

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Worship*

# INTRODUCTION

**AIM : To see the whole of our lives as an act of worship to God**

## Where do you worship?

Which of these responses do you think is most applicable to you?

- “I worship God at Emmanuel Church”
- “I worship God everywhere!”



Worship is sometimes seen as the period of singing that takes place during a church service, but the Bible has much more to say on the subject. We are going to refresh our memories today as we look at various passages that point to worship.

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Worship*

# PRAY

### **Pray to start:**

Ask God to open your ears and your hearts as you read through passages that may be familiar, and yet are always life-giving and life-shaping.

Pray that worship becomes a daily practice in your life, as you grow in your understanding of what God seeks from us as his followers.



### **NOTE TO LEADERS:**

There is a lot of content in today's study. You may like to take one question from each section instead of both.

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

*Worship*

## BIBLE STUDY



### Who does the Bible ask to worship?

**Read: Exodus 20 :1-3 ; Luke 4 : 8**

- There is no half-baked approach to what we read in the Bible about worship. In fact, we are **commanded** to worship God as the first of the Ten Commandments (*it's not an option*), and told that this is all about him. Why do you think this is so strongly expressed?
- Consider some of your daily interactions with other people and the choices you make. (*Maybe reflect on how you have lived your life in recent days*). What shape does this First Commandment give to our lives? What might we choose to do or to sacrifice as a result of true obedience?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## Worship

# BIBLE STUDY



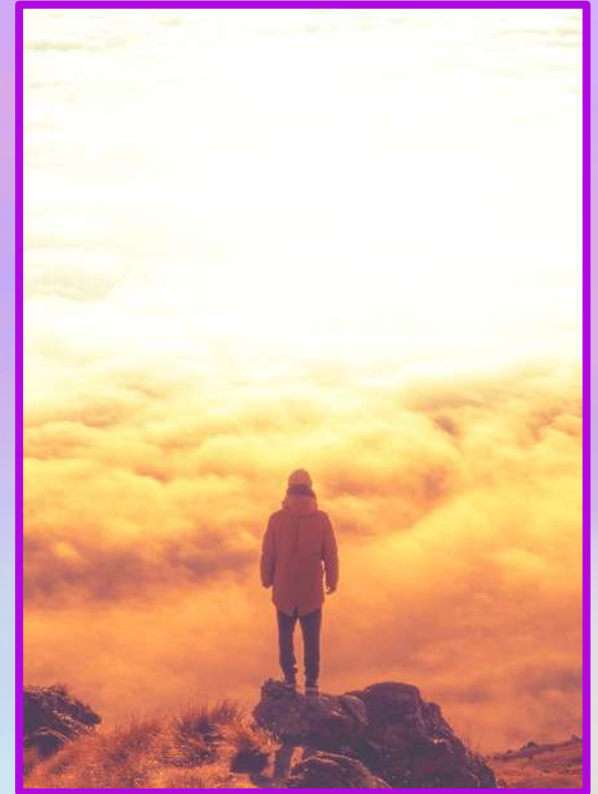
## Why does God ask us to worship him?

### Read: Exodus 20 : 4-5

- God continues in the Second Commandment with the call to worship him alone. Here he tells the people what they must not do. Why does God call himself a jealous God? *(Think about the covenant that God is making with his people, perhaps in terms of a marriage or call to faithfulness).*  
How is jealousy a positive attribute here?

### Read: 1 Chronicles 16:29; Revelation 4:11

- We have seen that God asks us to worship him alone. What are some of the reasons you see in these verses to do so?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Worship*

# BIBLE STUDY



## How does God ask us to worship him?

### Read: Romans 12 : 1

- What does true worship involve? What are some of the ways in which we can put this verse into practise in a way that might speak to non-believers around us?

