June Meeting Primer

An optional read-ahead and quick reference, about 10 minutes

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Guiding Question: What contribution is mine to make?

At the Meeting

- **Today's reading: Cicero, *On Duties* 1.20–23**. We'll bring it into discussion question 4.
- **The shared case:** An even split of a dinner bill benefits some diners more than others. Everyone can reason from these facts, whether or not they have done the weekly practice.

Doing Your Part

An even split of the dinner bill looks simple. You had steak and drinks, and a friend ordered soup. The arrangement saves effort, but it also asks your friend to carry part of a cost you chose.

June brings justice into action. We check the proposed response, choose words that fit, make a correction without contempt when needed, and look for useful work that is ours to do. At the table, that contribution might be as modest as asking about the split and helping work it out.

The Justice Check makes the relevant reasons harder to overlook. It cannot settle every difference by itself. A fair response needs attention to the people, any earlier agreement, and what the circumstances allow. Once you choose a response, carry it out and adapt when new facts warrant a change.

The readings connect justice with good faith, correction, and contribution. *For ancient texts, use any translation you like.*

Optional Reading (about 8 minutes)

1. **Cicero, *On Duties* 1.20–23** (3 minutes) This is the passage we'll read together. Why does Cicero discuss both doing harm and failing to protect someone when protection is possible?
2. **Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 10.4** (1 minute) What manner of correction does Marcus ask for, and what should the other person be helped to see?
3. **Seneca, *On Benefits* 2.1** (2 minutes) What can the timing and manner of help do to make it easier to receive?
4. **Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 9.16** (2 minutes) Where does Marcus locate the good of a rational, social being? What would that ask of a good intention at the dinner table?

Think About

The shared case is enough to participate. We explore reasons and alternatives before using the application steps.

- What might convenience leave out of the proposed split?
- How could your words make a fair arrangement easier to reach?
- How could fairer judgment and wider concern help you act justly here?

Application at the Meeting

Application after discussion: The Justice Check. Use the steps once to test the understanding developed together.

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1. **Honest.** Am I giving a truthful account of the facts and my reasons?
2. **Fair.** Could I defend how this shares benefits and burdens?
3. **Reciprocal.** Would I accept this standard if our places were reversed?
4. **Common life.** What does our shared life require me to do now?
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Compare two defensible arrangements and explain what would justify each. Use Honest → Fair → Reciprocal → Common life once on one proposal. Try the words aloud and identify the next act. The friend's reluctance to make a fuss can then test whether apparent agreement settles fairness.

The rehearsal tests how a reason guides speech and follow-through. It does not demonstrate completed conduct outside the meeting or guarantee everyone's approval.

Key Terms

For reference during the meeting. No need to memorize these.

Justice (*dikaiosynē*). Knowledge of what is due to others. Consider benefits, burdens, risks, and responsibilities.

The Justice Check. Four questions about honesty, fairness, reciprocity, and common life. The checklist is a modern teaching aid grounded in Stoic principles.

Good faith. Truth and reliability in promises and dealings. Include what has actually been agreed and what people reasonably rely on.

Reciprocity. Applying a standard you could accept with positions reversed. Relevant differences can justify different shares.

Appropriate action (*kathēkon*). An action for which a reasonable account can be given in the circumstances. Agreement alone cannot establish that it was just.

Disciplined speech. Words governed by truth, responsibility, timing, and purpose. A clear correction can preserve the other person's standing.

Deliberate Service. Choosing and attempting a bounded contribution that answers a real need, with regard for roles, capacity, and permission.

Reservation. Recognizing that completion also depends on circumstances while committing to a good use of choice.

The Discipline of Action. Training fitting conduct and follow-through. June's question is *How can I contribute to our common life through just action?*