



40 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

IN OUR FATHER'S STEPS

FAIRFAX CHURCH OF CHRIST

OCTOBER 1-NOVEMBER 10, 2018

INTRODUCTION

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord

(Jeremiah 29:11-14a, ESV)

WHY DO THIS?

We strongly believe that God continues to direct His church in a very unique and powerful way. Scripture teaches us that prayer and fasting are two of the primary means God uses to guide His people. We also firmly believe that God shares His will and purpose for our lives and His church as His Spirit speaks to us through the Bible. With these truths in mind, the goal of our 40 Days of Prayer & Fasting (from various things) is two-fold:

1. To draw near to God so that He can draw near to us (James 4:7-8) and transform us from the inside out so that we may better love and serve Him, and
2. To ask God for guidance, direction, and clarity for His family and leadership here at Fairfax Church of Christ

Scripture (Deut. 4:29; 2 Chr. 7:14-15; Jer. 29:13-14a; James 4:8) shows us that when we, as God's people, embrace this process (drawing near and seeking God) in submission and humility, then we prepare ourselves for discerning His will and His vision for our lives and for His family at Fairfax. May we encounter the living God through our prayers and fasts these next 40 days!

WHY 40 DAYS?

There are many examples throughout the Bible of God's people seeking His guidance and will over a period of 40 days:

- Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights praying and fasting with God before bringing the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel (Exodus 24:18; 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9).
- Moses spent another 40 days and 40 nights praying and fasting with God so that God would forgive the Israelites sins and would not destroy them (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; 10:10).

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- 12 men, by God's command, went into Canaan for 40 days to spy out the land and seek the Lord's direction before entering the promise land (Numbers 13:25).
- Elijah flees to Mount Horeb (Sinai), where He spend 40 days and 40 nights and God comes in a gentle whisper to guide him (1 Kings 19:8-13).
- Jonah shared the word of God to the people that God would destroy them in 40 days and the people believed in God and repented and fasted (Jonah 3:4-5).
- Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness fasting with His Father before entering into ministry (and before His temptations)(Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:2).

While there is no biblical mandate for forty days and nights, there is biblical significance to spending an intentional and concerted time with God to seek His will and guidance through prayer and fasting. Therefore, we are asking all of our Fairfax family to devote the next 40 days and 40 nights to ask God to reveal His will to us for our lives and for His church family. To ask Him to transform our lives and give us a course to take in the coming days, weeks, months, and years (should He choose to give them to us). To ask Him to give us the courage and boldness to be faithful to His guidance and direction.

WHY THE THEME *"IN OUR FATHER'S STEPS"*?

When I (Phil) was a boy, I remember the big snowfalls we would get in Ruidoso, NM every winter. I was always excited because I knew that following the snowfall would be a family trek. My dad would bundle all of us up in warm clothing and then we would set out for a hike in the new fallen snow. Now, these snows would often be deep snows of 2-4 feet. So, before our walk, my dad would tell us, "Now, the snow is really deep and you can get stuck in it. So, I'm going to go ahead and make foot holes for you. As long as you walk in my steps you will be ok. But, if you go outside of Daddy's

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

(Psalm 139:1-10, ESV)

INTRODUCTION

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.

(2 Chronicles 7:14-15, ESV)

foot holes, then you may get stuck in the deep snow or lose sight of me. Please follow in my footsteps."

That image still sticks in my mind today. We have a Father that deeply loves us and wants us to join Him on a journey. He instructs us to take some time to prepare for the journey (put on some warm clothing and good hiking boots). He then tells us how we should walk: in His footsteps. He has willingly walked out before us to show the way and has even provided the placement of our steps. Yet, He lets us know that if we choose to go our own way then we may find ourselves stuck or we may even lose sight of Him.

For a moment, take a look at the cover image and consider that God has already gone out before us and is simply wanting us to follow in His footsteps. Our job right now is to prepare for the journey. We need to clothe ourselves and put on the proper hiking boots through a time of prayer and fasting so that we can fully hear our Father's voice and step in our Father's steps.

We often spend so much time talking and sharing our own thoughts that we neglect stopping for a time to listen to our Father's voice. We can be so busy talking to each other that we lose sight of the Father and begin to forge our own trail which may lead to getting stuck or getting lost. Over the next forty days we ask you to join us in a time of listening to and relying upon the Father. To hear His voice and seek clarity of vision for the journey He has already mapped out for us. Please join us as we seek a word from God and prepare to walk "In Our Father's Steps".

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will include daily scriptures to read and reflect on, questions to consider, prayer suggestions, and things to fast from. All of these are simply suggestions to prompt us all to

INTRODUCTION

be still enough and attentive enough to hear the voice of our Father. Through this time of focused prayer and fasting, we will consider some of the following :

- Adoring and exalting the greatness of God
- A better understanding of God's character
- A deeper thirst for the living God
- Our attentiveness, faithfulness, and persistence in prayer
- Personal spiritual growth
- Confession of sins and struggles
- Seeking and extending patience and forgiveness
- Building unity as the body of Christ
- Wholehearted obedience and devotion to God
- God's provisions and care in our lives
- Godly vision, guidance, and wisdom

In order to make the most of this time with God, we provide the following suggestions to help guide you through the journey:

- **Prepare your heart** – Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you and draw you near to God. Open your heart and life to God and His leading instead of trying to tell Him what to do. Enjoy a closeness and fellowship with the Almighty that allows Him to be in control, instead of you trying to take control.
- **Schedule time** – Set aside time each day for reading, praying, and preparing for your fast.
- **Stay focused** – Many of us are easily distracted during our time with God. Remove distraction as much as humanly possible and quiet your heart and spirit to hear the Father's gentle whisper. Focus on developing a deep and intimate relationship with God which requires your attention.
- **Meditate** – Focus your heart and mind through the repetition of prayers, scriptures, and even simple thoughts that lead you gently back to God.

Let me hear in the
morning of your
steadfast love, for in
you I trust. Make me
know the way I should
go, for to you I lift up
my soul...Teach me to
do your will, for you are
my God! Let your good
Spirit lead me on level
ground.

(Psalm 143:8, 10, ESV)

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But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

(Deuteronomy 4:29, ESV)

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord...

(Jeremiah 29:13-14a, ESV)

- **Enjoy silence** – Find time to be still and know. Let go and allow God to be present in your life.
- **Confess** – Share with God your sins and struggles in detail. He already knows them, but you need to talk openly with Him about them for healing and growth.
- **Ask God** – Ask Him to guide you and open you up to His leading. Ask Him to supply your needs as only He is sufficient to do so.
- **Fast** – Learn the beauty of giving things up and emptying yourself so that God can fill you with His ever-abiding presence and power ([See Appendix B](#)).
- **Journal** – Attempt to keep a journal of your 40-day journey to record what the Holy Spirit is telling you and how He is growing you through the process. We have provided space for you to journal each day.
- **Be thankful** – No matter what you hear (good or bad, according to your opinions or in direct conflict, etc.), thank God for hearing your prayers and considering your thoughts. Thank Him for giving you life and allowing you to live it for Him. Thank God!
- **Use resources** – We are providing you with multiple resources throughout this 40-day period (journal, instructions, texts, emails, Facebook, Echo Prayer app, etc.: [See Appendix A](#)). Use these resources as a guide and help when you get stuck. Remember, you are not alone, and we are in this together as a family.

