

## Preparation for S134 —Freedom and Independence

This session finds us nearing the celebration of Independence Day. In honor of the theme of Independence and the aspiration of freedom that our nation was founded on, you are invited to reflect on the spiritual qualities associated with these rather lofty ideals. Spend some time considering the following questions in preparation for our next session.

You are invited to bring a favorite short quote on freedom or independence to the session if you so choose. We will be doing a “reading around the circle” of many different quotes and short readings as part of our worship service, but there will also be a number on hand in case you forget or choose not to bring one.

1. For what freedom in your life are you most grateful?
2. What does freedom mean to you?
3. Is there an area in your life where you don't feel free? What, if anything, do you feel you could do to change that?
4. Try writing your own declaration of independence, if you wish, from whatever you feel binds you. It can be as brief as a few sentences or a paragraph to as long as you wish to make it. Some ideas to get you started:
  - *the Declaration of Independence states, “...we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”* What truths do you hold to be self-evident?
  - *“...and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them,...”* What do you feel entitled to and by whom? What would equality look like?
  - *“...we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”* What, if anything, might you be willing to pledge your life for? What about your wealth? What value do you place on honor?
5. Most people in the United States live in relative freedom compared to people in some nations around the world. Are there groups of people you feel still lack freedom in the U.S.? Do you feel free?
6. Is there a particular place or time that you associate with or have felt great freedom?
7. When you think of freedom, do you tend to focus on political and social liberties, the human/natural setting sense of the word, or on spiritual or other uses of the word? Does your view of freedom change how you view an aspect of your daily life?