

PATHWAYS

WEEK 1

Series Big idea: Pathways to abiding with Jesus

Abiding = making your home in Jesus' love

John 15:1-11

Understanding the Illustration

The Father = Vinedresser/Gardener

Jesus = vine

People = branches

Two Branch Types

1. Connected
2. Disconnected

Two Actions

1. Cut-back (pruned)
2. Cut-off (tossed)

Abide = to build your home in Jesus' love

The Cycle of Abiding

- We experience His love
- We Internalize His word (vs. 7 my word abides in you)
- He prunes our hearts
- We vocalize our wants that are being transformed by His desires (vs. 7)
- We receive God's joy in us (vs. 11)

The Pathways

- Living in Community
- Reading Scripture
- Prayer
- Making Amends
- Serving
- Worship and Singing
- Fasting

INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES

As we enter this new season as a church, we will have weekly individual exercises that will help you make your home in Jesus' love. This week's individual work is on auditing your time and making space for spiritual pathways to commune with God and experience joy. Fill out the charts below the best you can before you head to your missional community this week. Then, answer the two questions below.

SCHEDULE

Work - Family - Spiritual Life - Recreation

Time Audit

| Time Spent | Work | Family | Spiritual Life | Recreation |
|------------|------|--------|----------------|------------|
| Daily | | | | |
| Weekly | | | | |
| Monthly | | | | |
| Yearly | | | | |

The Pathways - Abiding with Jesus [*How much time can you spend?*]

| Practices | Community | Scripture | Prayer | Amends | Serving | Worship | Fasting |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Daily | | | | | | | |
| Weekly | | | | | | | |
| Monthly | | | | | | | |
| Quarterly | | | | | | | |
| Annually | | | | | | | |

1. What time of day are you most alert and responsive to God?
2. What are some busy times for you over the next few months? How will this affect your ability to be intentional with your schedule and your community?

MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

As we enter this new season as a church, we'll be exploring spiritual practices that encourage us to abide in Jesus' love. As we go through this series, the hope is that our missional communities will be a place where we can discuss on a deeper level these spiritual practices, and find a place where we can have practical questions explored together and answered.

As you meet this week with your Missional Communities:

Pray

Pray with your group. Pray that in this new season, your group would have clarity on what it means to abide in Jesus' love. Pray that your group would be convinced that their identity in Christ is secure and unchanged by any "success" or "failure" that they may feel in these Spiritual practices.

Remind

Remind your group of the intended rhythm of the next few months. As we explore these spiritual practices, we will have the opportunity to:

- Have different Spiritual practices introduced and taught on Sundays
- Practice them individually
- Discuss them in Missional Communities as we live in community

Encourage

Encourage your group of the following truths:

No one is going to "master" these Spiritual practices. The only person who lived a perfect Spiritual life is Jesus. As we seek to abide in His love via these practices, we will fail. This season at The Bridge is not about developing the perfect prayer life or figuring out exactly what our calling in ministry is—it's about looking to Jesus as our example and following Him, even imperfectly.

Think of a young child who is learning basic skills. Parents don't correct pronunciation when their baby says her first word or get frustrated when their child falls after his first steps. In these instances, parents are just thrilled that their children are growing and developing. And children aren't doing these things to gain approval or move on to the next stage; they are just doing what they have seen their parents do. In the same way, our Heavenly Father rejoices to see our transformation, and we continue to transform because of our relationship with Him.

No stage of life rules out Spiritual growth. Some of these spiritual practices will not come as naturally during certain stages of life. For instance, families with young kids may not easily be able to practice these habits in a normal or routine way. This is natural! Different seasons of life bring about different opportunities for Spiritual formation and no two people's Spiritual growth will look the same. Instead of focusing on where our season of life hinders opportunities for Spiritual growth, we must ask of

God where He has given us opportunities to grow. For instance, those parents with young kids likely have differently opportunities to practice servanthood, teaching, and community very often in the everyday rhythms of their life.

“Our season of life—whatever it is—is no barrier to having Christ formed in us” - John Ortberg.

Discuss

Discuss with your Gospel Community:

- What do you think about this idea of exploring spiritual practices as a church?
- Is there anything about this concept that confuses you or is unclear?
- Read John 15:1-11 as a group
- Discuss your individual exercises and what you learned about making space.
- What would it look like to make your home in Christ's love?
- What would it feel like to experience His joy?