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT?

Expect to hear God. God will speak to us in various ways if we are willing to listen. 1 John 5:13-15 says, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him."* God is eagerly awaiting to spend this time with us. Please join us as we walk together "In Our Father's Steps".

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

Before we begin to listen, we must reflect on who God is...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for who He is
- Confessing your sins and struggles and need for God's grace and forgiveness
- Asking the Holy Spirit to draw you near to God to hear His voice
- Being still long enough to listen as He speaks to you

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- How great is God?
- Does God's greatness grip you with awe, or are you more amazed by the works of man?
- Meditate and reflect on Psalm 8 and Psalm 145 and consider:
 - What do you learn about God's greatness in these Psalms?
 - How should you respond to God's character, as directed by these Psalms?

CONCLUSION

Spend some time in prayer reflecting on God's greatness. Simply spend time adoring God. These are expressions of how much you adore Him. Praise Him for His power, majesty, creation, love, etc. Respond by thanking Him for His greatness and holiness.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things we hold on to. Fasting is a way to allow that purification to take place by letting go of something for the day (or longer). This first day of the 40-day period we encourage you to fast from food for a 24-hour period. During this time, when hunger comes, pray to God that He become your one true sustenance and that you rely solely upon Him for all things. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

DAY 2

WEEK 1 – OCTOBER 1-7, 2018

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

GOD'S GREATNESS AND OUR WEAKNESS

To truly listen to God's voice, we must understand our limitations in light of His greatness...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His greatness
- Recognizing your many limitations in comparison to God's great power
- Asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten the eyes of your heart (Eph. 1:18) so that you may see God clearly
- Listening for the God's voice in the gentle whisper (be still)

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- How have my own limitations often limited God's greatness?
- Paul reminds us that we are just pots that hold a power not our own (2 Cor. 4:7). His greatness is intended to be made known through us. How can you focus any "greatness" found in you on God and not yourself?
- Meditate and reflect on Isaiah 40:18-31 and consider:
 - What does this passage say about God's greatness and your limitations ?
 - How does knowing this inform your next 40 days of prayer and fasting?

CONCLUSION

Pray for God to strengthen you when you are weak and work His greatness through you (in spite of your limitations). Thank God for how He works His power in you even when you are weak.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day two, we encourage you to fast all day from comparing yourself with others. Instead, compare yourself with God and find humility in the notion that there really is no comparison. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

GOD'S GREATNESS AND OUR HUMILITY

How we approach God matters. Do we approach Him with arrogance and self-centeredness, or with humility and reverence?

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His goodness, grace, and mercy
- Confessing any pride and selfishness
- Asking the Holy Spirit to confront you in your pride
- Meditating (repeating over and over) on the following prayer, "*Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner.*"

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on 2 Chronicles 7:14-15; 1 John 5:13-15 and consider:
 - Has my pride gotten in the way of my relationship with God and being able to hear His voice?
 - Do I pray more according to my will or God's will?
- Meditate and reflect on David's prayer in 2 Samuel 7:18-29 and consider:
 - How did David approach God in His greatness?
 - How might David's prayer influence your prayers?
 - As you consider the blessings in your life, how can you more fully acknowledge God's greatness at work?

CONCLUSION

Spend some time in prayer before God in humility. If you can, get on your knees. Recognize your place before God and pray for a more willing and devoted heart toward Him. Thank Him for all that He does through you to demonstrate His greatness and glory.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day three, fast for one day from being right. Instead, focus on knowing that only God is right and works His righteousness through you. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 4

WEEK 1 – OCTOBER 1-7, 2018

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

THIRST FOR GOD

Spiritual transformation begins when we long for a closer walk with God...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His great love and desire for relationship
- Confessing your desire for other people/things over God
- Asking the Holy Spirit to bend your heart toward God rather than self
- Recognizing God's presence in your life through love

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- What do you thirst for? What do you desire most?
- Have you ever had something to drink or eat only to find yourself still thirsty or hungry? Imagine never having to thirst or hunger again. God promises this through Jesus Christ, but what you thirst or hunger for is your choice.
- Meditate and reflect on Psalm 63:1-3; John 4:13-14; and Matthew 5:6 and consider:
 - Do I thirst for God over all things?
 - Do I really believe that Jesus can quench my thirst and fill my hunger?
 - What does my life reflect as my greatest thirst or hunger?

CONCLUSION

Pray that God gives you a deeper longing for Him and that He reveal Himself to you. Ask Him to help you put your relationship with Him above everything. Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day four, we encourage you to fast all day from social media. Instead, focus on Tweeting, Facebooking, Snapchatting, etc. with God only for a day. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

LONGING FOR GOD'S WORD

Longing for and knowing God's Word is an essential part of genuine and lasting spiritual growth and godly wisdom/revelation...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for sharing His heart through His Word
- Confessing any negligence of attending to His Word
- Asking the Holy Spirit to open God's Word to you
- Meditating (repeating over and over) on the following prayer, "*O put into my heart to understand and to discern, to mark, learn and teach, to heed, to do and to fulfill in love all the words of instruction in Your Word.*"

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- How do you see God's Word? As a textbook or love letter?
- Meditate and reflect on Psalm 119:36-40; Jeremiah 15:16; Matthew 4:4 and consider:
 - Do you long for material gain and/or worldly wisdom more than God's Word and His wisdom?
 - Is God's Word a delight to you or something to read only when necessary/needed?
 - Do you find yourself living on bread alone or God's Word alone? What do you need to change?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer asking God to give you a deep longing for His Word. Ask God to reveal Himself to you through His Word and help you apply the truths He reveals. Ask Him to use His Word to show you areas in your life that need to be surrendered to His will.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day five, fast for one day from movies, music, television, YouTube, etc. Instead, focus on reading God's Word when you feel the urge to view something. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 6

WEEK 1 – OCTOBER 1-7, 2018

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

EXAMINE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD

Spiritual transformation only happens when we acknowledge who we are before the Almighty God...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His patience with your spiritual growth
- Confessing your desire to be your own god over Him
- Asking the Holy Spirit to reveal and confront your sinfulness in order to make you holy
- Listening to God as He exposes where you are most unChristlike

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Do you examine yourself and your faith in God? If so, what have you discovered recently?
- Meditate and reflect on Psalm 51:10-12 & 139:23-24; Philippians 1:9-11; and 2 Corinthians 13:5 and consider:
 - Do you want God to create in you a new heart or are you satisfied where you are at?
 - Spend time examining your heart and life. Is Christ in you, or simply something you do on Sundays?

