



**FASTING & PRAYER  
DEVOTIONAL**



# New Life Philly

## Prayer and Fasting Schedule

### January 6-11, 2025

- We set aside this time to consecrate ourselves to God as we start the New Year.
- As disciples/apprentices of King Jesus, we do not live for ourselves.
- Our life is an offering to the one who has saved us and who is setting us free from the penalty, power, and presence of sin.
- This week we want to set a new pattern of spending time with the Lord to grow deeper in relationship with him.

**Devotional written by Pastor Larry Smith**

*PLEASE NOTE: If you are viewing this document on your device or online, all underlined text is clickable.)*



## Basic Structure of the Fast\*

What we are Fasting From:	What we are Fasting To:
<p><b>Food:</b> Cut out one or two meals a day (based on your health), as well as snacks. Drink water only. You may have a morning coffee or tea.</p>	<p><b>Prayer:</b> Use the time you would have been preparing and eating meals for prayer and contemplation. Also consider joining one of our regularly scheduled prayer times on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7–8 am AND this coming Wednesday at 12 pm on the Zoom Prayer Line (pw pray)</p>
<p><b>Internet:</b> No social media or internet surfing not connected with employment or education.</p>	<p><b>Contemplation:</b> We strongly encourage you to use the <b>Lectio 365 app</b> for some guided time of contemplation in scripture. This is a 10–12 minute guided time in the mornings and about 8 minutes or so in the evenings.</p> <p>On Saturday, January 11, from 10 am to 12 pm, we will be teaching a class on <b><u>Enjoying God through Silence and Solitude</u></b>. We would love you to make it a priority to come out to this class.</p>
<p><b>Television:</b> Limit your time to 60 minutes a day or less. Many of you may want to cut out TV altogether.</p>	<p><b>Loving Others Well:</b> This includes paying special attention to those around you who need to know that they are loved. Keep an eye out for strangers who may cross your path who need to know that they are seen and that God does love them.</p> <p>Ask God to give you a greater awareness of the needs of those around you and to be attentive to their needs. The focus of fasting is to live out the demonstration of God’s love (Isaiah 58)!</p>

*\*I hope it is obvious from this chart that fasting is less about “giving something up” and more about faithfully pursuing God so that you can live more fully for him. Also note that no “spiritual practice” is complete until it changes our lives in ways that better reflect God’s love for others through us.*







## Devotional Instructions

*(Please read carefully to get the most out of this.)*

- The daily meditations follow our theme of growing deeper in the Lord. I strongly encourage you to use a journal to write in as you do this devotional.
- When you read, God may pinpoint something in the scripture to you that he did not pinpoint to me. If he impresses something on your heart, I encourage you to write that phrase or verse down and then to write down your meditation and prayer on that thought.
- This devotional reflects my impressions, contemplation, and prayer as he worked through these verses.
- ***This is an exercise in listening to God and is meant to be a time for you to encounter God personally.***





# Prayer and Fasting Schedule

## January 6-11, 2025

Mon 1/6

### Finding Hope through Lament

- Scripture Reading
- Contemplation
- Question of the day
- Prayer

7 am Zoom Prayer

Tues 1/7

### Drinking in God's Word

- Scripture Reading
- Contemplation
- Question of the day
- Prayer

7 am Zoom Prayer

Wed 1/8

### Practicing Silence and Solitude

- Scripture Reading
- Contemplation
- Question of the day
- Prayer

12 pm Zoom Prayer

Thur 1/9

### Living for Others/Service

- Scripture Reading
- Contemplation
- Question of the day
- Prayer

7 am Zoom Prayer

Fri 1/10

### Living in Community

- Scripture Reading
- Contemplation
- Question of the day
- Prayer

7 am Zoom Prayer

Sat 1/11

### Practicing Sabbath

- Scripture Reading
- Contemplation
- Question of the day
- Prayer

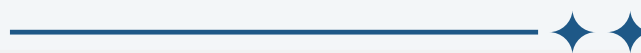
Sat 1/11

**10 am - 12 noon**

**Break the Fast Seminar**

**4 - 6 pm**

**Break the Fast Meal & Worship**



1/6  
**Monday**

## Finding Hope through Lament

Scripture: Psalm 42:

For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah.

