



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ASHLAND



This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).

Weekly Questions:

- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

From Garden to Garden. Conversation – True Worship Read Isaiah 58

- In the opening verses, God's people feel as though they are doing everything right – observing the religious rules for living – and God has not heard their prayers. They fast and observe the sabbath. What are similar faith practices we take part in religiously today?
- God's voice reprimands their lack of justice and neighborliness. Though we often think of "justice" as a system of laws to support individual rights, how does Isaiah 58 define God's justice? And what can we do to take part in acts of justice today?
- Isaiah 1 and Amos 5 contain similar passages where God scolds the religious acts of his people, claiming he despises them. Why? What makes these religious routines detestable to God when other places in scripture we read that God delights in our worship?
- The passage calls the poor and the wanderer (foreigners living among us) our flesh and blood. What would it take for us to view the people in our communities – especially those "least like us" - as family? What steps might help us view others through this lens?
- Walter Brueggeman in his Isaiah Commentaries says...
 - "...in our own time, the most zealous adherents of privatization also tend to exhibit loud devotion to "religion", but it is a religion that completely misconstrues the social solidarity implicit in covenantal faith."

What is an example you've notice of someone being loudly devoted to religion, but lacking social solidarity towards neighbors?

- The chapter ends with God describing worship that is pleasing to him. This involves worship as a delight and joy, rather than a compulsion or obligation. How can we have that attitude not only about our worship, but about the way we see our neighbors?

This week, take a moment to notice neighbors. Notice and appreciate beauty around you, removing yourself from being the "center of the universe". Notice how you are a part of the social fabric of your community. Ask God for a heart that beats for his justice and lean into community for healing and support as we navigate this world together.