CONCLUSION

Pray that God search through your life and reveal any sin and ask Him to help you be honest with Him about your sin. Ask Him to fill you with a deep longing for holiness (being set apart for Him) and hate sin. Ask Him to help you surrender the sins you hold onto to help you live more faithfully to Him. Thank Him for love and help.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day six, we encourage you to fast all day from complaining. Instead, focus on being grateful that God chooses to allow you to have life and to live it for Him rather than receiving the punishment we deserve. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

EXAMINE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Spiritual growth is not done in isolation, but through relationships. We must seek to build and/or restore healthy relationships...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving you relationships in life
- Confessing any gossip, resentment, etc. that you are holding toward others
- Asking the Holy Spirit to soften your heart toward others
- Listening to God as He shares which relationships need building and/or restored in your life

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Are there relationships in your life that are hindering your growth and relationship with God (i.e., holding resentment, talking against or being talked against, gossip, anger, etc.)?
- Meditate and reflect on Ephesians 4:25-27; John 13:34-35; and Colossians 3:12-15 and consider:
 - Do you have unresolved conflict with others that is keeping you from loving God and others fully?
 - Do you love others as Christ has loved you?
 - Do you regularly put on love in order to build unity, or do you tend to argue and fight to get your way?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal to you any broken relationships and show you what part you have had in the brokenness. Ask Him to help you in mending those relationships and forgive and love as Christ has forgiven and loved you. Ask Him to give you the courage to reach out and seek peace.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day seven, fast for one day from gossip and arguing. Instead, focus on forgiving and loving as Jesus forgave and loved you (both in thought and in action). (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 8

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 2 – OCTOBER 8-14, 2018

PRAYING BY FAITH

Allowing God to guide us requires us to pray by faith. A prayer offered in faith (rather than demand) opens us to God's leading...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His presence in your life through prayer
- Confessing any struggles you might have in praying to Him
- Asking the Holy Spirit to lead you to “pray in the Spirit”
- Listening to God as His Spirit shares His agenda with you

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Do you pray by faith or by sight? Or, do you pray “in the Spirit” or do you pray “in the flesh”?
- Meditate and reflect on Ephesian 6:18; Jude 20; James 4:2-8; and Romans 8:26 and consider:
 - What is praying “in the Spirit” as opposed to praying “in the flesh”? It is praying according to God’s will and agenda, not our own. Praying in the flesh means that we rely on human ability and effort to carry the prayer forward. Praying by faith means resting upon God’s ability to accomplish what we pray for and that it is for His glory and not our own.
 - What keeps you from praying in the Spirit/by faith?

CONCLUSION

Pray that God help you to pray more by faith and in the Spirit. Ask Him to help you pray with anticipation and trust that He will answer. Pray in a way that makes you vulnerable to the prayer's answer, even if it is not by your will or agenda, but by His alone.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day eight, we encourage you to fast all day from only talking to God when you need something. Instead, focus on praying throughout the day with the thought of “not my will but Yours.” (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)”

LIMITED BY UNBELIEF

Prayer is a very powerful tool for God's people. Yet, our unbelief can often limit our prayers and God's work in this world...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for working beyond your limitations
- Confessing anything you have done to limit God by your unbelief. Sharing what you believe God cannot do and surrender those things to Him.
- Asking the Holy Spirit to expand your faith and limitations
- Listening to God as exposes your areas of doubt

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Jesus was limited in what He could do by people's unbelief. When we think too small and too skeptically, we can often hold God back. Faith is always a mix of belief and unbelief, but it always trusts that God can do all things.
- Meditate and reflect on Mark 6:1-6 & 9:14-24 and consider:
 - Do you think you have kept God from working in your life due to unbelief?
 - Do you often feel like the father in Mark 9, between belief and unbelief?
 - Consider your perspective on prayer on how it might be limiting God. How might you change it?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer inviting God to grow your faith in prayer. Ask Him (like the father in Mark 9) to help your unbelief and to expand your perspective on prayer and His ability to act in your life.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day nine, fast for one day from searching Google for answers. Instead, focus on asking God for help and trusting that He will. Also, seek guidance from others, not the internet. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 10

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

WEEK 2 – OCTOBER 8-14, 2018

BEGIN WHERE YOU ARE

To deepen our prayer life and trust in God, we have to begin where we are instead of jumping to where we are not...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His patience with our spiritual growth
- Confessing any motives that are self-focused (in life, our families, in the church, etc.)
- Asking the Holy Spirit to shift your motives towards God
- Kneeling before God in humility

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on John 3:1-10; 7:45-52; and 19:38-39 and consider:
 - Nicodemus' faith journey was not all at once, but in steps. His faith and reliance upon Jesus grew over time and so does ours. We are all works in progress.
 - Our motives, attitudes, and faith will grow as we pray and surrender ourselves to God. You may question if your motives are pure or self-focused, but don't let that keep you from praying. Start!
- So, where are you at in your prayers with God? Are your prayers focused on you or on God? God will meet you where you start and move you to where He wants you to be. You simply need to trust Him and allow Him to move.

CONCLUSION

Pray to God asking Him to meet you where you are and take you where He wants you to be. No matter where you are now, ask Him to purify your motives - for you, your family, and His church family.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day ten, we encourage you to fast all day from junk/fast food. Instead, focus on feasting on God's Word today as a pure source of nourishment. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE PRAYER

The prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective. But who is righteous before God? God makes us right before Him and therefore empowers our prayers towards effectiveness...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for making our prayers powerful and effective
- Confessing your unrighteousness (sin) before God
- Asking the Holy Spirit to grant you power and effectiveness
- Trusting God to give you power and effectiveness in prayer

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on James 5:13-18 and Galatians 2:20 and consider:
 - James tells us that the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Do you feel your prayers are powerful and effective?
 - Who is righteous before God? Only those who give themselves fully to God and are cleansed through the blood of Jesus are righteous. So, when we are in Christ, Christ lives in us and through us and works His power.
- Are you aware that God can work His power and effectiveness through your prayers for you, your family, and His church? Do you pray with such confidence? Or, do you approach prayer with timidity and doubt?
 - How can God grow you in this area?

CONCLUSION

Trust that your prayers are powerful and effective, asking God to make this evident.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day eleven, fast for one day from sharing your opinion. Instead, allow God to share His opinion with you and work His power through you. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 12

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 2 – OCTOBER 8-14, 2018

PRACTICING SHALOM (PEACE)

Our prayers are often filled with anxiousness as we want God to do what we want instead of what He wants. Pray with Shalom (Peace).

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His peace that surpasses understanding
- Confessing any anxieties that you have tried to control
- Asking the Holy Spirit to grant you God's peace
- Resting in the hands of the Father rather than your control

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on John 14:25-27; Philippians 4:4-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7 and consider:
 - From what or where does your anxiousness come? Anxiety comes from our struggle with control. When we can't control things, we feel anxious.
 - According to these passages, how should we approach anxiousness?
 - How would you define the peace of God?
 - What does God promise you in these passages?
- Peace is not the absence of struggles or conflict but is the presence of God through them. How can you feel peace through your times of prayer with God?
- How would your prayers change if you prayed with peace for you, your family, and the church?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God asking Him to take your anxiousness (need to control) away from you so you can be at peace with how He works out His will in your life, your family, and the church. Trust and have peace.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twelve, we encourage you to fast all day from being picky. Instead, take things as they come today and thank God for giving them. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

SURRENDER THROUGH PRAYER

"Not my will, but Your's Lord." Can we truly say those words, or do we try to force God's hand to our will? True prayer leads to absolute surrender...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His love and plan to save you
- Confessing your attempts to bend God to your will
- Asking the Holy Spirit to help you surrender to God
- Listening to the areas that God is asking you to surrender to Him

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Jeremiah 10:23; Luke 9:23-25; 22:39-46; Romans 12:1-2; and James 4:7 and consider:
 - How must Jesus have felt to know what His Father's will was and what part He played?
 - Jesus asked, "Father, is there any other way?" Have you ever felt that way?
 - Are you willing to be a living sacrifice and say, "Not my will but Yours Lord"?
- Know this with certainty: God's way is always better. God's way is better for you, your family, and His church. Do you believe that and are you ok with it?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer asking God what you need to surrender in order to conform your will to His will. Consider praying this prayer with another who will support you and help you in your surrender.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirteen, fast for one day from road rage. Instead of trying to bend other drivers to your will, surrender your right and let them in and display God's kindness. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 14

