



## Small Group Discussion Guide

**ICE BREAKER:** Whether you're single, dating or married, do you celebrate Valentine's Day? If so, how? If not, why?

**INSTRUCTIONS:** If your group meets bi-weekly, do 2 & 4.

1. Review your message notes: What does Epaphras mean and where did he come from? Read Colossians 1:3-4, 6b, 2:5 and Col 1:23a, 2:1, 4, 6, 8, 16, 18, 20-23. The Colossian church had its positive traits and challenges. What was good about it? What were some of the challenges it faced? Do we see similar strengths in today's church? Are any of the challenges mentioned in these verses the same challenges we face today?
2. Read Colossians 1:7 and 4:12-13. Pastor Tom said that Epaphras was a person worth imitating. Describe the traits that we should imitate. Why are these traits worthy of imitation? How did these traits build the Colossian church? How can we use these traits today to help build Riverside Church?
3. Pastor Tom highlighted 3 things that make Epaphras' prayers worthy of being imitated. What were those 3 things? Read Luke 11:9-13, 18:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:17. What does persistent prayer look like and how does it cause us to embrace God's will? Read Romans 15:30. What does it mean to pray passionately? Review Colossians 4:12b again. Epaphras was focused on others. How does this help others to take next steps in their relationship with God?
4. Read Matthew 6:6. Pastor Tom stated that genuine prayer intercessors are almost always out of public view, but it is because of these prayer intercessors that ONLY GOD! moments have occurred at Riverside over the past 14+ years. What were some of those moments that Pastor Tom shared with us? If your small group has been praying together, what are some of the ONLY GOD! moments that you've witnessed in your group? If your group hasn't been praying for one another, take time to ask each member how each of you can pray for one another. Record them and pray for one another throughout the week.

### Personal Guide for Week of February 11th

- DAY 1 - Read Colossians 2:6-23.** The Colossian church was a growing, vibrant church, but it had its challenges. What were they?
- DAY 2 - Read Colossians 3:1-4:1.** What are some of the remedies Paul prescribes?
- DAY 3 - Read Colossians 4:2-6.** How is prayer the answer for the challenges faced by the Colossian church?
- DAY 4 - Read Luke 18:1-8.** How does persistent prayer allow a poor widow to receive justice?
- DAY 5 - Read Matthew 6:9-13 & Luke 11:2-4.** Discover how Jesus taught us to pray.



## Message Notes & Small Group Discussion // Personal Guides

*"Predictable Epaphras"*

Week of February 11, 2018



## “Nothing Ordinary: Predictable Epaphras” [Tom Lundeen, Senior Pastor]

### MESSAGE NOTES

“E-paph-ras” = “f\_\_\_\_\_ or covered with f\_\_\_\_\_”.

...he is especially noted for something that is often talked about, but not practiced as often as it’s talked about by followers of Jesus.

### 1. Who Was Epaphras?

Note Colossians 4:12-13

He was Paul’s representative to these 3 churches where Paul wasn’t able to be \_\_\_\_\_ (note Colossians 1:7).

Note Philemon 23

His name indicates he was a convert to Jesus as Lord out of p\_\_\_\_\_

(“Aphrodite” = Greek goddess of \_\_\_\_\_).

...Epaphras came to visit Paul and \_\_\_\_\_ him on this church’s condition (good things—Colossians 1:3-4, 6b; 2:5; and c\_\_\_\_\_, i.e., false teaching—Colossians 1:23a; 2:1, 4, 6, 8, 16, 18, 20-22).

### 2. A Person Worth \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ co-worker (note Colossians 1:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ faithful servant/minister (note Colossians 1:7)...a reminder that we’re \_\_\_\_\_ accountable and responsible to the Lord).
- A \_\_\_\_\_ person who was deeply committed to reaching people who needed to be \_\_\_\_\_ (note Colossians 4:13) - found people \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Not only was Epaphras a person worth imitating, but he was also a person with a:

### 3. “B\_\_\_\_\_ -S\_\_\_\_\_ Ministry

...the ministry Epaphras is \_\_\_\_\_ recognized for was something...that few people saw (note Colossians 4:12-13).

He prayed:

- P\_\_\_\_\_ (“always”) - note Luke 11:9-13; 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17—persistence in prayer is not so we can change God’s will, but so that we will \_\_\_\_\_ God’s will.
- P\_\_\_\_\_ (“prays earnestly...wrestling...striving in agony”) - note Romans 15:30
- \_\_\_\_\_ focused (note Colossians 4:12b) - prayed that his brothers and sisters in Jesus would be taking \_\_\_\_\_...

Because God doesn’t make anything or anyone ordinary:

- \_\_\_\_\_ prayer-intercessors are almost always out of public view.
- Their ministry is for people, but not in \_\_\_\_\_ of people often.
- Note Matthew 6:6
- God has done amazing, *ONLY GOD!* things the past 14+ years at Riverside...
- ...all of them were because people here (i.e., staff, elders, many others) talk to God persistently, passionately, and with an other’s-focus...
- God is looking for a lot more people like Epaphras...

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey. Use the connect card to let us know about your commitment, too!



## **“Predictable Epaphras”**

**Tom Lundeen, Senior Pastor**

### **MESSAGE NOTES**

“E-paph-ras” = “foamy of covered with foam”.

...he is especially noted for something that is often talked about, but not practiced as often as it’s talked about by followers of Jesus.

### **1. Who Was Epaphras?**

Note Colossians 4:12-13

He was Paul’s representative to these 3 churches where Paul wasn’t able to be physically (note Colossians 1:7).

Note Philemon 23

His name indicates he was a convert to Jesus as Lord out of paganism (“Aphrodite” = Greek goddess of love).

...Epaphras came to visit Paul and updated him on this church’s condition (good things = Colossians 1:3-4, 6b; 2:5; and challenges, i.e., false teaching = Colossians 1:23a; 2:1, 4, 6, 8, 16, 18, 20-22).

### **2. A Person Worth Imitating**

- A. Beloved co-worker (note Colossians 1:7)
- B. Christ’s faithful servant/minister (note Colossians 1:7)...a reminder that we’re ultimately accountable and responsible to the Lord).
- C. A found person who was deeply committed to reaching people who needed to be found (note Colossians 4:13) – found people find people.

Not only was Epaphras a person worth imitating, but he was also a person with a:

### **3. “Back-Stage” Ministry**

...the ministry Epaphras is eternally recognized for was something...that few people saw (note Colossians 4:12-13). He prayed:

- A. Persistently (“always”) – note Luke 11:9-13; 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – persistence in prayer is not so we can change God’s will, but so that we will embrace God’s will.
- B. Passionately (“prays earnestly...wrestling...striving in agony”) – note Romans 15:30
- C. Other’s focused (note Colossians 4:12b) – prayed that his brothers and sister in Jesus would be taking next steps...

*Because God doesn’t make anything or anyone ordinary:*

- Genuine prayer-intercessors are almost always out of public view.
- Their ministry is for people, but not in front of people often.
- Note Matthew 6:6
- God has done amazing, *ONLY GOD!* things the past 14+ years at Riverside...
- ...all of them were because people here (i.e., staff, elders, many others) talk to God persistently, passionately, and with an other’s-focus...
- God is looking for a lot more people like Epaphras...

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