### Read: Colossians 3 : 16

- Is worship only singing? How is singing powerful as a way of bringing us to a place of worship? Thinking about this verse and what we have already talked about in this study, what other ways can we show that we worship God in a way that is pleasing to him?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Worship*

# BIBLE STUDY



## When does God ask us to worship him?

### Read: Deuteronomy 6 : 4-7

- Do you think God expects us to worship him at a certain time and place?
- How might we hold God's commandments 'on our hearts' in an age of social media and constant distractions?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## Worship

# BIBLE STUDY



## Where does God ask us to worship him?

### Read: John 4 : 20 – 24

- Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman that he met by the well that there was no longer a requirement to worship God in a specific place (*as previously in Jerusalem*). He then gives this astonishing and transforming statement (**v. 23-24**).
- What do you think it means to worship ‘in spirit and in truth’? How does the Holy Spirit inspire our worship?

### Read: Acts 2 : 46 – 47

- How do you think the early church answers the question ‘where does God ask us to worship him?’



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Worship*

# GOING DEEPER

**Which of these responses do you think is most applicable to you?**

### Where do you worship?

- “I worship God at Emmanuel Church”
- “I worship God everywhere!”



- If you identify more with the first statement, what have you learned today about how we can avoid putting our lives into a compartmentalised life?
- If you identify more with the second statement, how would you answer someone who says that corporate worship is also very important?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

*Worship*

## LISTEN & PRAY

**Listen to Matt Redman  
Heart of Worship**  
and use it as a prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-Zp586pvZg>



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Prayer*

# INTRODUCTION

**AIM : To remind ourselves of the privilege, place and power of prayer in our lives; to learn a pattern for our prayers from Jesus**

- **Why is it so hard to pray?**
- **When might we instinctively turn to prayer?**



It is assumed in the Bible that we pray – ‘when you pray,’ said Jesus. Prayer is communication with God, and if we want to have a relationship with him, communication is a vital component of that.

But it’s so easy to feel that prayer is not a joy, but a duty.

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Prayer*

**PRAY**

### **Pray as you start:**

That God reminds us of some of the ways he has taught us through Jesus to have intimate communication with him. Thank him that when we don't know what to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us ([Rom 8 : 26](#)).

Praise him that we can reach him in prayer at any time and that we have open access to him through Jesus' death and sacrifice.



**We can learn so much from the prayer that is very familiar to us known as the Lord's Prayer.  
Jesus gave this to us as a pattern for our prayers.**

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## Prayer

# BIBLE STUDY



## Read : Matthew 6 : 9-13

- **Look at verse 9.** How was the way that Jesus began to talk to God through the Lord's Prayer revolutionary for his Jewish listeners?
- Last week, we considered ways in which God is worthy to be the only recipient of our worship. As we think about praying, why is it so good for us to remind ourselves that this amazing Creator God is also our loving, heavenly Father – our *Abba*?
- How might asking God's name to be made holy (**v.9**) give us a godly perspective as we begin to bring our praise and petitions to him?
- How might asking God's will to be done (**v.10**) give us peace in our prayers?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Prayer*

# BIBLE STUDY



## Read : Matthew 6 : 9-13

- **Look at verse 11.** Do you think our 'daily bread' only refers to food? What might this verse help us to do as we pray it?
- **In verse 12,** why is it so important to see forgiveness as something we both ask for and give? What are some of the 'debts' we might owe God, and some of the ways that other people become 'debtors' to us?
- In the final verse of the prayer (**v 13**) what are we praying for? Why should this be a vital part of our prayer life as we go out of prayer and into the situations awaiting us in our day?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Prayer*

# GOING DEEPER

## PRIVILEGE

### Read Philippians 4 : 6-7

- What is one of the amazing privileges of prayer that we so easily forget to access?
- What other privileges of prayer have you experienced in recent days?

## PLACE

### Read Matthew 6 : 6; Acts 2 : 42

- Which do you find easier - prayer on your own with God, or prayer as part of a group? Why?
- What do you think is the place for each of them in the life of our church?

## POWER

### Read Ephesians 6 : 12 -20

- How do you think not praying on all occasions impacts our thoughts and our decisions?
- How can we incorporate prayer more into our week this week?

