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## **“Know Austin, Love Austin: Introduction”**

Thank you for engaging the “Know Austin, Love Austin” audio tour guide resources. We hope these are a blessing to you toward knowing God's heart for aspects of brokenness in our city and embracing His heart, all through understanding aspects of Austin's complex history. Before you access these resources, we wanted you to know a few things beforehand that we think will help you to engage this content well. Last summer, the elders of The Austin Stone felt led to call us as a church to listen, learn, lament, and love in our statement on racial injustice and reconciliation. “Know Austin, Love Austin” is intended to facilitate listening, learning, and lamenting, in particular. The following will help you do that well.

The first is that these are meant to be accessed on-site. Learning must be more than just the transfer of information. My encouragement to you would be for you to drive up to the site—this could be alone or with some friends. Walk around before listening to the files. Pray, take in where you are, then find a place to engage the content quietly. Each file concludes with a prayer. Take your time and pray. Pause if necessary or journal to wrap up. This content wasn't made with quick consumption in mind.

Second, the amount of personal narrative may surprise some of you. This is intentional. Rather than offering in a recorded format what you may be able to find on a Google search or in a city archive, we wanted you to hear the history from the perspective of an Austin native, directly linked to the history you'll be hearing about. Instead of just taking in the factual history of each historical site, how has that history impacted families and community members living there? What comes to mind for someone when they drive past the site? What do they feel? We've partnered with Javier, founder and CEO of Black Austin Tours, a PhD candidate at UT. And we're so excited for you to listen to his story and get to know him. Javier is a fifth-generation Austinite with direct ties to the history that he'll be presenting to you.

Third, you'll notice us using the term “justice” a lot as we offer a Christian perspective and invite you to prayer. Since it's a term widely used with diversion intent, we thought we'd briefly share what we mean as we use the term. For some, to advocate for justice comes with a particular political or economic philosophy or solution. From our biblical perspective, justice is equal regard and treatment for all image-bearers of God. And doing justice, as we're called to in scriptures, is advocacy for individuals in communities who are or have been regarded as less valuable than other people in some way. This can be current or under-addressed injustice in history with lingering impact in the present day. While a spectrum of political or economic philosophies may exist within the church, the conviction to have a heart of mercy and to do justice is non-negotiable.





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Last, you'll notice the heaviness and tone of lament in the content. A couple of things on that note. As a majority-culture community, we may be unaccustomed to this. But lament is appropriate and even worshipful where Christ followers encounter aspects of reality that should not be and that are misaligned with God's heart. To press into Black history in the United States as a believer, is to lament toward hope and creative inspiration for God-honoring efforts of justice.

Thank you for taking the time to engage these resources. Again, we hope they are edifying for you and your community. Join us in praying that God uses these resources in a powerful way in our city.