1 As the deer pants for streams of water,

so my soul pants for you, my God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

3 My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

4 These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God

under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

5 Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God. for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

6 My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

7 Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

8 By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.

9 I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?"

10 My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

11 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

1/6  
**Monday**

## Finding Hope through Lament

### Verse for Meditation:

Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. 8 By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life. – Psalm 42:7-8

### Contemplation:

It is impossible to know the goodness of the Lord and to truly be thankful for his salvation unless you first understand just how bad things are apart from him. Most Christians have been taught to believe that grief, despair, and lament are sure signs that your faith is weak. The scripture tells us something very different.

When we don't allow ourselves to feel the depth of our sadness and grief we almost always cover it by indulging in worldly pleasures that take the edge off of our pain. Whether that is food, television, internet scrolling, buying things we don't need, or losing ourselves in a fantasy world, this dulls the pain and allows us to cope.

But God has not called us to cope but to LIVE. When we allow ourselves to experience and feel the depth of our pain, we can enter into real lament, as the psalmist does in verse 7. As he feels the crushing pain of the waterfalls breaking over him, he lifts his eyes to God and looks to him for salvation in verse 8.

Experiencing deep pain and lament is not a sign of weak faith, but it is the posture of a disciple/apprentice of King Jesus as they direct all their hope toward God instead of soothing their pain with worldly comforts. Deep calls to deep. Only as we allow ourselves to experience the depth of our pain will we experience the depth of God's love for us in Jesus Christ.





1/6  
Monday



## Finding Hope through Lament



Further Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





## Drinking in God's Word

Scripture: Psalm 19: 7 - 14:

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are  
trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the Lord are  
radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring forever.

The decrees of the Lord are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.

11 By them your servant is warned;  
in keeping them there is great  
reward.

12 But who can discern their own  
errors?

Forgive my hidden faults.

13 Keep your servant also from  
willful sins;

may they not rule over me.  
Then I will be blameless,  
innocent of great transgression.

14 May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart  
be pleasing in your sight,  
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.



1/7  
Tuesday



## Drinking in God's Word

### Verse for Meditation:

The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. – Psalm 19:9b-10

### Contemplation:

I like sweet things. I find my wife's sweet potato pie extremely hard to resist (especially with some whipped cream on top!).

To be honest, I also like to have financial stability—to know that I have enough and enough to share. David writes in these verses that God's decrees, his written word, are more precious than financial security and more satisfying than the sweetest of sweets.

I have found that developing a habit of reading God's Word daily has only increased my love and desire for more of it.

In a world where we are constantly inundated by messages urging us to buy this, do that, and give our hearts and lives to something else, God's Word, the Bible, stands alone as a message that offers real hope and overflows with the message of God's love for his people.



1/7  
Tuesday



## Drinking in God's Word

### Question of the Day:

- *If someone were observing your daily life, would it be easy to discern that you have a passionate love for God's Word?*
- *If so, how would they see that?*
- *If not, how can you work to change that in 2025?*

*(Take a few minutes to pray about this and to write down your thoughts.)*

### Respond:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

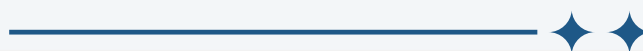
---

---

---

### Prayer:

Indeed, Lord, your word is perfect and always guiding me toward what is true and what is good. I thank you that your word always points me to your redeeming love that is most perfectly manifested in King Jesus. Lord, increase my hunger and thirst for your word, and help me to reprioritize my life so that I will spend regular time in your word daily. May your Word be sweeter to me than streaming services, social media scrolling, or sports. Help me Lord, to hear from you daily as I read your Word.





