

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Mark 1:40-44, 1 Corinthians 12:4-31
Philippians 2:1-4,

DAY 1

Read [Mark 1:40-44](#)

When Jesus offered comfort to others he did so with great love and compassion - and without seeking attention for himself. He did not keep people at a distance, but instead helped them face-to-face in a very personal and intimate way. Sometimes we take the comfortable route by offering help from afar. While it's good to support others with our financial gifts or by offering encouragement with notes or cards, visiting and comforting in person embodies Christ's way of giving comfort.

- **What are your motives when you help others? Do you genuinely seek to offer aid, a friendly ear, and loving presence?**
- **Do you ever do something good for someone else in hopes that others will hear about your good deed and think more favorably about you?**
- **Do you have a neighbor who is elderly or homebound who you could serve through personal acts of comfort-giving?**

Spend some time in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any underlying motives you might have about comforting others and seek guidance on ways in which you might be a comfort-giver.

DAY 2

Read [1 Corinthians 12:4-31](#)

Paul encouraged the church in Corinth to recognize that each member was uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to fulfill his or her role in the church community. Today, we need to heed his words and recognize that none of us is gifted to do all things for all people, but that all of us have been granted spiritual gifts that can be used to make our local church a vibrant, caring, faithful community where every person is valued and every member has a role to fill. Here at St. Paul, we have a *spiritual gift assessment tool* that can help each of us discover our gifts.

- **Have you discovered your own spiritual gifts? Are you putting them to good use here at St. Paul?**
- **Reflect on the things that ignite your passion and make you come alive.**
- **Ask God to reveal how you have been gifted to serve others and God's local church.**

If you would like to learn more about your spiritual gifts, please mark the Spiritual Gift Assessment block on your Connect Card this Sunday or [email us](#). We will arrange a time to help you discover how God has enabled you to serve.

DAY 3

When John Wesley wrote *The Character of a Methodist*, he reminded us that a Methodist *"does good unto all men; unto neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies: And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by 'feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison;' but much more does he labor to do good to their souls..."* Stephen Ministers care for the spirits, hearts, and souls of their care-receivers with a ministry of presence that focuses on being a good listener, a prayer partner and a Christian presence in times of trial, sickness, grief or doubt. Stephen Ministers must complete a training program of several months duration and attend

two monthly meetings once commissioned. The commitment is significant but the service to our Lord and those he loves is immeasurable.

- **Are you a good listener? Do people seek you out as a comforting presence in times of trouble?**
- **Reflect upon your own level of spiritual maturity and practices of prayer, study of the scriptures, and willingness to be accountable to others and leaders appointed to guide you.**
- **If you think you might be a candidate for Stephen Ministry, please mark the Stephen Ministry block on your Connect Card next week or [contact the church office](#) so we can put you in touch with a Stephen Ministry leader.**

Stephen Ministers are a significant part of our care-giving ministry at St Paul. Pray for guidance as you discern God's possible call for you to serve as a Stephen Minister and pray for those who already serve in Stephen Ministry.

DAY 4

Summer is a time when we have opportunities for all of us to serve families and children through events such as Vacation Bible School or the Back to School Jubilee. This fall, we will also launch an after-school ministry for Middle School students who need extra tutoring, and a safe place to take part in recreation or arts and craft activities. These students would also benefit from being in an encouraging environment with older students and adults who will serve as tutors and role models. We will need bus drivers (with appropriate licenses) and cooks willing to prepare an evening meal for the students. Many of you signed up Sunday to help with one or more of these ministries. Thank you all for volunteering to serve! This is one way we can show we are "FOR Pinellas" and that we take responsibility for bettering the lives of the kids in our community - OUR kids.

- **If you haven't volunteered, please pray about how you might serve at VBS, the Jubilee, or our**

- fall after-school ministry.**
- **Make a commitment to take a few tags off the Jubilee school bus and then buy and return the school supplies listed on those tags to the church office during the week or the Connection Center on Sunday morning.**
 - **If you are a former or retired educator who could help us launch the middle school ministry, please make that notation on your Connect Card next week.**

Take some time to pray for all of the children in our community and ask God to guide St. Paul as we engage in school partnerships at all grade levels.

DAY 5

Read [Philippians 2:1-4](#)

Placing the need of others ahead of our own needs is a characteristic of a mature believer. After all, when we sacrifice for others, we are embodying Christ. Too often today, we hear people who aren't part of a church say things like, "I think Jesus is great, it's Christians I can't stand because they are so judgmental." Sadly, we are often judged by outsiders based on what they read or hear portrayed on the news about those who claim Christ but whose actions are most un-Christlike. Here at St. Paul, we want our community to know what and who we stand for. We want to recognize goodness and compassion everywhere we see it on display. We are FOR Pinellas and we want EVERYONE to know it.

- **If you didn't have a chance to read the page in last Sunday's bulletin about our FOR Pinellas Campaign, take a look at our website for more about what we are doing how we can bring it to life as a congregation. It will help us reach those 20,000 people within a 5-mile radius of St. Paul who don't yet know the love of Christ.**

Pray for everyone in Pinellas County. Ask God to show you the ways that you can demonstrate the love of Christ in all ways, to all people, at all times, and in all places - especially here in our local community.

DAY 6

Reflect today on this week's scriptures and think about how you can offer comfort to those who need it. Pray and thank God for offering you comfort, and ask for guidance in how you can share comfort with others.

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