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Prayer*

**PRAY**

- Thank God for the gift of prayer.
- Ask him to strengthen your faith as you seek to interact with him as your loving Father.
- Reflect on what has struck you as you have looked at passages today and ask God to deepen your relationship with him as you allow the Scriptures to impact your prayer life.



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Fellowship*

# INTRODUCTION

## AIMS :

- **To dig beneath the outdated definition of the word 'fellowship' and find the riches that are buried within!**
- **To be challenged by the early church to re-discover the joy that comes through a united, loving community.**

## OPENER

How would you describe the word 'fellowship' to someone who asked what it means in a church context?

Why do you think it may have become outmoded in some church circles?

## PRAY

That God would get you excited once again about belonging to the family of God. Pray that as people visit our church, they are attracted by our fellowship with one another and our commitment to one another.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to infuse our church with a spirit of unity and love.



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Fellowship*

# BIBLE STUDY



## Intro

You may have read the book or watched the film that is part JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trio called 'The Fellowship of the Ring'.

In this film, fellowship is seen as a brotherhood, a group drawn together by a common goal, committed to one another even to the point of sacrifice.

**This idea of fellowship is one that the early Church would have understood**



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Fellowship*

# BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Acts 2 : 42 - 47

- This whole section is entitled 'the fellowship of the believers' in some versions of the Bible. Fellowship is specifically mentioned as one of the activities of the first Christians in **verse 42**. What do you take it to mean here? What strikes you most about the early Christians?
- **Look at verses 44-45**. This is more than a casual bumping into each other each Sunday. How would you describe the relationship these people had with each other?

### Now look at verse 47

This is a church that was growing quickly. We often think that to initiate church growth, we need to go from the church to outsiders. But what do you think was happening here?

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Fellowship*

# BIBLE STUDY



### Read: John 13 : 34-35

Jesus asked us to model our allegiance to him through our love for one another.

- How might the love we have for each other as believers go deeper than the affection you may experience in other groups?
- In which ways do you think we can live as 21st century disciples which show those outside the church who we follow?

LOVE ONE  
ANOTHER



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Fellowship*

# GOING DEEPER

**In The Purpose-Driven Church,  
Rick Warren says this about fellowship:**

*'The Bible is very clear that following Christ is not just a matter of believing – it also includes belonging.'*

*'The Christian life is **not** a solo act. We are meant to live in relationship with each other'*

- Thinking about this, the verses from Acts, and what you heard on Sunday, what does the church provide through fellowship? Why is it so important to be intentional in this area?
- The Greek word translated as 'koinonia' is used in the New Testament to describe the very special community relationship between Christians. It has been said that our danger is catching 'koinonitis' – developing such a close-knit fellowship that newcomers are afraid or unable to break into it. Is this something you have experienced? How can we strive against this happening?
- What do you find most challenging about the idea of belonging in this very committed way to each other at Emmanuel?

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

*Fellowship*

**PRAY**

Commit your thoughts, challenges and conversations from today into God's hands and ask him to sink his word into your heart as you actively seek to deepen your relationships with the church family where he has placed you.



