

MAKING *ROOM*



40 DAYS OF PRAYER

MAKING *ROOM*



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Introduction

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

We believe that God directs His church in a very powerful and specific fashion. The disciplines of prayer and fasting are God-designed tools for this process. We also believe the indispensable role of the Word of God by which the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts. With these truths in mind, the goal of this 40 Days of Prayer is two-fold:

1. To draw nearer to the Lord so that we can experience the life-changing power of His presence; and
2. To seek His guidance, wisdom, and direction for our church and our leaders.

WHY THIS THEME?

As a church, we want to affirm God's goodness and generosity toward us. All of us are prodigal sons and daughters who have turned our backs to our heavenly Father and chosen to go our own way. But in His infinite grace and mercy God continually calls us to come back to Him because of His great love for us. Just as He has made room in His Kingdom for us through His Son, we also desire to make room in our own lives for God, for others, and for His will to be done in us and through us.

During these 40 days, we want to join together in declaring our dependence on the Lord. We want to make room for more of God in response to His movement in our midst. Above all, we want to enjoy simply living in His presence as His beloved children.

WHY 40 DAYS?

Throughout the Bible, there are numerous examples of Godly leaders who sought the Lord for guidance, provision, and refuge over a period of 40 days:

- Moses spent 40 days and nights with God before bringing down the Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:18).
- Twelve men spent 40 days exploring Canaan (Numbers 13:25) before entering the land God had given them.
- Elijah traveled for 40 days to meet with God (1 Kings 19:8).
- Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, committing His life to the Father before beginning His ministry on Earth (Matthew 4:2).
- As a **church**, we are celebrating our 40th birthday this fall (September 2016). Coincidence? I think not.

While there is nothing magical about the 40-day period itself, there is something very biblical and dynamic about the reality of deliberate and specific focus on prayer. When we set our hearts to seek the Lord and His will for our lives, He responds with power and grace. Our love and pursuit of God is deepened. The unity of our church family increases. Lives are forever changed. God gives direction to our leadership in a very clear way. Our church is transformed because we are transformed.

Introduction

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

This guide includes daily Scripture readings and reflection questions beginning Monday, September 12, through Friday, October 21. We encourage you to spend time praying through the prompts at the end of each daily reading.

Below are some suggestions to help you get the most out of this prayer guide and your time with the Lord:

- Schedule a specific time you will spend reading and praying through this guide each day. Remove any distractions so that you can better hear God's voice.
- Focus on learning about God's attributes.
- Tell God what you need to get through each day, even though He already knows before you ask.
- Evaluate your life by confessing and then removing the things that have come between you and the Lord.
- Spend more time than usual being quiet, listening and letting God's Word saturate your heart.
- Experience the power of fasting in some form, as the Lord leads, throughout these 40 days. (A fasting guide is included in the Appendix.)
- Keep a journal handy throughout these 40 days to document what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. (Tips for keeping a prayer journal are also included in the Appendix.)

WHAT TO EXPECT

What will happen to you over the next 40 days is for you to find out, but one thing is sure: God is eagerly waiting to spend time with you. We are excited about what He will do in our hearts as we pursue Him in this season of great expectation. We will see in Scripture that just as God is love, God is generous and is always making room for more of Himself in our lives, in our church, and in our city. In fact, His extravagant generosity flows out of His extravagant love.

And this is what we want for you over the next 40 days - to recognize God's wonderful gift of grace and generosity toward you. We hope you recognize how He can transform you and those you influence to become more like His Son. Paul described this kind of life in 1 Timothy 6:19 as the "life that is truly life."

Week 1: September 12-18

Making Room in Your Heart

It has long been the practice of God to ask His people to prepare their hearts before taking steps of faith. This week you will journey passages where Jesus teaches on what it means to partner with Him in **His** dream for the world. Before reading the text and responding to the questions, please take a few moments to pray. Read through the passage a few times and let it soak in. Invite the Holy Spirit to do His work in you.

Key Prayer Emphasis This Week:

Pray that your eyes would be clear and your ears would be open to all God wants to say and show you during this 6-week journey.

DAY 1: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

THE CALL OF A DISCIPLE

Read Luke 9:1-6. Everything about this mission says that disciples are to completely depend on God. Their authority comes from Him. He supplies their needs. Simplicity seems to be the rule and ministry the focus.