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 2 – OCTOBER 8-14, 2018

LETTING GO AND TAKING HOLD

Before we can take hold of God's hopes and dreams for us, we must let go of our comforts, securities, and aspirations...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His great plans for a hope and future
- Confessing all the comforts, securities, and aspirations that you hold on to
- Asking the Holy Spirit to grant you freedom
- Allowing God to take hold of you as you let go of things

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- A trapeze artist decides when they are willing to let go of the swinging bar. They have to let go before they receive the assurance that they will be caught. At that point, there is no turning back. They fly high until they feel the hands of the one receiving them.
- Meditate on Hebrews 11:1-3; Romans 8:24; 2 Corinthians 4:18; 2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:8 and consider:
 - We hold on to a lot of things in life and swing back and forth. To what things are you holding on?
 - Are you willing to them let go, even before feeling the Father's hands?
 - Do you walk more by faith or by sight? How might you change that? What is holding you back?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God asking Him to identify in your life what you are clutching in your fists, preventing you from letting go. Ask God for the courage to let go and fly.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day fourteen, we encourage you to fast all day from checking your phone when you are with people. Instead, let it go and be attentive to them as you would God. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

KNOWING WHOSE YOU ARE

We must remember that as disciples of Jesus Christ we no longer have claim over our lives: God does. But what does that mean?

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for being present in and attentive to your life
- Confessing ways in which you hold claim over your life
- Asking the Holy Spirit to help you relinquish your claim on your life and allow God to truly claim you as His own
- Listening to God as He whispers His love and jealousy (in a good way – He wants your attention) over you

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; and Romans 14:7-8 and consider:
 - God has laid claim over you. What does that mean?
 - God has put His seal on you (branded you). It is unmistakable whose you are. Rest in that blessing.
 - There is nothing you can do to make God stop loving you and there is no depth He will not go to save you. God has made you His own. Will you make Him your all?
- Remember a time you felt alone. Now, know that you are never alone. God is always with you and He makes Himself known through His earthly family, the church.

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer asking God to help you release your claim on your life and allow yourself to fully be His. As you pray, feel God's loving arms around you as a Father holds on to His child.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day fifteen, fast for one day from calling others dumb, stupid, moron, etc. Instead, remember they are an image of God and may hold God's seal. Pray. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 16

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

WEEK 3 – OCTOBER 15-21, 2018

GOD IS CALLING YOU

Because God has laid His claim on us, He calls us to action and has something for us to do. What is God calling you to do?

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His plan for your life
- Confessing all the ways in which you have perhaps run from what God is calling you to do
- Asking the Holy Spirit to help you clearly hear your calling
- Listen to God's voice as he attempts to share His call to you

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- You now know that God lays claim over your life. He loves and accepts you, but He also has a plan for you. He has something for you to do. Too often, we spend most of our time letting God know what we need instead of asking God what we need to do for Him.
- Meditate and reflect on Romans 8:28; Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 1:15; and 2 Timothy 1:8-12 and consider:
 - You can recognize your calling from God as it is about and for Him, not about and for you.
 - "Working out your salvation" (Phil. 2:12-13) means allowing God to do His work through you.
 - What do you feel God is calling you to do for Him?
 - What do you think God is calling our church family to do?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God asking Him to give you the eyes to see and the ears to hear His calling for you and for our congregation. Ask Him to help you (and our church family) to be faithful to His calling.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day sixteen, we encourage you to fast all day from listening to music, podcasts, radio, etc. Instead, use that time to hear God's call. Use the silence to hear His voice. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

NONE OF SELF AND ALL OF THEE

Being a disciple of Christ means knowing that it is not about you, but all about Him. Answering God's call means taking on the nature of a servant...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving Jesus as an example of a servant
- Confessing ways you want to be served rather than serve
- Asking the Holy Spirit to soften you to the needs of others
- Listening to God as He shares how to make your life about Him rather than about you

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Our culture teaches us that life is all about you. You take care of you and get the most out of this life for you. We often bring this attitude to church and make it all about us. But God tells us something different. Our lives, what we do in and out of church, is all about Him.
- Meditate and reflect on Philippians 2:3-11; Romans 12:11; Mark 10:45 and consider:
 - How hard is it for you to make your life about God rather than about you?
 - Do you find it hard to serve rather than be served?
 - Is going to church about you or about Him? What do you need to change (attitude, actions, etc.)?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer thanking God for giving you the church as a place to focus on Him rather than on you. Ask Him to change your perspective and approach to Him (to none of self and all Him).

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day seventeen, fast for one day from being selfish. Instead, serve God by serving others in some way today. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 18

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 3 – OCTOBER 15-21, 2018

THE GREATEST THINGS

There are a lot of good things that we can choose to do in life. But living for God means focusing on "The Greatest Things" for Him...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His example of how to live, as Christ
- Confessing the ways in which you haven't focused on Jesus
- Asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to great things
- Opening yourself up to God's most important things

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- "The Organizing Principle" is well known in the world as that principle that gives direction to goals, decisions, and activities in schools, organizations, businesses, etc. This is the principle that provides stability when everything else is crumbling around you. For us, Jesus is our "Organizing Principle." He is the way we keep ourselves, our families, our church rooted and stable. We do this by focusing on what He focused on: The Greatest Things (the Greatest Commands and the Great Commission).
- Meditate and reflect on Philippians 3:8-16 and consider:
 - Is this too much for you?
 - Is it actually possible to completely orient your life around Jesus and what was most important to Him?

CONCLUSION

Spend time praying to God asking Him to help you reorient your life around Jesus Christ (your "Organizing Principle") and to help you focus on The Greatest Things: Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day eighteen, we encourage you to fast all day from caffeine. Caffeine is good, but pure water is greater. Drink water today symbolizing drinking Jesus' living water. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

LOVE GOD

One of "The Greatest Things" we must focus on as disciples of Christ is to Love God above all things...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for loving you before you took a breath
- Confessing ways you don't show God love
- Asking the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with love for God
- Listening to God whispering to you, "I love you."

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Mark 12:29-30 and consider:
 - When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was He responded with "Love God." Why do you think this commandment is greater than all the rest?
 - Our nature is to love ourselves first, God second (or third or fourth or fifth). Loving God has to be our most important focus, otherwise, we will focus on ourselves. How can you focus on Loving God first in your life?
 - What is the difference between loving and liking God? Which do you tend to do?
 - What keeps you from Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer thanking God for loving you. Ask Him to help you learn to love Him more and more every day. Ask Him to teach you the true meaning of love over simply liking Him.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day nineteen, fast for one day from being jealous. Instead, desire loving God over everything else. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 20

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 3 – OCTOBER 15-21, 2018

LOVE OTHERS

Another of "The Greatest Things" we must focus on as disciples of Christ is to Love Others as Jesus Christ loved us...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for showing us how to love others (Jesus)
- Confessing the moments that you have not shown Jesus' love to others
- Asking the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with Christ's love
- Opening yourself up to loving your enemies

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- When asked what the Greatest Command was, Jesus responded with "Love God," but quickly followed with the second that was like it: Love Others. We cannot love God and hate others as it is in conflict with the character of God.
- Meditate and reflect on Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31; Luke 6:27-36; and John 13:34-35 and consider:
 - It's easy to love those who love us back. But what about those that don't love you at all?
 - Remember, God loved you even when you were His enemy (Romans 3:23 and 5:8).
 - What does it mean to love others as Christ loved?
 - Loving others as Christ loved you is the mark of a true disciple. Do you have that mark? Does our church? What must we do?