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

*Service*

## INTRODUCTION

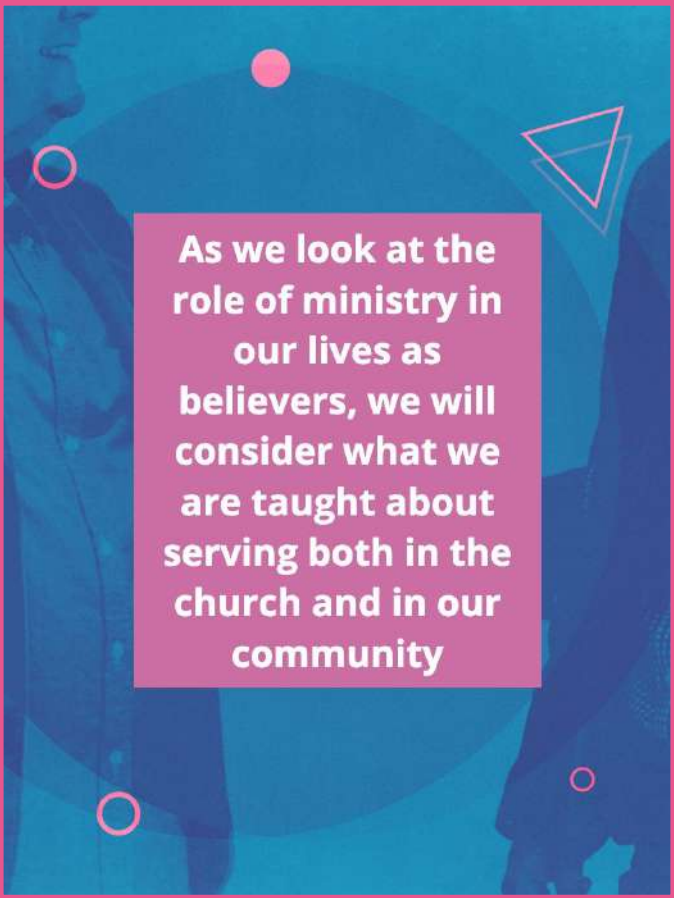
### AIM:

To remind ourselves that we are 'created in Christ Jesus to do good works' so that the 'body of Christ may be built up'; to see believers as 'salt and light' in our community.

### OPENER

What is your experience of serving others – either in church or in the community – over the years that you have been a believer?

What does the word 'serving' make you think?



As we look at the role of ministry in our lives as believers, we will consider what we are taught about serving both in the church and in our community

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

Service

## BIBLE STUDY



### IN THE CHURCH

#### Read: 1 Corinthians 12 : 14-20

These well-known verses are often used to show that each person who is part of a church has a significant part to play in that church. Yet we still fall for the idea that some ministries (*vicar, worship leader, missionary*) are more important than others.

- What can these verses teach or remind us today when it comes to the idea of some ministries being more important than others?
- Do you think we have a specific role that is right for us in the church (in line with our gifts and personality) or do you think that everyone should 'take a turn' at some less desirable roles – like putting the chairs out or washing up?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

Service

## BIBLE STUDY



### IN THE CHURCH

#### Read: Ephesians 4 : 11-13, 16

Some verses from **Ephesians 4** that teach us what lies behind our service as a member of Christ's body.

- **Look at verses 11 -13.** Here we are told that our service for others in church is used to build others up and to unify.
  - Why is it so important to have a church that is built up and unified through everyone taking part? What does it lead to?
- **Look at verse 16.**
  - What is the role of the 'ligaments' in this verse? What do you think the ligaments might be in our church?
  - Picturing the church as the body of Christ, what do we learn about our roles at church from our verse of the year?

*"From him  
the whole body,  
joined and held together  
by every supporting ligament,  
grows and builds itself up in love,  
as each part does its work."*

EPHESIANS 4 : 16



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

Service

## BIBLE STUDY



### IN OUR COMMUNITY

#### Read: Matthew 5 : 13-16

(If possible, read them in The Message for a very practical version)

- If we are salt, how might we lose our saltiness when we step out into the community? (v 13)
- What are some of the ways that you feel called to be **salt and light** in your community?
- Thinking about this passage, what do you think is our calling as believers when it comes to being part of our local community?
- Looking at both parts of this study on service, what do you think is the relationship between our **service in the church** and our **service in the community**? Do you think one is more important or valued by God than the other?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

Service

## GOING DEEPER

### Look at Ephesians 2 : 8-10

These verses teach us fundamental truths about our faith when it comes to 'good works'.

- Why is it so important to understand that rushing about busily in the name of Christianity does not bring about our salvation? What is the **temptation (v9)** that can result from our 'works'?
- **Verse 10** tells us that we were created to '**do good works**'. If we have been saved by grace, why do you think God wants us to '**do good works**'?