- What does Jesus give so you can accomplish what He is asking?
- Are you trusting in the power and authority of God or are you only looking at what you have to offer?
- What do you need to release to God to make this a reality?

Ask God to identify people or injustices around you where He is calling you to advance His work...to depend solely on Him for power and authority to make a difference right where you are.

DAY 2: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

THE FAITH OF A DISCIPLE

Read Luke 9:10-17. This miracle is unusual in that no reaction from the crowd is recorded - a detail showing that the lesson is for the disciples. Excited and exhausted, Jesus takes the disciples away. Their attempt at solitude does not last long.

- Is there an area in which you are using your own wisdom to figure out a solution instead of taking what you have to Jesus and seeing what He can do with it?
- What tangible needs are present among your family, neighbors, co-workers, and church? How might these needs be opportunities to imitate Jesus' compassion?

Seek God's wisdom with regard to whom you can extend compassion toward and ask for the courage to follow through.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

THE HEART OF A DISCIPLE

Read Luke 9:43b-48. Jesus' Kingdom is defined where the first shall be last and the greatest will be those who serve others for His sake.

- What types of issues in your life need to be addressed so that a heart of humility and service can be cultivated?

Confess where your desire to be great or to have a great life has caused you to miss out on opportunities to meet the needs of others, especially the weak and vulnerable.

Week 1: September 12-18

Making Room in Your Heart

DAY 4: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Read Luke 9:20-25, 57-62. In this passage, Jesus says if you want to follow Him, you must do two things: deny yourself and take up your cross daily.

- What steps do you need to take to become more focused on Christ and less focused on physical things?
- Where is Jesus asking you to practice imitating **Him** through sacrifice?

Ask God to give to you the desire to give up your way of living and make a daily decision to live for something greater.

DAY 5: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

THE PRAYER OF A DISCIPLE

Read Luke 11:1-10. Prayer is the anchor that keeps you tethered to the heart and will of God. Notice how persistence and boldness pay dividends.

- How can you pray more boldly for God's Kingdom to be revealed in your life?
- Is your prayer life aligned with God's mission and purposes?

When you pray, say the Lord's Prayer, bringing your desires, wants, and needs into alignment with His will for this world.

DAY 6: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

THE LOVE OF A DISCIPLE

Read John 13:34-35. Jesus says His followers' love for one another will be defined by the way He loved them. It's a self-sacrificing kind of love.

- What obstacles are hindering you from offering this kind of love to others?
- Who do you most need to express this kind of sacrificial love to right now?

Be obedient to the smallest promptings to extend love and kindness today to your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers.

DAY 7: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

REST & REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM GOD'S WORD, WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM GOD'S VOICE, AND WHERE GOD'S SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU.

Week 2: September 19-25

Making Room in Your Home

I continue to be amazed by how much of Jesus' ministry centers around food and eating. With a few simple shifts, our homes can become major hubs for ministry-changing the landscape in our neighborhoods. This week we will focus on making our homes places where life-change can happen.

Key Prayer Emphasis This Week:

Ask God to unify the families of Grace Point through the Making Room campaign and beyond. Pray that your family would grow closer to each other and closer to Jesus through this campaign. Pray for your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; that they would know and love God.

DAY 8: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

PLEASE, COME IN

Read Luke 19:1-10. Jesus notices people who are seemingly on the margins of society and invites them to eat with Him.

- How can your home be a place where everyone is welcome?
- What would it look like for you to connect over dinner with two or three families who are far from Christ? Who are those friends, co-workers, and neighbors?

Write their names down and ask God whom you should invite over for dinner from the neighborhood, and for the courage to make the call.

DAY 9: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

GOD MOVED IN

Read John 1:1-14. The Message translation of 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood." Jesus calls us to dwell well in the places we live.

- Do you know your neighbors by name?
 - Are your neighbors' lives better because you are there?
- Today, when you pray, ask the Lord to expand and deepen your love for your neighbors and neighborhood - the place you call home. Consider taking weekly prayer walks around your neighborhood to pray for your neighbors.*

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

THE ONE THING

Meditate on Galatians 5:14, "The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

- Who are the neighbors that God is moving you toward, nudging you to take that next step from acquaintance into relationship?

Ask the Lord to help you move toward friendship with your neighbors, going beyond simply knowing their names.

Week 2: September 19-25

Making Room in Your Home

DAY 11: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

PARTY ON!

