

Philippians 1:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.



Fall Start-Up Bible Study: Philippians 1:1-11

For Life Community usage the week of 9/8/14

Transitional context: Whether your LC has been meeting regularly or sporadically during summer, this study is designed to help people transition from the summer to the more regular and intense fall season. This study is by design shorter in length so that you can spend more time relationally reconnecting. It accompanies and begins the new GC sermon series **Come Together**, and is closely related to (but not dependent upon) the Sunday sermon (only because we realize that not everyone has heard that sermon).

Community Builder Questions (20-30 minutes): Use several questions to help people catch up, reconnect, and participate. You may also be welcoming and integrating new people. So, select several questions or invent your own. Wise questions are “self-descriptive questions,” allowing people to voluntarily describing experiences, insights, and interests. (If your LC is “relationally” out of touch or fairly new, then it is best to avoid “self-disclosure questions,” which require more internal processing and revealing, and are best saved for later when relationships and community are renewed.)

- What is one of your favorite memories of the summer? (could be an individual experience or something shared with friend/s or family, such as a hike, canoe trip, vacation, outing)
- What are you looking forward to this fall?
- During the summer was there a time or way you sensed God’s blessing, or leading, or renewal that you’d feel comfortable sharing?
- As you think about our LC experience together, what are you looking forward to together or hoping we can contribute to one another’s lives?

Purpose for short (20-40 min.) study: To provide vision for this year—and to join in the fall’s sermon-series **Come Together**, as we seek to find, build, and live in *true* community at church and in our wider world.

Today’s BIG idea: True community happens when we come together around something bigger than ourselves.

Read aloud: Philippians 1:1-11

(Consider giving several additional minutes for people to reread the passage and reflect on it.)

- a. In v. 1 we are introduced to the authors and to the recipients of this letter. What do you learn about them?
- b. V. 2 provides the opening greeting, which is a bit different than the normal 1st century salutation. What interests you or strikes you about it?
- c. In vs. 3-6 Paul (on behalf of Timothy and himself) writes to the Philippians about how he prays and thinks about them. What are some of the various aspects that you observe?
 - While we will learn more about “your partnership in the gospel” as we go further into this letter, what would you speculate the phrase might mean?
 - In what ways in the past has our LC experienced “partnership in the gospel”? (As you ask this somewhat risky question, be prepared to share a personal example.)
 - The phrase “a good work in you” revolves around the plural “you.” In what ways might God continue and complete some aspect of partnership in the gospel and good work through your LC this year?
(Both “partnership in the gospel” and “a good work in you” will be great phrases to keep alive in your LC throughout this year!)
- d. In vs. 7-8 Paul shares about his feelings, longings and convictions (more than emotions) for the Philippian Christ-followers. What is the foundation of their fellowship? What impresses you about Paul’s care and concern?
- e. Now Paul will share the specifics of his prayer for them. Look at each of the 3 segments, conveniently in each of v. 9, v. 10 and v. 11. What does each segment mean? How does this prayer progress?
 - Often people keep their prayers private. Why do you think Paul is so forth-telling about his prayers for them?

Summary and closing:

- How does this passage prompt our thoughts and hopes for our LC as we begin this new season?
- Let’s pray together—for one another and for our year of “Come Together,” using words and phrases, bits and pieces from this passage that we just studied together.