SVN OKS

DAYS OF PRAYER



DAYS OF PRAYER

What to expect:

INTRODUCTION

OPENER **NEXT STEPS** WELCOME TO 21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING FASTING: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT DO I DO?

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DAY 2 (TUESDAY)

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WEEKTWO | IGNITE MY CHURCH

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WEEKTHREE | IGNITE MY COMMUNITY

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DAY 4 (THURSDAY) **GROWTH IN SHOWING A DIFFERENT LOVE**

DAY 5 (FRIDAY) **GROWTH IN LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR**

DAY 6&7 (SATURDAY|SUNDAY) GROWTH IN LOVING OUR FAMILY



WELCOME | PRAYER AND FASTING

HEY CHURCH!

YOU HAVE IN YOUR HANDS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS INTO GOD LIKE NEVER BEFORE! THIS IS NOT JUST A FEW DEVOTIONS AND SOME PRAYERS; THIS IS A CHANCE TO DEVELOP RHYTHMS IN YOUR LIFE THAT CAN CREATE A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE MOVES OF GOD IN AND THROUGH YOU. THIS IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY AND PRAY WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH, BEING UNITED IN ASKING GOD TO REVEAL AND MOVE IN WAYS HE NEVER HAS IN OUR CHURCH, OUR COMMUNITY, AND OUR WORLD. DOES IT SEEM LIKE I'M SWINGING FOR THE FENCES WITH THAT STATEMENT? MAYBE, BUT IT'S NOT A WISHFUL STATEMENT... LOOK WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT OUR GOD.

"14 FOR THIS REASON I BOW MY KNEES BEFORE THE FATHER, 15 FROM WHOM EVERY FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH IS NAMED, 16 THAT ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY HE MAY GRANT YOU TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT IN YOUR INNER BEING, 17 SO THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH —THAT YOU, BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE, 18 MAY HAVE STRENGTH TO COMPREHEND WITH ALL THE SAINTS WHAT IS THE BREADTH AND LENGTH AND HEIGHT AND DEPTH, 19 AND TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE, THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. 20 NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER AT WORK WITHIN US, 21 TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.

-EPHESIANS 3:14-20

CAN I TELL YOU... GOD WANTS TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE (LUKE 1:37), HE WANTS TO HEAL NATIONS (2 CHRONICLES 7:14), HE WANTS TO HEAL THE SICK (MATTHEW 10:7-8), HE WANTS TO LOVE THE RUNAWAY (LUKE 15) AND CARE FOR THE BROKEN (JOHN 8:1-11). WE BELIEVE IN A BIG GOD WHO IS ABLE TO DO IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN WE CAN ASK FOR OR THINK OF. THIS GUIDE IS ABOUT BRINGING THE CHURCH TOGETHER, PRESSING INTO CHRIST, AND SEEKING WHAT GOD WANTS TO DO IN AND THROUGH HIS CHURCH FOR 2022. WILL YOU JOIN US?

IN THIS GUIDE YOU WILL FIND A DEEPER DESCRIPTION AND METHODS OF FASTING. YOU WILL ALSO FIND SIX DEVOTIONALS PER WEEK THAT WILL FOCUS ON YOURSELF, YOUR COMMUNITY, AND THE MISSION GOD HAS CALLED US ALL TO. WE ARE PRAYING ALONGSIDE YOU AND ARE BELIEVING GOD WILL MOVE IN INCREDIBLE WAYS NOT ONLY IN JANUARY, BUT IN ALL OF 2022.

YOU ARE LOVED AND APPRECIATED!