Read Luke 5:29-32. Jesus loved a good party. He turned water to wine in Cana. In this story, Jesus is invited by a despised Jew named Levi who decided to throw a party and introduce his friends to Jesus.

- When was the last time you had a party at your house and invited your neighbors? Who could help you out?

Open your calendars and start planning your next bash. Invite your church and unchurched friends.

DAY 12: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

STAND AND BE AMAZED

Read Habakkuk 1:5; 2:1-3; 3:2; 3:19. Habakkuk is praying for Israel's deliverance from foreign oppression. He is waiting expectantly as a watchman in a watchtower for the Lord to deliver.

- Where does restoration need to happen in your neighborhood?
- What promises are you praying over your home and neighborhood?

Thank the Lord that His promises and mercies are new each day. Ask that He would do something truly amazing in your home/neighborhood.

DAY 13: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

STARTS AT HOME

Read Joshua 24:14-15; 25-26. In the Old Testament, the word for serve means "worship." There is a connection between service and worship. Joshua reminds us that serving God is connected to worship and it starts in the home. If you have children in your home, the greatest disciples you may ever make in your life are your kids.

- What is your plan for raising disciples in your home?

When you pray, seek God's counsel on how your home can be a place of worship and discipleship.

DAY 14: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

REST & REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM GOD'S WORD, WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM GOD'S VOICE, AND WHERE GOD'S SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU.

Week 3: September 26–October 2

Making Room in Your City

Praying for the mission of God in our city is one of the most beautiful ways we can join God in His renewal and restoration of our city. This week, let us focus on being people who are marked, not just by lives on mission in the everyday, but people who intercede daily and purposefully on behalf of our city. As Walter Wink once said, "History belongs to the intercessors."

Key Prayer Emphasis This Week:

Pray that God would give you a greater love for the people of Topeka. Pick a church besides Grace Point and pray that God's favor would be poured out on them.

DAY 15: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

A BROKEN HEART

Read Nehemiah 1. Nehemiah was a royal servant to the Persian king. When he heard the discouraging news about his hometown, his heart was broken.

- What breaks your heart about Topeka?

Pray that God would soften your heart to the cracks in our city...that He would open your eyes to the harsh realities that need to be filled with the hope of the Gospel.

DAY 16: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

THAT ONE THING

Read Nehemiah 6:1-4. Along with the residents of Jerusalem, Nehemiah rebuilt the city wall. He faced a lot of opposition. There were some who did not want to see the wall rebuilt. Four times Nehemiah says, "I am carrying on a great work and I cannot come down."

- What great work are you praying happens in Topeka?

Pray that God would use our church to carry on a great work which we cannot stop no matter the opposition or cost for His Kingdom and His glory.

DAY 17: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

PURSUE PEACE

Read Jeremiah 29:4-7. Stranded for 70 years in a strange land, God spoke through the prophet, Jeremiah, encouraging them to dwell well in the land and to pray to Him for the well-being of the city.

- Do you pray for the welfare of Topeka? When was the last time you prayed for the mayor, city council/officials, civil servants, businesses, churches, schools, etc.?

Spend time praying today (and the rest of the week) for God's blessing and will to be accomplished in our city. Pray for our city leaders, churches, pastors, businesses, and schools.

Week 3: September 26–October 2

Making Room in Your City

DAY 18: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

SACKCLOTH AND ASHES

Read Jonah 3. When the Word of the Lord reached the city officials and king, they declared a fast and repented by turning to the Lord.

- When you pray for Topeka, do you think about praying against the forces of evil and darkness?
- What obstacles do we need to pray for God to break down so that the Gospel can reach every corner of our city?

Pray that the Spirit would reveal the things that stand against the Lord and for wisdom and discernment to break through those barriers.

DAY 19: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

DRY BONES

Read Ezekiel 37:1–14. After 10 years in exile, and with Jerusalem destroyed, the people give up hope of home. The nation is dead. Or is it? Can God breathe new life into dead things?

- Where do you see restoration happening in Topeka?
- Is God calling you to join that work? What can you do to participate in that restoration?

As you pray, ask the Lord how you can lock arms with other people/organizations to breathe new life into lifeless places in the city.

DAY 20: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1

MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

Read Revelation 21:1–5, 22–27. What began in Genesis as a garden ends in Revelation as a city. In John's vision, there will be a day when God will dwell again with His people in perfect relationship.

- When you read, replace the word "city" with "Topeka."
- How does this change you? What difference does this make to you?

