Authentic Worship
Crafting A Personal Liturgy

SERVING GOD AND OTHERS AS ACTS OF WORSHIP

On dark days, when we're tempted to withdraw, when our hearts are crushed by pain, when overwhelm is dogging our heels (and there seems no way to praise), a personal liturgy can shift our hearts toward Jesus.

Liturgies are regular patterns or disciplines that guide our spiritual growth. The Greek word for *liturgy* (*leitourgia*) is used in two distinct ways in the New Testament. In Philippians 2:17, *liturgy* is used to describe Epaphroditus's sacrificial work of *serving others as an act of worship.*

In Hebrews 9:21, *liturgy* describes the act of s*erving God as an act of worship.*

***Liturgy*, then, means serving God and others as acts of worship.**

PERSONAL LITURGIES MAKE THEOLOGY PRACTICAL

Think about your life.

- How do you spend your time?
- What do you read?
- What do you watch or listen to?
- What does your daily worship look like?
- Does it have substance?
- Does it reflect a changed (and changing) life?
- Are you consistent?

Writing liturgies gives us practical ways to interact with God every day. God delights to meet with us. We have instant access to Him, yet we are easily distracted people with endless excuses. It's easier to pick up our phones than our Bibles, easier to binge-watch our favorite show than close our eyes and pray to the Father who longs for our time and attention, easier to talk with a friend than the Lord who knows our hearts best.

The goal of personal liturgies is to take our pain and sorrow and shift it toward praise, especially when we don't feel like it.

A personal liturgy recalibrates our hearts with God's, moving us from personal pain to sacrificial service in courageous and Christ-centered acts of worship.

CRAFTING A PERSONAL LITURGY

- **BEGIN WITH A BREATH PRAYER**, such as Colossians 3:16.
  Inhale: *Let the word of God...*
  Exhale: *dwell in me richly.*
- **SELECT A SCRIPTURE PASSAGE** that resonates with you, or one to prayerfully explore. If you need a place to begin, consider starting with a psalm that begins with struggle or suffering and builds towards deeper confidence in God.
- **CHOOSE A WORSHIP SONG OR HYMN** that holds significance for you with lyrics you can pray back to God as you listen or sing.
- **PRAY**. Be honest about how you're feeling, ask God for what you need, intercede for others, and (as your heart is drawn toward worship) praise Him for who He is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do. If this is difficult, pause and look around. Thank God for sun streaming through a window, clean tap water, or a soft sweatshirt. Let praise lead you into the awe and wonder of all God has created.
- **SERVE AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP.** How is God leading you to serve sacrificially today? Perhaps by:
  - encouraging a weary caregiver.
  - recognizing a co-worker's kindness.
  - thanking a delivery driver.
  - making a loved one's favorite meal or dessert.
  - calling a lonely friend, neighbor, or relative.
- **CLOSE WITH A BREATH PRAYER.** Consider Psalm 96:9.
  Inhale: *I worship You, Lord...*
  Exhale: *in the splendor of Your holiness.*

LITURGY CULTIVATES DEVOTION

When our hearts hurt and the pain threatens to sink us, we have a Savior who understands, a God attentive to our cries, and a Spirit who stirs our hearts toward prayer and service as acts of worship.

Liturgy gives us words when our own words fail, reminds us that we are part of something greater than ourselves, and helps us develop holy habits. **Liturgy is a rhythm that cultivates devotion to God and attentiveness to His presence in our lives.**

Let liturgy guide your heart toward authentic worship as you sacrificially serve God and minister to others.