CONCLUSION

Spend time praying to God and ask Him to help you learn how to love others. This is not in your nature so ask God to break down any barriers that keep you from loving as He loves.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty, we encourage you to fast all day from being angry. Instead, focusing on loving that person(s) in spite of what they have done. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

MAKE DISCIPLES

The last of "The Greatest Things" is to be about our Father's business and go and make disciples of Jesus Christ...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for including us in His plan to disciple others
- Confessing times when you have not had a passion to share your faith with and disciple others
- Asking the Holy Spirit to motivate you to be about your Father's business and make disciples who make disciples
- Opening yourself up to those who God sends your way

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Disciples of Christ make other disciples of Christ (this is the Great Commission). It is in our DNA as His followers and we have the honor of being about our Father's business.
- Meditate and reflect on Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:17; and 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 and 5:18-21 and consider:
 - It is humbling to consider that God includes us in His mission. We are called not only to help people come to believe in Jesus, but then aid them in their walk to become like Christ. This is our commission.
 - What are you doing to be Christ's ambassador?
 - How can you be more intentional about making disciples?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to speak in and through you to others.
Ask Him to send individuals your way whom He needs discipled.
Ask God to move our church family into deeper discipleship.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-one, fast for one day from laziness. Instead, work hard to seek out who God wants you to disciple. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 22

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 4 – OCTOBER 22-28, 2018

CHURCH REVIVAL

Doing "The Greatest Things" happens often (mostly) in the context of a healthy, loving, and productive church family...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His family (the church)
- Confessing when you have spoken or acted against the bride of Christ rather than building it up or equipping it
- Asking the Holy Spirit to guide our church family to God's calling and purpose for us
- Listening to the role God needs you to play in our church

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Ephesians 3:17b-19 and 5:21-32; Ezekiel 37:4-6 and consider:
 - How might our church family become more rooted in God's love and filled with His fullness? What part might you play in that?
 - We cannot hate or speak against that for which Jesus died. But we can strengthen and equip it for what it was called to do. How can you help strengthen and equip our church family?
 - Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy concerning the dry bones. By God's word, life is breathed into the lifeless. How does God need to breathe life into (revive) you and our church family?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to pour out His Spirit on our church and revive us. Ask Him to fill us with His Spirit and strengthen our commitment to His mission. Ask Him to raise up more laborers.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-two, we encourage you to fast all day from negativity. Instead, focus on being positive and thankful to God for all He has done. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

REVIVE US, OH LORD – ELDERS/SHEPHERDS

A church will not rise any higher spiritually than those who are leading it. Pray for our elders/shepherds...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving us our elders/shepherds
- Confessing times when you may not have spoken well of or supported our elders
- Asking the Holy Spirit to lead our elders on the path He wants them to lead us on
- Listening for ways in which you can encourage and support our elders

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Acts 20:28-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; and Hebrews 13:7, 17 and consider:
 - Our elders have been appointed by God and given a great task. Their role is never easy and at times overwhelming.
 - What can you do to help their role be a joy?
 - Do you spend more time approaching the elders with groaning or with support and encouragement?
 - How can you help our elders maintain the right spiritual priorities in their challenging role?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to bring our elders close to Him. Ask Him to surround them and their families with His angels and remind them of His great love for them. Ask God to lead our elders so that they may lead us in His ways.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-three, fast for one day from judging people. Instead, see them as Jesus sees them—sinners in need of God’s love, grace and mercy (just like you). (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 24

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 4 – OCTOBER 22-28, 2018

REVIVE US, OH LORD – MINISTERS

A church will not rise any higher spiritually than those who are leading it. Pray for our ministers...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving us our ministers to help us grow
- Confessing times when you may not have spoken well of or supported our ministers
- Asking the Holy Spirit to lead our ministers to encourage, equip, and empower you towards faith and works for God
- Listening for ways in which you can encourage and support our ministers

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; and Ephesians 6:19-20 and consider:
 - Our ministers are called to set an example for you in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. That call can bring a great deal of pressure on them and their family. How can you help them in their call?
 - Our ministers are instructed to teach the message, rebuke and correct when necessary, encourage with patience, and fulfill their ministry. How can you encourage them in their role?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to pour out His Spirit on our ministers and revive them. Ask Him to give them a deep thirst for Him and surround their families with protection. Ask Him to let them feel His love and encouragement.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-four, we encourage you to fast all day from sarcasm. Instead, focus on speaking encouraging words to others. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

REVIVE US – MINISTRY COORDINATION TEAM

A church will not rise any higher spiritually than those who are leading it. Pray for our Ministry Coordination Team (MCT)...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving us leaders who are willing to serve
- Confessing times when you have not followed others well
- Asking the Holy Spirit to guide our Ministry Coordination Team to keep us focused on our vision as a church family
- Listening for ways in which you can encourage and support our Ministry Coordination Team

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Our Ministry Coordination Team works tirelessly to keep our vision, mission, and ministries moving. However, we often don't even know they exist or what they do.
- Meditate and reflect on Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; and Acts 6:3-4, 7 and consider:
 - The word "deacon" in Scripture simply means "servant". God calls all of us to serve but there are some servants in our family who take on greater responsibility in order to help lead our family.
 - How can you assist our Ministry Coordination Team in their task to keep us on target and moving?

CONCLUSION

Spend time praying to God and ask Him to fill our Ministry Coordination Team with His Spirit. Ask Him to remind them of His great love for them. Ask God to focus our MCT so that they can keep us focused on His ways.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-five, fast for one day from unconstructive criticism. Instead, focus on asking how you can help _____ more. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 26

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 4 – OCTOBER 22-28, 2018

REVIVE US, OH LORD – MINISTRY LEADS

A church will not rise any higher spiritually than those who are leading it. Pray for our ministry leaders...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving us servants who lead our ministries
- Confessing ways you have not supported our ministry leads
- Asking the Holy Spirit to equip and empower our servant leaders
- Listening for ways in which God may be calling you to lead a ministry

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Spirit-empowered leadership of the ministries in our church family is crucial for moving God's vision forward.
- Meditate and reflect on Jeremiah 1:6-8 and Acts 4:29-31 and consider:
 - Our ministry leads work hard to provide ministries that will help us grow in our faith and live it out. Often, they struggle knowing what to do or how to do it. But they know they need to be doing something. They feel called by God to lead others.
 - Spend time encouraging one ministry lead today in the work they are doing and ask how you can help.