Pray that the Lord would increase your burden for our city. That your love and growth in the Lord would produce a desire to see others saved, and grow in their love and understanding of who God is and what He has done, and what He is doing.

DAY 21: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2

REST & REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM GOD'S WORD, WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM GOD'S VOICE, AND WHERE GOD'S SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU.

Week 4: October 3-9

Making Room for Mission

Jesus' final words to His disciples are the most important for us to live by today. His command to "go and make disciples" is the bedrock foundation for our church. It is the reason we exist - to lead others into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Nothing matters more to Jesus than making disciples. It is mission-critical to advancing His Kingdom revolution worldwide.

Key Prayer Emphasis This Week:

Ask God to begin confirming how you can participate financially in the Making Room campaign. Pray that God would send us a buyer for our current church facility. Ask God to give you a white-hot passion for the un-churched and de-churched in our community and around the world.

DAY 22: MONDAY, OCTOBER 3

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Read Matthew 28:16-20. When the disciples first see the resurrected Christ, some doubt. But their doubts are confronted with the authority Jesus has been given over Heaven and Earth.

- What does it mean to make disciples?
- Jesus' command is to go out and share the Gospel with people around you. What does this look like in your life?

Ask the Lord for boldness and wisdom. Begin having conversations with people in your life about Jesus.

DAY 23: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4

COMPASSION FOR THE LOST, THE LEAST, THE LONELY

Read Matthew 9:35-38. The two-fold ministry of every Christian is to share the Gospel ("Good News of Jesus Christ") and to minister to people's needs.

- How are you living out the two-fold ministry of Christ?
- Who are three people you know who could use some good news in their lives and a touch of compassion?

As you write down the names of people around you who could use some good news and compassion in their lives, ask God how you can specifically minister to those friends.

DAY 24: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5

MAKE DISCIPLES

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7. In a letter to his protégé, Timothy, Paul shares some comments on disciple-making. A disciple is a student of Jesus who applies His teaching in his or her life.

- How many generations of disciples are represented in this passage?
- One author says that making disciples is "transmitting a life of following Jesus to another. It involves training, mentoring, and teaching another, not to follow you, but to follow and obey Jesus." Who are you discipling?

Seek God's guidance in whom you can invest through a discipling relationship. Seek that person out. Pray for a Godly mentor to disciple you if you do not already have one.

Week 4: October 3-9

Making Room for Mission

DAY 25: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

ORDINARY IS EXTRAORDINARY

Read Acts 4:5-13. Peter and John are arrested for proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. The text says that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with courage in a very discouraging situation.

- Answer honestly, when people look at you, can they tell that you have spent time with Jesus?
 - If not, what are the obstacles in your way from spending time with Jesus?
- Boldness is directly proportional to time spent with Jesus. Take extra time to just be with the One who gave His life for your salvation. Ask Him to make you courageous.*

DAY 26: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

CONTAGIOUS JOY

Read Acts 13:44-52. Take note of the word “joy” in this passage. There is tremendous joy in seeing people hear a word from the Lord and respond in belief. Joy is a contagious catalyst for spreading the Gospel.

- Would you describe sharing the Good News of Jesus as a joyful thing for you? Why or why not?

The opposite of joy is misery and discouragement. Confess your misery before the Lord and ask Him to transform your heart to be more like His. Pray for joy in sharing the Good News.

DAY 27: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

BURNING PASSION

Read Acts 19:11-20. When the Gospel reached the city of Ephesus, the text says that many confessed evil deeds, and those who practiced witchcraft burned their scrolls publicly. I think the book-burning illustrates their burning desire to follow Christ.

- What are you white-hot passionate about?
- How does your passion align with the mission of God to spread the Good News and care for the lost, lonely, and hurting?

Fredrick Buechner once wrote, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Ask the Lord where this place is for you.

DAY 28: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

REST & REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM GOD’S WORD, WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM GOD’S VOICE, AND WHERE GOD’S SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU.

Week 5: October 10-16

Making Room for Generosity

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son." (John 3:16a) If we desire to be generous givers, we must know this passage intimately. This week, we will be reminded that God does not ask of us anything that He has not first done for us. God is the first and most generous giver, and He calls for biblical people to follow.

Key Prayer Emphasis This Week:

Ask God to provide every penny we need to see this vision become reality. Ask God to show up in miraculous ways through our collective generosity. Ask God to bless us, not so we can be blessed, but so we can be a blessing to others.