IN HIS GRIP,

PASTOR SHANE MOSS EXECUTIVE PASTOR | SEVENOAKS.CHURCH



DAYS OF PRAYER NOT A FORM OF A DIET

FASTING

WE ARE AWARE THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SOME OF YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE OF FASTING. WE WANT THIS TO BE A POSITIVE, LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE. WE HAVE THEREFORE PROPOSED SEVERAL DIFFERENT LEVELS AT WHICH YOU CAN PARTICIPATE WITH THE REST OF THE CHURCH. WHATEVER ROAD YOU CHOOSE TO TAKE, KNOW THAT THERE IS SOMETHING SPIRITUAL GOD DOES WHEN SOMEONE CHOOSES TO IGNORE WHAT THEIR BODY (FLESH) WANTS AND INSTEAD LISTENS TO WHAT THEIR SPIRIT WANTS. SO, HERE'S THE QUESTION, WHAT DO YOU DO FROM HERE?

BEGINNERS

PRAYER IS SIMPLY COMMUNICATION WITH GOD. FASTING, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS AN INTENTIONAL ABSTENTION FROM FOOD, OR ANY OTHER CRAVING, FOR A SET PERIOD OF TIME TO SEEK GOD THROUGH PRAYER. YOUR PETITIONS IN PRAYER ARE ALWAYS MADE TO GOD IN JESUS' NAME. YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE A REGULAR TIME OF PRAYER AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK WHERE YOU PETITION GOD FOR YOUR NEEDS AND OCCASIONALLY THE NEEDS OF OTHERS, BUT YOU'VE NEVER FASTED. YOU FIND YOURSELF EAGER TO LEARN WHAT IT TRULY MEANS TO COMMUNE WITH GOD ON A LEVEL DEEPER THAN THE ONE YOU'RE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING.

FASTING FOR BEGINNERS: IF FOOD IS TOO GREAT TO ABSTAIN FROM AT THIS EARLY STAGE, THEN YOU CAN CHOOSE TO ABSTAIN FROM ANY FORM OF MEDIA, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA, FOR A SET PERIOD OF TIME DURING THE DAY. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU CAN CHOOSE NOT TO VIEW ANY MEDIA FROM 6:00AM-9:00PM, AND SPEND THAT TIME PRAYING AT THE TOP OF EACH HOUR. OR YOU CAN SKIP ONE MEAL A DAY, AND SPEND THAT MEALTIME PRAYING.

INTERMEDIATE

YOU MAY HAVE ENJOYED IN THE PAST SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF PRAYER AND FASTING, MAYBE THROUGH ROOTED. PERHAPS YOU SPEND A TOTAL OF FORTY-FIVE MINUTES TO ONE HOUR DURING THE WEEK IN PRAYER INTERCESSIONS (PRAYING FOR YOUR NEEDS AND THE NEEDS OF OTHERS). YOU HAVE FASTED FOR AT LEAST ONE DAY IN THE PAST WHERE YOU'VE ABSTAINED FROM A MEAL OR A HOBBY TO SEEK GOD THROUGH PRAYER. YOU'VE READ BOOKS ON PRAYER OR HAVE BEEN A PART OF A TRAINING COURSE ON PRAYER AND ARE LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PUT IT TO GOOD USE.

DAYS OF PRAYER NOT A FORM OF A DIET

FASTING

FASTING FOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL: YOU CAN DO THE SUGGESTIONS ABOVE OR DO WHAT'S KNOWN AS THE DANIEL FAST. THE DANIEL FAST EATING PLAN IS LIKE A VEGAN DIET BUT WITH MORE RESTRICTIONS. THE ONLY BEVERAGE IS WATER AND THE PRIMARY FOODS ARE FRUIT, VEGETABLES, WHOLE GRAINS, AND LEGUMES. THERE ARE NO SWEETENERS ON THE FAST AND NO PROCESSED FOODS OR CHEMICALS. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE DANIEL FAST, VISIT WWW.DANIEL-FAST.COM. DURING THIS FAST, SET ASIDE FOUR TIMES DURING THE DAY TO PRAY: 9:00AM, 12:00PM, 3:00PM, 6:00PM. IF YOU ARE AN EARLY RISER, THEN ADD A 6:00AM PRAYER TIME.