CONCLUSION

Ask God to pour out His Spirit on our ministry leads and encourage them. Ask Him to give them a deep thirst for Him and give them a vision for their ministry. Ask Him to grant them wisdom to lead the ministry faithfully.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-six, we encourage you to fast one night from your pillow. Instead, remember servants have no place to rest their heads. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

REVIVE US, OH LORD – MINISTRIES

A church cannot move without feet to carry it. Our ministries are the feet of our vision and mission. Pray for our ministries...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for the opportunities He gives you to serve
- Confessing times when you have neglected serving (in whatever way) God in ministry
- Asking the Holy Spirit to guide you to a ministry you can participate in and contribute to
- Opening yourself up to God's call to ministry

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Ministries are vehicles for growth in and service to God. Our church family participates in and contributes to many different ministries.
- Meditate and reflect on 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Ephesians 4:11-16; and Joshua 24:14-15 and consider:
 - How are you engaging in ministry regularly?
 - In what ministry or ministries are you a part of in our church family?
 - What ministry would you like to be a part of to use your God-given gifts best?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to bless our ministries. Ask Him to guide them and open up any potential ministry areas that may be overlooked. Ask the Holy Spirit to move through our ministries to the point that they shake our community for the kingdom of God.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-seven, fast for one day from hitting the snooze button. Instead, consider waking up immediately to the ministry opportunities God is presenting to you. Do it today, not later. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 28

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

WEEK 4 – OCTOBER 22-28, 2018

THE MEASURE FOR SUCCESS

Churches often struggle with how to measure success. Success for God is not always measured in numbers, but more in faithfulness...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His church and its purpose
- Confessing times when you may have focused on the wrong measure of success in the church
- Asking the Holy Spirit to lead our church to focus on God's picture of success for His family
- Opening yourself up to God's plan for success

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Success in the church has often been related to worldly measures: buildings, bodies, and budgets. The higher the numbers, the greater success. But God measures success differently. God focuses more on faithfulness, transformation, and replication.
- Meditate and reflect on Matthew 25:31-46 and consider:
 - How do we measure success in our church family?
 - Where might we need to focus more?
 - Our successes should be measured in becoming more like Jesus, loving God and others, and making more disciples. What part are you playing in this?

CONCLUSION

Ask God to help us lay aside any human measure of success and integrate God's measure more fully into our church family. Ask Him to bless us richly in these efforts and to show us the way.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-eight, we encourage you to fast all day from checking bank accounts, retirement, stocks, etc. Instead, focus on spending time with God as your true source of worth. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

TRUSTING GOD

A church cannot move forward without faith and trust in God. Pray that our church family will trust God and move by faith...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His ability to accomplish all things
- Confessing times when you struggle trusting God
- Asking the Holy Spirit to increase our faith and trust in God
- Opening yourself to whatever God is doing with our church

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- God is calling our church family to love Him, love others, and make disciples. But, do we have what it takes? Can our church family become more of what God is calling it to be?
- The answer is, "YES!" God is faithful and will provide everything we need to do what He asks of us.
- Meditate and reflect on Philippians 4:10-20 and consider:
 - Do you trust that God will supply all our needs to move forward as a church family?
 - How much (or little) do you believe that God will equip our congregation with what He needs to accomplish His will and purpose for us?
 - What is holding you back?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God with boldness and ask Him to significantly increase your faith and trust in Him. Ask Him to dramatically increase the faith and trust of each member of our church family so we are open to His call and purpose for us.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day twenty-nine, fast for one day from telling people how to do things (unless it is a part of your job). Instead, allow them to do it their own way instead of yours. Trust that God can work without your control. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 30

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

This image shows a vertical rectangular sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no text or other markings on the page.

WEEK 5 – OCT. 29-NOV. 4, 2018

OUR HEART'S DESIRE OR GOD'S?

Churches move and grow when they focus on God's desires and not their own. Pray that our hearts want what God desires...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving you freedom to choose
- Confessing times when your choices were for you over God
- Asking the Holy Spirit to open your heart to God's desires
- Listening to God's heart as He expresses His desires to us

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Psalm 37:3-7 and Proverbs 3:5-6 and consider:
 - Does God really give us all the desires of our heart? Yes, when our desires become His desires. Those who take delight in God over themselves will align their desires to God's desires.
 - When we trust in God and lean on His ways, He will always make our paths straight. Do you trust in God and lean on His ways, or do you direct your own path toward your own desires?
 - How will our church family know the difference between our own desires and God's desires?
- To discern between the two, pay attention to your desires as you pray. Are they for you or are they for God?

CONCLUSION

Pray this prayer: Oh Lord, as we submit ourselves to you as Lord of our lives, help us to discern what are our own desires and what are Yours. Help us to lean on Your ways over our own.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty, we encourage you to fast all day from thinking about what you want. Instead, focus on what God wants for you and our church family. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

CONSISTENT WITH GOD'S WORD

God's Word is one of the primary ways to determine whether we are seeking our own desires or God's...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for revealing His heart to us through the Bible
- Confessing times when we don't turn to God's Word first
- Asking the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to God's Word
- Listening to God's voice spoken through the written word

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- It is possible for God's people to follow their own desires over His purpose and mission for them. When our desires are not shaped by Christ's mission, then we can be led down wrong paths.
- Meditate and reflect on 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 14-17 and consider:
 - God's Word was breathed out to lead us to God's desires and equip us of every good work. When we don't spend time in the Bible, we will be prone to make our own opinions and walk our own paths.
 - Is our vision and mission consistent with Scripture?
 - Is our vision and mission compatible with the ministry and teachings of Jesus?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to grant us insight into His Word and how it speaks to our developing vision and mission. Ask Him to align our direction forward to His will as written in Scripture.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-one, fast for one day from reading secular books, magazines, newspapers, etc. (unless for school or work). Instead, read God's Word and seek guidance through its pages. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 32

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

WEEK 5 – OCT. 29-NOV. 4, 2018

IS OUR GOD TOO SMALL?

Churches grow stagnant and complacent when the God they follow is "man-sized." How big is the God we follow?

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising the name of the Lord!
- Confessing times when you have made God too small
- Asking the Holy Spirit to expand the limits of your knowledge of God's power and greatness
- Kneeling before our great and awesome God!

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- J.B. Phillips once wrote a book called "Your God is Too Small." In his book, he talks about how God's people have limited God to the point of making Him "man-sized." As humans, we have a tendency to make God in our image rather than the reverse.
- Meditate and reflect on Psalm 148 and consider:
 - What size box might you have placed God in?
 - Are your fears based on a big God or small faith?
 - Is our vision limited to what we think we can accomplish on our own, or is it open to what God can do in His greatness?
- Any vision or direction that we can accomplish merely by human ability is too small!

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to eliminate any way in which we are unconsciously (or consciously) limiting His plan for us. Ask Him to help us stop thinking too small and lead us to greater things.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-two, we encourage you to fast all day from wearing your favorite color. Instead, wear a color that is different and opens you to new possibilities. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

GOD HAS HOPES AND DREAMS TOO!

What happens when a church does not limit their God and instead lives into His hopes and dream?

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His hopes and dreams for us (His Will)
- Confessing times when we mistake our hopes and dreams for God's
- Asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to God's Will
- Listening through pray to how our church family can live into God's hopes and dreams

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- God's Will (His hopes, dreams, desires, and wishes for the world) is not as elusive as often thought.
- Meditate and reflect on Ephesians 1:3-10 and consider:
 - According to this passage, what is God's Will (His hopes, dreams, desires, and wishes for the world)?
 - To reconcile and unite all humankind to Him through Jesus Christ, His Son.
 - What does it look like when a church family lives according to God's Will?
 - What does our church family need to do in our community in order to live according to His Will?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God asking Him to make it clear to us what our unique opportunity and purpose is in our community to reconcile and unite people unto Him.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-three, fast for one day from daydreaming of your own hopes and dreams. Instead, dream of how we can live according to God's Will in our community. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 34

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

This image shows a vertical rectangular sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it is resting on a surface.