DAY 29: MONDAY, OCTOBER 10

A GENEROUS SPIRIT

Read Romans 5:5. The God who gives to us so generously has provided a pattern of giving for us to adopt. We give because God gave.

- What does your current giving reflect about your understanding of God's grace (unmerited favor) in your life?
- What are two ways God has been extravagantly generous to you?

Ask God to take your understanding of His grace and generosity to deeper levels.

DAY 30: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11

AN ABUNDANT GIVER

Read Malachi 3:10. This is the only passage in Scripture that challenges you to test God in the area of your finances by giving a full tithe (10%). Are you up for the challenge?

- If giving 10% seems impossible, seek God's wisdom in how you can be more generous in giving to His Kingdom work.
- If you already give 10%, seek God's wisdom in how you can give just 1% more than you're currently giving.

Thank God for the resources He trusts you to manage no matter how small or big, and seek His priorities in your giving.

DAY 31: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12

A GREAT HARVEST

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. Paul compares the perspectives of two kinds of farmers with that of a generous giver. The abundance of our harvest will be in direct proportion to the level of generosity with which we sow our seed. Great giving invites great harvests.

- Who is the most generous person you have ever known? What impact has he or she had on your life?
- What role does faith play in your ability to sow generously for an abundant harvest of Kingdom gain?

Ask God to provide role models in your life who demonstrate cheerful generosity.

Week 5: October 10-16

Making Room for Generosity

DAY 32: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

Read Acts 4:32-35. Luke is writing to an audience who knows little about giving. It is a world that is consumed with a self-centered perspective toward the poor and the needy.

- What are some tangible ways you can model the generosity of the early Christian church?

Pray God gives you many opportunities to be a blessing to the poor and those in need.

DAY 33: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

AN ENSLAVED HEART

Read Matthew 19:16-17, 20-22. Does Christ really want you to have (much less enjoy) wealth, or not? Looking into this man's heart, Jesus knew that his wealth owned him.

- Scripture teaches that we cannot serve both God and money. How does wealth tend to capture your heart like the rich young ruler?

Reflect on your relationship to money and possessions. What if Jesus were to put the challenge to you?

DAY 34: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

A PROSPEROUS LIFE

Read 2 Corinthians 9:11-15. When you begin to give on the basis of enthusiastic generosity, all sorts of things in life begin to fall into place, and the result is that glory and praise will be given to God.

- What does prosperity mean to you? How does generosity contribute to this?

Pray today God (not you) would be glorified in your giving.

DAY 35: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

REST & REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM GOD'S WORD, WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM GOD'S VOICE, AND WHERE GOD'S SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU.

Week 6: October 17-21

Making Room for What's Ahead

What I am about to say may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. Scripture reminds us over and over again that our days on earth are numbered; therefore, we are to make the most of each day giving thanks and glory to God. But, we also know that we still have a lot of work to do to share the Gospel and disciple more than 96,000+ in our city that are far from Christ. This week, I want us to focus on making room for what lies ahead as we embark on a new adventure together.

Key Prayer Emphasis This Week:

Ask God to give you eyes to see this project in the way He sees it.

Pray for wisdom, discernment, and courage for Grace Point's leaders, board members, and staff, as we move forward. Ask God for a spirit of unity to permeate everything we do as a church.

DAY 36: MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

LORD, SURPRISE ME

Read John 3:1-8. I cannot think of a better description of the way the Holy Spirit works. He is unpredictable and wild, which causes excitement or anxiety. The choice is yours. One thing is certain: if you follow Jesus, your life will be anything but boring.

- How would you describe how the Holy Spirit works in your life?
- What excites you most about the future of Grace Point? How are you going to contribute to the mission and vision of the church?

DAY 37: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

CRAZY FAITH

Read Luke 18:1-8. This story reveals something about the nature of God. He could not care less about protocol. Jesus honors the faith of the crazy person. God is still honoring those who defy protocol with their bold prayers.

- What is the biggest, boldest, craziest prayer you have been too afraid to pray? Pray it today. *Continue to pray for the sale of the current church property. Pray for the capital campaign to be successful so we can break ground on the new facility as soon as possible. Pray that God would open the floodgates and overwhelm our church with all kinds of people who are searching for God.*

DAY 38: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

AMAZING THINGS

Read Joshua 3:1-7. The word consecrate means "to set apart." It means to be completely surrendered to the lordship of Christ, and when we give more of ourselves to God, God will give more of Himself to us.

