

## Philippians – Week 6 – Faithful Servants – Bible Study Helps

Title: Faithful Servants: Learning from Timothy and Epaphroditus

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the lives of Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples of faithful servants of Christ. It emphasizes that God uses ordinary people with different backgrounds and callings to accomplish His work. The message encourages believers to be faithful in their service to God, regardless of their circumstances or perceived abilities. It highlights the importance of discipleship, mentorship, sacrificial service, and perseverance in the face of challenges.

### Key Points:

- God has a plan for each believer's life and calls them to faithful service
- Timothy's life exemplifies the impact of godly upbringing and discipleship
- Epaphroditus demonstrates sacrificial service and faithfulness despite setbacks
- God uses people with diverse backgrounds and experiences for His glory
- Faithfulness in small things can lead to greater opportunities for service
- Ministry is personal and involves both joys and sorrows
- Both long-term companions and short-term helpers are valuable in ministry

### Scripture Reference:

- Philippians 2:19-30

### Stories:

- The story of Timothy's upbringing by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois
- The account of Epaphroditus falling ill while on a mission to help Paul
- A church member holding scripture signs on a busy street
- A mission trip where participants fell ill but still served faithfully

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## Discipleship and Small Group Guide: Faithful Servants (Philippians 2)

### Opening Prayer

### Key Takeaways:

1. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for His glory.
2. Faithfulness is crucial in serving God, regardless of one's background or role.
3. Both long-term companions and short-term encouragers are important in ministry.
4. God honors those who serve Him sacrificially, even when circumstances are challenging.

### Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon highlights Timothy's upbringing in a godly home. How has your own upbringing influenced your faith journey?
2. Epaphroditus faced unexpected illness while serving. Share a time when you faced challenges while trying to serve God. How did you respond?
3. The apostle Paul describes Timothy as someone who "will naturally care for your state" (Phil. 2:20). What does it mean to genuinely care for others in the church? How can we cultivate this attitude?
4. How does the example of Epaphroditus challenge our perspective on "successful" ministry?
5. The sermon mentions that "ministry is personal" and can come with heavy burdens. How can we support one another in carrying these burdens within our church community?
6. Reflect on the different roles of Timothy (leader/teacher) and Epaphroditus (servant/messenger). How do you see your own gifts and calling fitting into the body of Christ?

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### Practical Applications:

1. Faithfulness Check: Take time this week to evaluate your faithfulness in different areas of your life (e.g., prayer, Bible study, serving others). Identify one area where you can grow in consistency.
2. Care Initiative: Choose one person in your church or community to intentionally encourage or serve this week, emulating Timothy's genuine care for others.
3. Unexpected Service: Be open to opportunities where God might use you in unexpected ways, like Epaphroditus. Pay attention to needs around you that you might typically overlook.
4. Mentoring/Discipleship: If you're a mature believer, consider how you might mentor someone younger in the faith. If you're newer in your faith journey, seek out a mature believer who can disciple you.
5. Gratitude Journal: Start a journal to record ways God is using you or others in your life, even in seemingly small or ordinary circumstances.

### Closing Prayer:

Thank God for the examples of faithful servants like Timothy and Epaphroditus. Ask for His help in growing in faithfulness and being open to how He wants to use each group member for His glory.

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### Discipleship Questions

How does the example of Timothy's upbringing challenge our assumptions about what makes an effective servant of Christ, and how might this apply to raising children or discipling/mentoring others in the faith today?

In what ways does Epaphroditus's story of sacrificial service, despite illness and setbacks, inspire or convict us about our own willingness to serve God and others at personal cost?

How does Paul's commendation of both Timothy and Epaphroditus reveal the value of different types of service within the body of Christ, and how might this shape our view of our own roles in ministry?

What can we learn from Paul's statement that 'all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's,' and how might this challenge us to examine our own motivations in serving?

How does the concept of 'working out your own salvation with fear and trembling' relate to the examples of faithful service we see in Timothy and Epaphroditus?

In what ways does Paul's deep personal connection to his fellow workers challenge our modern notions of professional ministry or church leadership?

How might the story of Epaphroditus's illness and Paul's reaction to it inform our understanding of suffering, setbacks, and God's purposes in the lives of believers?

What lessons can we draw from the contrast between Timothy's long-term discipleship under Paul and Epaphroditus's shorter-term but impactful service?

How does Paul's instruction to 'receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness and hold such in reputation' challenge our attitudes towards those who serve in less visible or prestigious roles in the church?

In what ways does the faithfulness of figures like Timothy's mother and grandmother, mentioned briefly but impactfully, encourage us to consider the long-term influence of our own faith on others?

# Philippians – Week 6 – Faithful Servants – Bible Study Helps

A 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

## **Day 1: Faithful Service**

Reading: Philippians 2:19-30

Devotional: Paul's words about Timothy and Epaphroditus remind us that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Timothy, raised in a godly home, and Epaphroditus, from an obscure background, both served faithfully. Their examples teach us that regardless of our upbringing or past, God can use us mightily if we're willing to serve Him wholeheartedly.

Reflect on your own life: How has God been preparing you for service? Are there areas where you've hesitated to serve, thinking you're not qualified? Remember, God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called. Ask Him to show you where He wants you to serve and for the courage to step out in faith.

## **Day 2: Caring for Others**

Reading: Philippians 2:1-4

Devotional: Paul commends Timothy for his genuine care for others, noting that most people look out for their own interests. In a world driven by self-interest, we're called to be different. Christ's example of selfless love should motivate us to put others' needs before our own.

Consider: Who in your life needs care and attention right now? How can you practically demonstrate Christ's love to them this week? It might be a phone call, a helping hand, or simply a listening ear. Remember, when we care for others, we're reflecting God's heart and fulfilling His command to love one another.

## **Day 3: Perseverance in Suffering**

Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Devotional: Epaphroditus nearly died while serving Paul, yet his suffering became part of his powerful testimony. Often, we view hardships as obstacles to serving God, but they can become platforms for His glory. Paul learned that God's strength is perfected in our weakness.

Reflect on a current struggle in your life. How might God be using this difficulty to shape you or to display His power? Instead of praying only for deliverance, ask God to reveal His purpose in your pain and for the strength to glorify Him through it.

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### **Day 4: The Value of Discipleship/Mentorship**

Reading: 2 Timothy 1:3-7

Devotional: The relationship between Paul and Timothy illustrates the importance of spiritual discipleship and mentorship. Paul invested in Timothy, nurturing his faith and preparing him for ministry. This legacy of faith, which began with Timothy's grandmother Lois, shows how one life can impact generations.

Who has been a spiritual discipler/mentor in your life? Take time to thank God for them and consider reaching out to express your gratitude. Additionally, is there someone you could disciple/mentor? Pray for God to show you how you can invest in others' spiritual growth, passing on the faith as it was passed to you.

### **Day 5: Unity in Diversity**

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Devotional: The stories of Timothy and Epaphroditus remind us that God uses different people with varied gifts to build His church. Some, like Timothy, may be called to leadership and teaching. Others, like Epaphroditus, serve through support roles and practical assistance. Both are equally valuable in God's eyes.

Reflect on your unique gifts and experiences. How has God uniquely equipped you to serve His body? Remember, no role is insignificant when done for God's glory. Pray for unity in your local church, appreciating the diverse ways God works through different members. Ask Him to show you how your particular gifts can contribute to the body's overall health and mission.