WEEK 5 – OCT. 29-NOV. 4, 2018

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Churches that live according to God's Will live out the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for establishing His Kingdom through Jesus
- Confessing times when you have not lived a Kingdom-life
- Asking the Holy Spirit to help us understand what Kingdom-living truly is
- Opening yourself up to a Kingdom-life

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Matthew 6:9-15 and consider:
 - Did Jesus really mean it? Can God's Kingdom be lived on earth now, or only when He comes again?
 - God wants His Kingdom (His reconciled and united children) of peace, justice, forgiveness, grace, and love to be enacted right here and now through His body/family.
 - How can our church family demonstrate Kingdom-living to the community around us?
 - How should this be reflected in our vision and direction forward?

CONCLUSION

Spend time in prayer asking God to help us focus on Kingdom-living as a church family. Ask Him to help us discover what our family can do to help His Kingdom come more fully in our community.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-four, we encourage you to fast all day from sweets or desserts. Instead, focus on knowing that there is nothing sweeter than living and working in God's Kingdom, now and forevermore. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

IN THE ZONE

Churches that live "in the zone" live into God's calling for them even when they want to give up...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for His strength through struggle
- Confessing times when we allow our weaknesses to keep us from living “in the zone”
- Asking the Holy Spirit to give us strength and courage
- Opening yourself up to pushing through the pain

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Running a marathon is no easy task. Part of the race is trying to reach your “peak.” Your “peak” is when you get to that place when you feel you can run more and can push through the pain. Before the “peak” you always want to quit, to give up. Yet, when you reach your “peak” you know you are “in the zone” and can keep going.
- Meditate and reflect on Matthew 11:28-30 and consider:
 - When our church family is aligned with God’s Will, then we are “in the zone” and running at our “peak.” But, before we get there, we hit a time of deep struggle and want to give up, to quit.
 - What must we do to make sure we push through the struggle to get “in the zone” as a church family?

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to lead our church family to our “peak” so we may live “in the zone.” Ask Him to lead us into the future with courage, strength, and faith to His glory and not our own.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-five, fast for one day from procrastination. Instead, do today what you were planning to put off till tomorrow. Don't quit! (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 36

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

WEEK 6 – NOVEMBER 5-9, 2018

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

Churches that move forward into God's vision are endowed with His strength and courage...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for never leaving us alone
- Confessing times when you have allowed fear and anxiousness to keep you from doing God's will
- Asking the Holy Spirit to provide our church family with the strength and courage we need to move forward
- Listening to God's words of encouragement and strength, "Be strong and courageous...for I am with you!" (Josh. 1:9)

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Joshua 1:1-9 and consider:
 - Discerning God's vision is one thing but having the strength and courage to live it out is another. God's vision for us may seem expansive, scary, daunting, and even unpleasant at times. However, it will also be exciting and fulfilling.
 - Are you (we) willing to face the challenges?
 - What scares or frightens you?
 - How might we gain strength and courage to fulfill God's purpose for us?

CONCLUSION

Pray and ask God to give us the strength and courage that we need to move forward as a church family.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-six, we encourage you to fast all day from “playing it safe”. Instead, do something today that scares you, but that you’ve always wanted to do. Remember that God uses people who are willing to take risks for Him. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

STEPPING OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Churches that are living out God's vision are willing to step out of their comfort zone and go and do whatever God calls them to...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for including us in His great plan!
- Confessing times when we are unwilling to do what God asks of us
- Asking the Holy Spirit to push us to greater things
- Opening yourself up to God's call for our church family

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Acts 16:6-10 and consider:
 - Often, we find ourselves heading in a direction and then God changes it. It is then that we must be willing to heed His call and adjust our course.
 - Are you (we) willing to step out of our comfort zone to listen to God's call?
 - God's call is always for the purpose of spreading His Word and sharing His love. That is the test! Is our vision and direction passing the test?
 - Remember, there are people in this community who need us to discern God's vision and to move forward. The need to hear God's Word and feel His love. They are waiting on us!

CONCLUSION

Pray to God and ask Him to help our congregation remain focused on His mission rather than on our comfort. Ask Him to help us answer His call (wherever and whatever it may be).

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-seven, fast for one day from calling anyone (except for work). Instead, be still and listen for God's call. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 38

WEEK 6 – NOVEMBER 5-9, 2018

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

TIME TO WORK

Wherever God takes us, we must be willing to get to work and do it with all our heart for the Lord...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for giving us the opportunity to work for Him
- Confessing times when we have been lazy and self-focused
- Asking the Holy Spirit to motivate us to action
- Obeying God's call to action

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Meditate and reflect on Colossians 3:17, 23-24 and consider:
 - There is a time for everything (Ecc. 3:1-8). A time to pray and fast and a time for action. We are nearing the time for action. Are you motivated by the challenge, or crippled with fear?
 - When we find ourselves crippled with fear, we fail to live into the wide-open, spacious lives God has called us to. Listen to what Paul said to the Corinthians
 - *Dear, dear Corinthians, I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn't fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren't small, but you're living them in a small way. I'm speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively! (2 Cor. 6:11-13, The Message)*
 - Are you ready to live openly and expansive, or do you like your fences?

CONCLUSION

Spend time praying to God and ask Him to motivate us all to roll up our sleeves and get busy with the work He is calling us to do.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-eight, we encourage you to fast all day from being lazy. Instead, do some sort of exercise today and focus on being called to action for God. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

Time is fleeting. Here today, gone tomorrow. Churches that are moved by God's vision make the most of the time they have...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for us this moment (it's the only one we know we have)
- Confessing times when we have wasted time for ourselves
- Asking the Holy Spirit to help us make the most of this time
- Hearing God above the noise of the world and its desires

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- Time seemed to go by so slowly as a child. "Are we there yet?" "Is it almost over?" "How much longer?" Common questions we all probably asked. In your adult life, time seems to fly by and we often feel like we let it slip away.
- Meditate and reflect on 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 and James 4:13-17 and consider:
 - Knowing that time goes by so quickly and we don't know how long we have; what contribution are you (we) making to God's Kingdom right now?
 - Paul tells the Colossians, "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time." (Col. 4:5) Do you feel you are making the best use of the time right now for the glory of God? Is our church?

CONCLUSION

Ask God to give you and our church family a compelling vision and the resources needed to carry it out day by day.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day thirty-nine, fast for one day from checking the time. Instead, live as if you don't have the next minute, hour, day for the glory of God. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

DAY 40

Journaling

What is God saying to you?

[illegible]

WEEK 6 – NOVEMBER 5-9, 2018

NAMING, CLAIMING, BEING, DOING

The time is approaching to name our vision forward, claim it as our own, become what God has created us to be, and do what He has called us to do...

PREPARATION

Begin in prayer by...

- Praising God for the past 40 days for prayer and fasting
- Confessing times when you struggled and made it about you
- Asking the Holy Spirit to share with our leaders and our members God's vision forward for us
- Listening to God's voice in these final moments of prayer and fasting

REFLECTION

Contemplate and reflect on these thoughts and questions...

