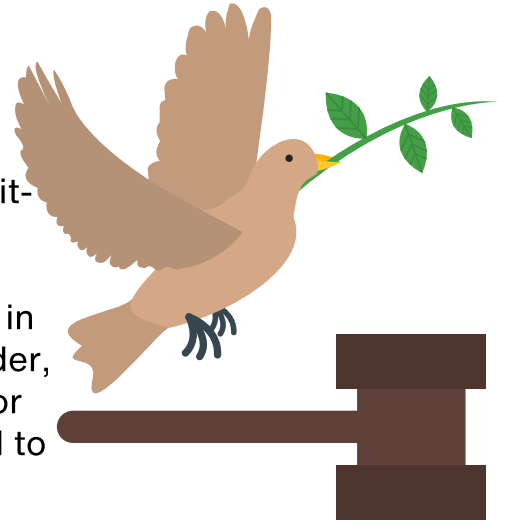


Practicing The Practice

What is **Do Justice** about?

Often when we hear the word *justice* we think of our American justice system, of courtrooms and judges and crime and punishment. Sometimes we understand justice to be a kind of tit-for-tat system in which equal rewards, equal punishment, and equal treatment are handed out regardless of context or circumstance. But *biblical justice* is rooted not only in laws and in right and wrong; it is the foundational value in a good social order, governed by equity and restoring what is imbalanced, broken, or imperfect. The call to do justice in Micah 6:8 is not simply a call to distinguish right from wrong. **God's justice is restorative, not retributive, and it emerges from a place of deep abiding love.**



For us to do justice, we need to not only identify the rules but also pursue systems that provide equity, healing, and harmony. We do this by consciously seeking to create and establish justice. We begin by seeing injustice in the world and in our own actions. We examine our own hearts and feelings, expressing compassion for those suffering from injustice. We speak up, using our voices as individuals and as community members, to amplify the voices of those who are oppressed. And finally, we commit to doing the work of changing systems and practices that perpetuate and perpetrate injustice. We cannot do this alone. We need each other to clarify and focus, and we need the guiding love of God to move us always in the direction of grace and lovingkindness. It is indeed what God requires of us.

* Household Check-In

Supplies: Poster board or large paper, stickers

The four parts of doing justice are what we see, how we feel, what we say, and what we do. Make a household check-in chart with a square for each member of the household. If you live by yourself, consider doing this with friends or using this as a journaling/ self-reflection opportunity. Create a grid with four columns labeled See, Feel, Say, Do, and a row for each person's name. Add stickers or notes when people share in one of the columns. Use it regularly to check in and have conversations about how we do justice in our everyday lives.

* House Rules

Supplies: Poster board, markers or crayons, stickers

The Bible tells us to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.” The 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:35–40) tell us some of the rules for doing that. Make a set of family rules for your house. At the top of a piece of poster board, write IN THIS HOUSE. Work together to create some household rules, such as “we share,” “we forgive,” and “we do our chores.” When you’ve come up with all the House Rules, write them on the poster board and decorate it. Display your House Rules where everyone can see them. Each week or so, check in on the rules. Are they easy or hard to follow? Do they help point you towards justice?

Hands-On Justice Work

What are the ministries in our church or organizations in our community that seek to welcome, feed, clothe, and care for those who are on the margins? Contact them and learn what and how your family can help. Here are ideas of who to partner with:

- **Just Lunch:** our lunch for neighbors experiencing food insecurity on the last Saturday of each month. Contact Mike Skidmore at miskidmor@lexingtonky.gov to learn more.
- **First Fixin's:** our annual holiday meal drive. Learn more about how you can support this important ministry at www.fpclex.org/fixins.
- **GreenHouse17:** an advocacy agency committed to ending intimate partner abuse in families and the community. We support GH17 through First Fixin's and Angel Tree. See the church website about how to participate in those ministries, or visit www.greenhouse17.org to learn more about how you can support GH17.
- **Step-by-Step:** a holistic program working to empower young single moms. We support them through First Fixin's and Angel Tree. See the church website about how to participate or visit www.sbslex.org to learn more about how you can contribute to the work of Step-by-Step.
- **Kentucky Refugee Ministries:** resettling refugees and immigrants in our community. We support KRM through Music for Mission; visit www.kyrm.org for additional ways you can contribute to their work.
- **The Nest:** preventing the abuse and neglect of children and adults by supporting families in crisis through education, counseling, advocacy, and support. We support The Nest through First Fixin's and Music for Mission; visit www.thenestlexington.org to learn more about how you can contribute to the work of The Nest.

Prayer

O God, help us each day to look around, to have compassion for others, to speak up when we need to, and to do the work you want us to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Fair Is Fair, Isn't It?

Read aloud *Fair Is Fair, Isn't It?* by Dr. Lindsey L. Wilson or watch the YouTube video of a reading of the book (bit.ly/FMFairIsFairWilson) with others. (Remember: bit.ly links are case-sensitive!) After the story, have a conversation about what things you see that may not be "fair" but are aligned toward justice and meeting needs.

Balm in Gilead

Supplies: *Internet-connected device, soothing fragrant lotion*

"Balm" means comfort, or healing. In Bible times, Gilead was a place where a soothing medicinal perfume was produced. In our times, a balm is a soothing lotion. This song is a spiritual, dating back to the mid-1800s. It was the song of a people who yearned for balm, for relief from suffering, and for healing. Listen to the YouTube video "Balm in Gilead" (bit.ly/FMBalm) with others and share some of the lotion by rubbing it onto each other's hands. How did it feel to receive that balm? What other songs bring comfort to people?

Conversation Starters

- What is the difference between everyone getting the same thing and everyone getting what they really need? How does that work in your family?
- Are there songs you sing or play to soothe and comfort? What are they?
- What do you learn about justice from the Bible or in worship? Does God always give us what we want? Does God always give us what we deserve?
- If you could fix one injustice in the world, what would it be?
- Name and describe some people you see who work for justice. What do they do and how do they do it?
- Think of some justice heroes from comic books, movies, or stories. What makes them heroes?

For more ideas & resources about **Do Justice**, visit FPCLexFormation.org/Justice