1/8  
*Wednesday*

## Practicing Silence and Solitude

Scripture: Luke: 5: 15 - 16

15 Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

1/8  
*Wednesday*

## Practicing Silence and Solitude

### Verse for Meditation:

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed – Luke 5:16

### Contemplation:

Jesus' lifestyle majored on getting alone time with the Father. It's all over the gospels. This was the fuel for Jesus' life and ministry. Being alone with God allowed him to live out his calling. Because of this, Jesus was never hustled into hurry or bullied into busyness. He knew who he was and what the Father was calling him to. What about you? A study showed that the average iPhone user touches their phone 2,617 times a day (and twice as often for millennials)! Most of us have become so distracted by technology that we lie to ourselves by saying that we don't have time to get alone with God. Here's the thing. You do have time to spend time quiet and in God's presence—you just have to make it a priority. If Jesus NEEDED alone time with the Father (God on God!), do you somehow suppose that you DON'T need it? God is inviting you to make 2025 a year of change—a year where you begin to spend more time in silence and solitude with him and less time scrolling, streaming, and complaining about feeling disconnected with God! The invitation is to practice the way of Jesus and spend daily undistracted time in God's presence. And the payoff for this is a life of real rest, true joy, and peace that passes all understanding. Only a growing connection with God can give you these things.









## Living for Others/Service

### Scripture: Epesians 2: 1 - 10

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.





## Living for Others/Service

### Verse for Meditation:

Verse for Meditation: For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. – Ephesians 2:10

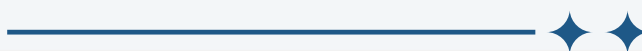
### Contemplation:

You do not exist to serve yourself. God has not redeemed you and kept you so that you can accumulate things and enjoy "the American dream."

The truth is that the American dream is actually a nightmare. It is built on the notion that it is only by accumulating more things, more money, more experiences, and more success that you can ever be happy. That, my friends, is a lie from the pit of hell!

God has designed you and redeemed you so that you will be a blessing to others. It really is true that it is more blessed to give than to receive. When you are giving, serving, and blessing others, you are living as the reflector of God that you were created to be in the first place.

You have been given a unique mix of gifts and abilities and a specific place and time in God's world to bless others in ways that no one else will. When you lean into that calling, living as an apprentice/disciple of Jesus (instead of an apprentice/disciple of the empire of greed and consumerism), then you will know true joy.







## Living in Community

### Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27:

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

## Living in Community

### Verse for Meditation:

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. – 1 Cor 12:21-23

### Contemplation:

We NEED each other. Not just kinda/sorta but "for real for real." In a culture that values the ideas of autonomy and individualism, community is a countercultural way of life. The Christian community that the apostle Paul talks about in these verses is not just hanging out with some folks to have a nice time, but it is more like committing your life to others in a way that we sink or swim together. It is living out the biblical ethic of interdependence. To the degree that we live our lives independent of our community, we wreak havoc on the way of Christ, and we open ourselves up wide to the enemy's attacks.

By committing ourselves to life in community, we are declaring that we are needy. We are admitting that we don't have what it takes to make it on our own. In doing so we lean into God's organic and sometimes a little bit organized community called the church. It is here that all the parts come together to form something that is beautiful and that shows people what God is like. It is the unified community of God's people that points people to the reality that Jesus Christ has indeed been sent by the Father (John 17:23).

If we minimize Christian community in our lives, we almost certainly minimize our own growth in Christ. By declaring our self-sufficiency, we undermine the work of the Spirit, who is heaven-bent on pruning our rough edges through the practice of committing ourselves to Christian community. The reality of our commitment to Jesus is best measured by our willingness to submit ourselves to his people in mutual love and dependence.



