

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. ²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹ So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, ³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

Questions:

In Philippians 2:19-30, we read about two people who modeled whole-hearted discipleship - Timothy and Epaphroditus. Pastor Jonathan highlighted three characteristics for our attention: a humble reliance on the Lord, a genuine love for God's people, and a costly commitment to the work of the Gospel.

1. What does having a "humble reliance" on the Lord look like? Notice how Paul uses the phrase "in the Lord" throughout the passage. How can we adopt this characteristic as we go about making plans in our lives and ministries?
2. Paul describes Timothy's and Epaphroditus' genuine love for God's people. Paul also showed a sincere love for his brothers and sisters in Christ. Read Philippians 1:3-8. What are some signs of their genuine concerns for God's people? How can we better live this out as a family of God? Imagine the testimony this would have to the world if they see how we genuinely care for each other. Discuss.
3. We read about the costly commitment these men made for the work of the Gospel, even to the point of death for Epaphroditus (vs. 30). How can we make more sacrifices in our own lives and give more of ourselves for the sake of the Gospel? (For example, time.)
4. Perhaps as we have discussed together the characteristics of these exceptional disciples of Christ, someone in your own life has come to mind who has been a role model to you, a faithful follower of Christ and partner in the Gospel. Share with the group what you admire about this person and what you have learned from them.

PRAYER TIME: You are encouraged to pray as a group for each other and also individually about where you can best serve the Lord Jesus with the gifts, experience and skills God has given you.