- What is the one thing you have been withholding from the Lord? What is the one thing that you have not surrendered over to Him?

As you pray, examine yourself honestly to see if there is anything in you that you have not completely turned over to God, and, when you find something, surrender it.

Week 6: October 17-21

Making Room for What's Ahead

DAY 39: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

ONE GOD-IDEA

Read Ephesians 3:14-21. Our best solutions, ideas, and efforts are not good enough. When we hit our knees and trust God to do only what God can do, the Holy Spirit will reveal things that can only be discovered in the presence of God. One God-idea is worth more than 1,000 good ideas.

- Are your problems bigger than God, or is God bigger than your problems?
- Is a God-sized idea taking shape in your life? If so, what is it?

God-sized ideas come from time spent with the Lord in prayer. Talk to the Lord about what He might be birthing inside you. Ask God for one God-sized idea worth pursuing.

DAY 40: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

THE LONGEST LEVER

Read Zechariah 4:4-10. In this passage, the Jewish remnant who returned to Israel are getting ready to rebuild the temple. All they have done up to this point is take a measurement - just one small step. But God is rejoicing over them!

- What is God calling you to do now? What is your next step?

Like a parent who celebrates a baby's first step, your heavenly Father rejoices when you take the smallest of steps in the right direction. Continue to pursue God's direction and leading for you - it might not be what you have planned, but what He has planned for you.

Thank you, Church, for creating space and taking the time to engage in 40 days of prayer for our church and our city, and to seek God's vision for us. I cannot wait to see what God will do in you, your neighborhood, our city, and this church! Love deeply and give your life away for the sake of the Kingdom!



Josh Cooper
Discipleship & Equipping Pastor

Appendix

THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF FASTING

In the Bible, times of prayer and fasting often led to clarity in God's direction. Moses gave himself to a 40-day period of prayer and fasting prior to receiving the Ten Commandments. The Apostle Paul engaged in a three-day absolute fast following his encounter with the living Christ. Jesus fasted from food for 40 days in the wilderness before launching His public ministry proclaiming repentance and inviting others into the Kingdom of God.

Fasting is usually thought of as refraining from food for the purpose of spending more time with God. From a physical standpoint, this is what is usually involved in a fast. However, fasting is never done as a means to gain favor with God. How easy is it to take something like fasting and try to use it to get God to do what we want? The purpose of fasting is not to get God to do something for you, but to open yourself up to hear from the Lord with greater clarity. The glory of God should be your highest priority during these 40 days.

Fasting is an ancient practice that has been largely neglected by Christians today. Yet it was a vital practice in the lives of the saints in biblical times. They gained spiritual sensitivity and heard from God in fresh and inspiring ways during their fasts. Historically, when a biblical church engaged in corporate prayer and fasting, God would reveal Himself in their midst with their repentance, a display of His power, and spiritual renewal. That is our hope and prayer for you during the 40 days.

GUIDELINES FOR FASTING

1. DETERMINE THE PURPOSE OF YOUR FAST

Although the goal of these 40 days is to spend more time in the presence of God, fasts can be undertaken for a number of reasons. Some of those may include a desire to:

- Strengthen the urgency of our prayer (Ezra 8:23; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 9:3; Joel 2:12-17; Acts 13:3).
- "Fasting is calculated to bring a note of urgency and importunity into our praying, and to give force to our pleading in the court of Heaven. The man who prays with fasting is giving Heaven notice that he is truly earnest; not only so, but he is expressing his earnestness in a divinely-appointed way. He is using a means that God has chosen to make his voice to be heard on high." - Arthur Wallis
- Your hunger reminds you to pray all day long.
- Seek God's guidance (Judges 20:26-28; Acts 14:23) - Fasting does not ensure certainty in discerning the will of God, but it does tend to make us more sensitive to the One who loves to direct us.
- Draw near to God and express grief in the midst of suffering and sin (Judges 20:26; Neh. 1; 1 Sam. 31:13).
- Seek deliverance or protection from God (2 Chron. 20:3-4; Ezra 8:21-23; Esther 4:16).
- Express repentance (1 Sam. 7:6; Joel 2:12; Jonah 3:5-8).
- Humble oneself before God (1 Kings 21:27-29; Psalm 35:13).
- Express concern for the work of God (Neh. 1:3-4; Isaiah 58:6-7).
- Minister to the needs of others (Isaiah 58:6-7).
- To overcome temptation and dedicate yourself to God (Matthew 4:1-11).
- To express love and worship to God (Luke 2:37).