- The time is approaching where our vision forward will be named, and we will need to claim it as our own. Once we claim the vision, we will need to live into it. Then, we will be called into action by God. Are you ready?
- Meditate and reflect on Acts 2:14-21 and 8:26-38 and consider:
 - Are you prepared to embrace God's vision and calling for our church family? For you?
 - Have you felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit during these 40 days to a "desert road"? What did He say?
 - Thank the Lord for what He has done and shared with you during these past 40 days. Reflect on how He has grown you. Thank Him for deepening your relationship together and for the love He has shown you.

CONCLUSION

Spend time praying to God and asking Him to help you commit to the leading of the Holy Spirit for our church family (even before you know what it looks like). Pray that you will be open to the Spirit's nudging and obedient to what He calls you (us) to do.

FASTING

In order to hear God, we often need to allow His Spirit to purify us from the things to which we hold. For day forty, we encourage you to fast all day from food one last time. Instead, rely on God for all your needs. (See Appendix B for more on fasting.)

APPENDIX A

RESOURCES

Each Sunday, a printed prayer guide will be made available at worship services (as well as online at www.fxcc.org). This guide includes daily prayer exercises, scripture readings, and something to fast from each day. It also includes a margin area for journaling through the process.

We will also use other avenues to encourage and equip you throughout this process so that you can engage with God and others during these 40 days:

- **Email** – Subscribe to our 40 Days mailing list (contact church.office@fxcc.org or subscribe through the ebulletin)
- **Text Message** – Text **40Days** to **31996** for daily prayers and scriptures
- **Social Networks** – Follow our Facebook Page and Instagram (@fairfaxchurchofchrist)
- **Echo Prayer App** – Echo prayer app is a free app that helps you keep track of your prayers, reminds you to pray throughout the day, and lets you share requests with others.
 - Download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store
 - Create Login
 - Once logged in, click the 3 Lines in the top left corner to open the menu
 - Click feeds
 - Click search for a feed
 - Type in "Fairfax Church of Christ"
 - Click "40 Days of Prayer & Fasting"
 - Click "Follow" and you're all set!

APPENDIX B

FASTING

The Old Testament and New Testament people of faith both practiced the discipline of fasting. Scripture indicates they fasted in order to obtain strength during times of mourning, mercy in moments of distress, spiritual focus during times of repentance, or simply to set aside time in order to enhance their prayer life and draw closer to God. The idea behind fasting is to set aside those things that sustain you, demand your attention, dominate you, or control your thoughts in your daily life in an attempt to replace them (for a certain period of time) with a focus and reliance upon God.

Those who practice a food fast replace their time of eating with a moment of prayer or meditation toward God. Christians today continue this practice in hopes of replacing their reliance upon earthly food for physical sustenance with the bread of life for spiritual sustenance. The scriptural approach to food fasting places God in the center of our thoughts and actions while setting aside the physical blessing we are prone to depend upon. In many respects, we are setting aside those blessings that God has provided (upon which we develop an unhealthy dependence) and focus, instead, on the Creator from which all things come.

As is the case with most spiritual disciplines, there are incorrect attitudes, reasons, and motives that can be associated with fasting. Fasting in order to manipulate God into answering prayer quickly, to encourage God in controlling other people, to reason with God as one lives in disobedience to His Word, or in order to draw unnecessary attention to oneself are all highly discouraged and result in a negative response from God. Fasting cannot be used as a means of manipulating God for holy or unholy purposes.

Consider these passages:

Matthew 6:16-18

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Isaiah 58:6-7

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of wickedness,

to undo the straps of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover him,

and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

10 Reasons Why We Fast:

1. When you fast, you tell God that you love Him more than _____(fill in the blank: food, media, etc.).
2. When you fast, you detach yourself from your psychological crutches on _____(fill in the blank).
3. When you fast, you make your return to _____(fill in the blank) a worship. You now see it as a gift from God.
4. When you fast, you display the Holy Spirit fruit of self-control and mastery over your physical body.
5. When you fast, you unite with the suffering of Christ who gave up all things for you.
6. When you fast, you learn to take up your cross to bear (any cross, not just the cross you choose).
7. When you fast, you learn to encounter any discomfort through prayer and reliance upon God.
8. When you fast, you connect with those who have not (food, technology, money, etc.).
9. When you fast, you are humbled before the Sustainer and Giver of life.
10. When you fast, your prayer and reliance upon God is strengthened.

Guidelines for Fasting from Food (Taken from Calhoun's Spiritual Disciplines Handbook):¹

- Don't fast when you are sick, traveling, pregnant or nursing. People with diabetes, gout, liver disease, kidney disease, ulcers, hypoglycemia, cancer and blood diseases should not fast.
- Don't fast if you are in a hurry and are fasting for immediate results regarding some decision. Fasting is not magic.
- Listen for a nudging from God to fast.
- Stay hydrated. Always drink plenty of water and fluids.
- If you are new to fasting, begin by fasting for one meal. Spend the time with God that you would normally be eating.
- Work up to longer fasts. Don't attempt prolonged fasts without guidance. Check with your doctor before attempting long periods of fasting.
- If you decide to fast regularly, give your body time to adjust to new rhythms of eating. You may feel more tired on days you fast. Adjust your responsibilities appropriately. (Expect your tongue to feel coated, and expect to have bad breath.)
- Begin a fast after supper. Fast until supper the next day. This way you miss two, rather than three, meals.
- Don't break your fast with a huge meal. Eat small portions of food. The longer the fast, the more you need to break the fast gently.

Spiritual Exercise

- Make a decision to fast from food for a specific period of time beginning with a predetermined date. Make the planned fast for a short period of time, such as lunchtime during the week. (As you practice this more, extend your time period of fasting.) Take into account any medical issues you may have. You may need to consult a physician prior to putting this discipline into practice if you are taking certain medications or battle certain illnesses such as diabetes, kidney diseases, etc. Plan to drink plenty of fluids and remain hydrated during the entire fast.
- During the time you are fasting, schedule a time in solitude whereby you can commune with God through prayer. Bring your Bible and read the following passages to yourself that reflect the thoughts

¹ Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 220.

of other people of God as they fasted: I Sam 7:6; Nehemiah 1:4; Esther 4:16; Acts 13:2-3; Isaiah 58:3-7; Matt 6:16; Luke 18:9-14; Ps 103:1-5.

- Relax and breathe in a restful manner as you commune with God.
- Praise God and thank Him for the protection He provides you and your family. Thank Him for delivering you from the evil one through His son, Jesus. Tell Him that you love Him and desire to be His servant and a true disciple of His son, Jesus. Thank Him for His mercy and compassion towards His creation. Confess to Him your sin and ask for His forgiveness. Ask Him to walk closely with you for the remainder of this day. Ask for the direction of His Spirit. Worship Him!
- As your fast continues through the day, think on God and look for evidence of Him around you.
- If you are fasting with another brother or sister in Christ, share your thoughts with each other.
- Before you break your fast, thank God for the food and other sustenance of life that He continually provides you.
- When beginning to eat again, consume small portions in order to avoid illness.

Reflection Questions

- Was the process of fasting an exercise in self-denial for you?
- Was your relationship enhanced with God as your focus turned away from food and toward God?
- What other things are important to you that could become a part of a fast in your life so that your attentiveness is shifted toward God?
- How do you think fasting could impact unity within the church?