

# A Time Called... Good Friday

*One Christian lamented the poor attendance of church members to her church's Good Friday worship: "If we can't even bear the cost of one hour this day to hear the story of Jesus' death, how can we begin to consider – how can we begin to fathom – the cost he bore for us, and how deeply we are loved?"*

## Tracing the Historical Roots of Good Friday

In the early church this was a day for a fasting in preparation for the great festival of Easter. By the late 4<sup>th</sup> Century a service existed with readings from Isaiah, and Hebrews, and the Gospel accounts of Jesus' trial and death, as well as prayers and devotion to the cross. Later, this service could include the Lord's Supper. Protestant churches might draw on traditions of the Three Hour Devotion (readings and meditations on the seven last words of Jesus, focusing on the three hours of his dying). Others may use a reading of and meditation on the Gospel accounts of Jesus' death with silent reflection. The Lord's Supper is not generally included in these services.

## Finding Meaning In the Tradition

On this dark day, we need not pretend that we don't know that Jesus will be raised. But, giving the events their own day, reminds us that new life comes at great cost and by way of a cross – this cross. In the same way baptism is not just about rising with Christ, but dying and rising with him. Part of our baptismal identity is given to us today, giving us the courage to face the pain, suffering, and injustice in our lives and in our world. Seeing those things through the Good Friday story, we glimpse the promise of Easter.



## Questions for Personal Meditation

1. What troubles me in this story? Could it become a prayer?
2. How do I "get into" this story and make it part of my faith story?
3. What questions would I like to ask God about this story?
4. What questions does God ask of me?