It might help to know that the word 'workmanship' in verse 10 (NIV) is also translated as 'poetry', 'handiwork', or 'masterpiece' in other versions of the Bible!



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

*Service*

**PRAY**

As you consider your role at Emmanuel and your role in the community, how might these passages speak to you?

Ask God to once again give you insight into how you should be spending your time, remembering that God does not want us to burn out!

Talk with your group about areas where you may be struggling as you try to discern how to spend your valuable time. Ç



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Outreach*

# INTRODUCTION

## AIM:

To remind ourselves of how and why Jesus asked his church to be outward-looking.

## OPENER

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'evangelism'?

Has your experience of evangelism (on the giving or receiving end) been positive or negative?

## PRAY

As you start to once again be reminded that all people and places are under Jesus' authority, and that all people need the good news of hope that we have as believers. Ask for a sense of strength, and also excitement, as we seek to **'shine like stars'** in our families, work places, and neighbourhoods

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## Outreach

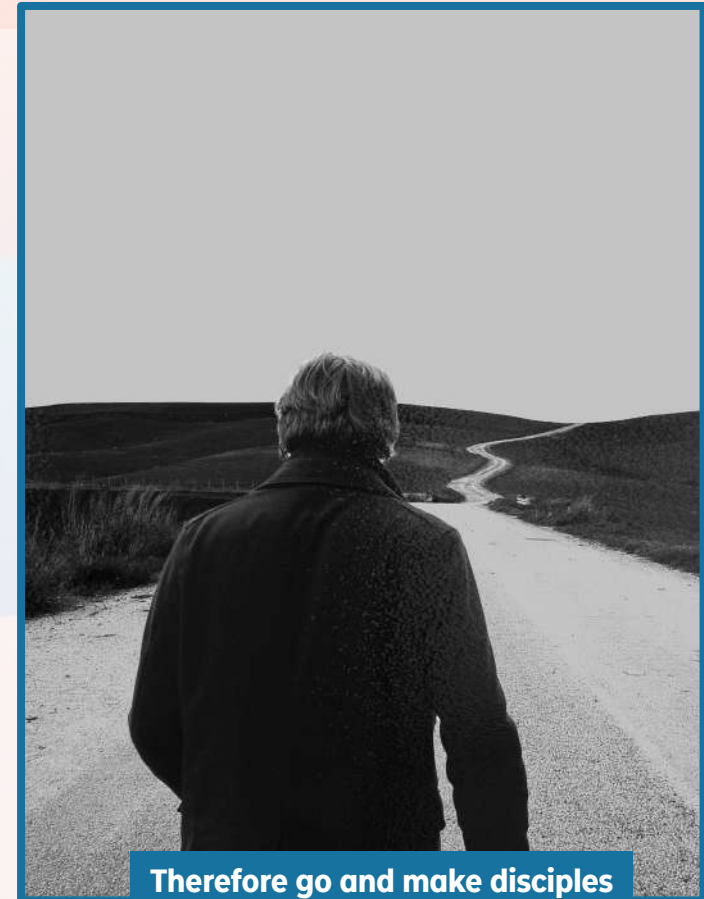
# BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Matthew 28 : 19-20

This is one of the most famous passages of Scripture and is known as the **Great Commission**. As Jesus' followers today, these words continue to hold a powerful command for us, some two thousand years later.

- How does Jesus begin the Great Commission in **verse 18**?
  - How has Jesus shown this to be true as he says these words to his disciples?
  - Why is it significant for us to remember these opening words as we consider what he is asking us to do?
- Why do you think Jesus uses the word 'go'?
  - What stops us from going?
- Where is the place we 'go' to find people who are on our 'frontline' – people who don't know Jesus? Think about all the places in your life that this might apply to.