Appendix

2. DETERMINE THE TYPE OF FAST

If you are not experienced in fasting or if you have certain types of medical conditions, you should seek your doctor's advice before starting any food fast.

- If you are undertaking a normal food fast (water and clear juices only), start slowly with a reasonable goal. Only an experienced faster should consider a 40-day food fast. For example, begin with a partial fast of 24 hours' duration; many have found lunch to lunch to be the best time. This means that you would not eat two meals.
- Another idea is to fast from a particular meal for the next 40 days or for one day each week.
- Another possibility is to fast from sunrise to sundown one to two times per week.
- Since the objective of this fast is to make yourself more available to God for prayer, Bible study, and reflection, you could also consider an alternative approach, such as:
 - Fasting from TV, movies, Netflix, or other electronic devices, and use that time for spiritual pursuits.
 - Refrain from a typical daily activity (going to the gym, daily Starbucks coffee run, etc.) and use that time for God.
 - Get up an hour earlier or stay up an hour later to spend with God.
 - If family obligations permit, devote time you would normally use eating to prayer and reflection.
 - Look for repetitive times in your schedule that could be rearranged to gain more time with God.

3. DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF FASTING DAYS

- For the purposes of these 40 days, we are encouraging you to fast one day per week; however, you may want to simply start with one meal and work your way up to one 24-hour period of time.

4. PREPARE YOUR HEART BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Fasting is a simple tool to enable you to hear from God and to experience deeper dimensions of His grace and love for you. An essential component of your fast, especially at the beginning, will be renewing your personal commitment to Christ. This usually requires extended times of life review and repentance, so plan ahead for this process.

*Is this not the fast which I choose,
to loosen the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the bands of the yoke,
and to let the oppressed go free
and break every yoke?*

*Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into the house;
when you see the naked, to cover him;
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then your light will break out like the dawn,
and your recovery will speedily spring forth;
and your righteousness will go before you;
the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.*

- Isaiah 58:6-8 (NASB)

Appendix

KEEPING A PRAYER JOURNAL

A journal is an excellent way to record the works and ways of God in your life. It can contain reflections on daily events, personal relationships, and prayer requests. It often includes your personal responses to the truths you are learning in God's Word and a collection of written prayers that flow from your heart to the Lord.

Many of the Psalms are like David's journal entries. The book of Lamentations is a record of the prophet, Jeremiah's, feelings during his worst days. A journal is a very powerful means by which you can pour your heart out to God and later go back to see where God answered prayer or moved in that one situation.

A prayer journal will enable you to:

- **See more clearly how God is working in your life.** As you read back through your journal entries, you may begin to see common threads that are part of the bigger picture that God has for your life.
- **Find encouragement in times of spiritual dryness.** Everyone experiences periods when God does not seem to be as close as He was before. A journal can lead you back to Him and remind you of how it felt when you were seeking God with all your heart.
- **Sort out questions and doubts.** Take your questions and doubts directly to God. Taking the time to write them out releases you to trust Him with your doubts and questions.
- **See prayers answered.** By recording specific prayer requests and praises, over time you will be able to see how God answered those prayers and met those needs. Use your journal to record how God answers the deepest longings of your heart.

Since most of us forget the details, lessons, and experiences of everyday life, we are wise to get in the habit of keeping a spiritual journal. There is no best format, except the one that best expresses your heart. Write freely. Write honestly. Write often. Months and years from now you will find your thoughts and words to be a great source of inspiration and challenge.

*I shall remember the deeds of the Lord;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
I will meditate on all Your works
and muse on Your deeds.
- Psalm 77:11-12 (NASB)*

CREDITS

Portions of this guide were taken and adapted from multiple sources, including:

1. McLean Bible Church for their "40 Days of Prayer" booklet;
2. Engedi Church for their "Revolution 710" campaign;
3. Gordon MacDonald's book, *Generosity: Moving Toward Life That Is Truly Life*, (2009);
4. Mark Batterson's devotional, *Draw the Circle: The 40 Day Prayer Challenge*, (2012);
5. NavNeighbors 30-Day Prayer Guide (www.navneighbors.org); and
6. "How to Pray for Your City" by Bliss Spillar at The Gospel Coalition. Accessed August 1, 2016.

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