1/10  
Friday



## Living in Community

Question of the Day:

- ***What are some ways that you can live in greater commitment to Christian community?***
- ***Why would doing this be important for your growth in Christ?***

*(Take a few minutes to pray about this and to write down your thoughts.)*

Respond:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Prayer:

You know me, Lord. You know how I like things to be a certain way. You know that I really click with some people, and you know how other folks rub me the wrong way. Help me Lord, to get past my selfish pursuit of comfort so that I can live purposefully in the community of your people. Help me to work to preserve the unity of the body and to be a part of meeting the needs of others that I am walking with. Let your name be glorified as I submit myself to the body of Christ and yoke myself together with others as we pursue you.





1/11  
*Saturday*



## Practicing Sabbath

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:12-15:

12 "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do.

15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.





## Practicing Sabbath

### Verse for Meditation:

13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work. – Deut. 5:13-14a

### Contemplation:

There may be no more radical and countercultural practice than the practice of Sabbath. There may be no more important practice to living out the way of Jesus on earth than the practice of Sabbath.

I'm guessing that for many people those statements might not ring true. In part this is because we have merely substituted the term "Sabbath" for a "day off." Let's face it—a day off is nice, but it is NOT a revolutionary way to experience God.

But Sabbath is meant to be exactly that—a revolutionary way of reorienting our lives around God. Sabbath as simply a day off to get other non-work work done, or to shop, or to continue to live in the noise of our digital devils (i.e., phones, the internet, and social media) is not a biblical Sabbath at all.

I encourage you to read the passage again. This is a Sabbath to the LORD! That phrase changes everything. It means that when we Sabbath, we take a day to dramatically unplug from the world and focus our full attention on God and his blessings.

Sabbath is an act of resistance against the gods of this world and an act of worship and obedience to the LORD. It is an act of trust and faith that it is God who holds all things together—not us! Let us, as God's gathered people at New Life Philly, commit to grow in our practice of true Sabbath.





## Practicing Sabbath

### Question of the Day:

- ***How can you make changes to your schedule to make a “Sabbath to the LORD” more of a reality in your life?***
- ***If you are already practicing a 24-hour Sabbath, how can you improve your practice to be more focused on stopping, resting, contemplating, and delighting in the LORD?***

*(Take a few minutes to pray about this and to write down your thoughts.)*

### Respond:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Prayer:

LORD I recognize that I belong to you—all of me belongs to you. Everything that I am, everything that I have, and everything I could ever dream of belongs to you. So help me, Lord, to learn how to pull away from the current of this world and find my rest and delight in you. Help me to enjoy you in Sabbath, not as a legalistic practice to bolster my spiritual resume but as an act of worship that empowers me to enter into the pure joy of life in you.







# "New Life Family, let's join together in faith as we trust God for amazing things in 2025!"

**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,  
according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church  
and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. –**

**Ephesians 3:20-21**



To connect to the New Life Philly Zoom Prayer Line, click the link below. Prayer is at 7 am on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. This week we will also have a prayer time at noon on Wednesday.

- [Connection to Zoom Prayer](#)

## Recommended Resources

- [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry, by John Mark Comer](#)

This book is extremely powerful and convicting, but also easy to read and very enjoyable. If you want to make 2025 a year of growing closer to the Lord, then I highly recommend this book.

- [2-Year Bible Reading Plan](#)

If you're looking for a great way to read through the Bible, let me suggest this plan—it's simple and realistic. Instead of rushing through in one year, this plan spreads out over two years and has you reading just five days a week. That means there's plenty of flexibility to catch up if life gets busy! And here's a bonus idea: while you follow this plan, consider reading one of the four Gospels each month. It's a powerful way to keep the life and teachings of Jesus fresh in your heart as you journey through Scripture.

- [Practicing the Way Classes Registration](#)

**Register for the "Practicing the Way" Discipleship class, which is starting in February.** In 2025 this 8-session class is becoming the critical and basic discipleship class that we encourage every member of New Life to take. This class will be offered about two Sundays a month starting on February 9. Many of the church leaders are finishing it up this month, and they have found it to be extremely useful in helping them grow in their walk with Jesus.