**Therefore go and make disciples  
of all nations**

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## Outreach

# BIBLE STUDY



## Matthew 28 : 19-20

- What are the two parts that follow the command to 'go and make disciples' in **verses 19-20**? Why are they each an important part of discipleship?
- In **verse 20b**, what does Jesus promise? In what way is he always with us?
- Looking once again at the bookends of the **Great Commission** (the way Jesus opens and closes) where do you feel encouraged, and where do you feel challenged as you consider it?

'What he commands us to do, he empowers us to do. The command is to "make disciples." The rest of the verses tell us how we do that: sharing the gospel, baptizing those who respond and teaching them to obey.'

The resurrection is intimately tied with the authority vested in Jesus and the power we now have to share the gospel and make disciples'

Ephesians 1:19-20

Taken from <https://fpchouston.org/am-site/media/small-group-study-guide-november-22-2015.pdf>

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

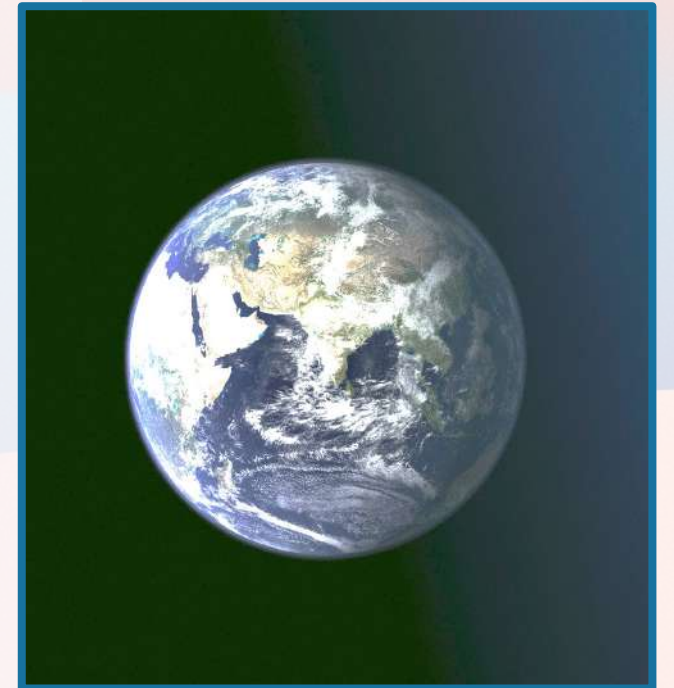
## *Outreach*

# GOING DEEPER

### **Read: Ephesians 1 : 17-23**

We can easily feel very daunted by the **Great Commission**, feeling that it is for those with a special calling to evangelise others, or those who are sent overseas in mission.

- How can these verses from Ephesians encourage us today? As we consider our various roles in our life outside church, how can we use these verses to change our perspective if we are feeling overwhelmed?
- What holds you back from speaking about your faith to those in your daily life?
- What could you ask your group to pray about in this area?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Outreach*

# PRAY

### Pray using the verses from Ephesians 1

- Use these verses as a prayer of praise to thank God for what he has done in Jesus and the hope and power that this gives us today.
- Ask him that **'the eyes of your heart'** may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you', as you reflect on what today's verses mean for you in the situation you find yourself in.
- Thank him that we do not walk in our own strength as we look for opportunities to talk to others about our faith.





# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Discipleship*

# INTRODUCTION

**AIM:** To explore what it means to be a whole-life follower of Jesus

**OPENER:** What do you think makes someone a disciple?

We know that the amazing gift of grace means that we cannot do anything to earn our way into God's kingdom. We reach out to him in belief as we recognise who Jesus is and what he has done for us. But we also know that, whilst God loves and accepts us as we are, he also loves us too much to leave us as we are.

**Discipleship is the journey towards maturity in our faith, and learning how to live in a way that shows God to people in our lives.**

## PRAY

Pray as you start that through today's reading, we will be reminded of what God has done for us and what God wants for us.

**As we think about discipleship today, this prayer shows what Paul was praying for the early church as it started out on the discipleship pathway.**

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## Discipleship

# BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Colossians 1 : 9 – 14

Looking through this passage, there are four places where Paul and Timothy's prayer expresses what they want for the Colossian believers. These represent four places where they might grow in their faith. We are going to consider these now as we think about our own discipleship journey.

#### (v.9) – to be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

- What do you think it means to be 'filled with the knowledge of God's will'? How can we see this move from words to reality?
- What is the goal of this part of the prayer (v.10)?

#### (v.10) – living a life worthy of the Lord.

- What do you think 'living a life worthy of the Lord' looks like?
- What are the ways in which we can please God, according to this verse?
- Where do you struggle to bring this verse off the page and into your life?

#### (v.11) – being strengthened with all power

- What is this power that can strengthen us? What is its purpose?
- Do you feel as if you can identify with being strengthened with God's power? How / when?

#### (v.12) – joyfully giving thanks

- What does verse 12 suggest that our thanks is linked to?
- What is our inheritance? Why is it so easy to lose sight of it, and what can we do about that?

How do these four prayer requests link together? Do you think they are circular (one flows into another and so one in a circle), or steps on a ladder (one leading on from another)?

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Discipleship*

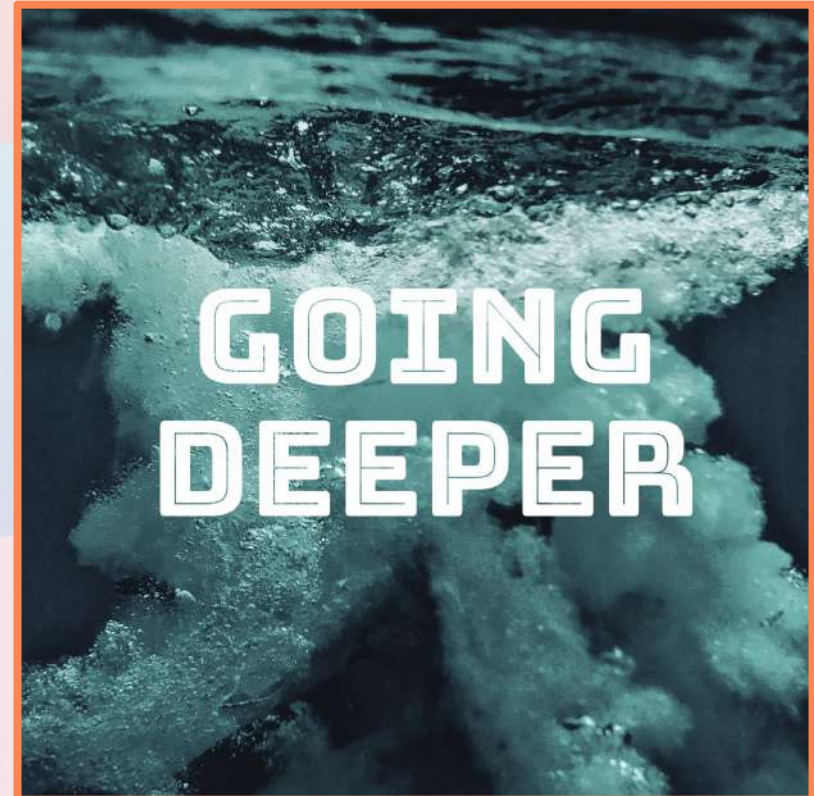
# GOING DEEPER

Look back again at today's Bible reading and at the four prayer requests that Paul has for believers that we have already looked at.

Think about this definition of discipleship: **'to know Jesus and to make him known'**. What do you notice in these verses about:

- God's role as we seek to know Jesus in a deeper way
- Our role as we seek to show Jesus in a way which impacts the whole of our life

How might these verses encourage you as you seek to grow in maturity, and to show him to others by marching to a different beat?



# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

*Discipleship*

**PRAY**

What strikes you most about how Paul prays, and what he prays?

Who is someone you can pray one or more of these points for today, and then encourage them by letting them know what you're praying for them?