ADVANCED

PERHAPS ALL OF THE ABOVE IS TRUE OF YOU. IN ADDITION, YOU PRAY DAILY FOR 15-20 MINUTES. YOU HAVE FASTED FOR THREE DAYS OR MORE IN THE PAST AND HAVE EXPERIENCED GOD'S BLESSING THROUGH IT. YOU HAVE A REGULAR HABIT OF TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS FROM PEOPLE IN NEED AND PRAYING OVER THEIR NEEDS.

FASTING FOR ADVANCED LEVEL: YOU CAN DO ALL OF THE ABOVE OR YOU CAN DO AN ABSOLUTE FAST. WHILE WE DON'T RECOMMEND YOU GO THE ENTIRE DAY WITHOUT ANY FOOD OR WATER, YOU CAN CONSIDER SKIPPING BREAKFAST AND LUNCH EACH DAY AND THEN END THE DAY WITH A LIGHT EVENING MEAL. DURING THIS FAST, YOU SHOULD PLAN TO BE IN PRAYER AT THE TOP OF EVERY HOUR OR EVERY OTHER HOUR.

WARNING:

CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN BEFORE BEGINNING A FAST, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE A PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITION, OR ARE AN EXPECTANT OR NURSING MOTHER. WHILE FASTING IS A SPIRITUALLY FULFILLING EXERCISE, GOD WOULD NOT COMMAND A PHYSICAL EXERCISE THAT WOULD HARM HIS PEOPLE PHYSICALLY OR EMOTIONALLY.

REMEMBER, NONE OF THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE HARD AND FAST RULES. THEY ARE GUIDELINES. THE SCRIPTURES GIVE PLENTY OF LIBERTY IN HOW ONE SHOULD ENGAGE IN THE FAST. THE GOAL IS NOT SIMPLY TO ABSTAIN, BUT TO PRAYERFULLY SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN YOUR LIFE.

CONCLUSION:

OVER THE NEXT 21 DAYS WE WILL BE SPENDING TIME EACH DAY IN PRAYER. ALONG WITH PRAYING WE ARE ASKING, FOR THOSE WHO CAN, TO SPEND TIME FASTING AS YOU PRAY FOR WHATEVER THAT DAY'S DEVOTION CALLS FOR. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE PASTORS AT INFO@SEVENOAKS.CHURCH AND WE'D LOVE TO HELP YOU WALK THROUGH THIS INCREDIBLE SEASON.

WEEK1 DAY1

REMEMBER THE BEGINNING

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 " 'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.' Revelations 2:1-7

REFLECTION:

I (Pastor Shane) remember the first time I fell in love with the game of golf. I was with three friends, playing for the first time, but I could never really hit the ball, at least not like the other guys. In fact, I couldn't even get the ball off the ground. Regardless of how bad I was, I still fell in love with the game. Our faith is often like that. When I first encountered Jesus, I didn't know how to act or pray or worship, I just fell in love with Him. So, I read and pursued the best I knew how. Somewhere along the line we forget... we're not as passionate anymore, we don't pursue as much as we use to. The second chapter of Revelation challenges us to return to our first love. You lost your first for God? Then remind yourself why you gave your life to Him in the first place... make prayer a priority, gather with others and share stories. Here's the reality, we can ignite our faith again, the love can be set ablaze again!

- 1. When you first became a Christian, how did you feel, what did you do? What emotions were present after you committed your life to Christ?
- 2. When you think of the greatest moments in your journey with Christ, what spiritual habits were present? What one thing can you do today to help ignite a passion for Christ?
- 3. Pray that God would help you remember why you follow Him, and pray He would give you a renewed fire for the things of God.



WEEK1 DAY2

FAITH COMES BY ...

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:13-17

REFLECTION:

This past month we celebrated one of my favorite seasons; Christmas!! There are so many things I (Pastor Shane) love about Christmas; remembering the birth of Christ, cookies, cold weather, lights and music. Like most people, the best part is exchanging gifts. If you're like me, receiving a gift tells me this person knows me, they got something I liked (usually) and I felt appreciated. But have you ever come across that relative, maybe a nephew or niece, who you didn't know how to buy for? This is especially hard when you haven't seen them in a while. Here's a full proof way to get them a gift they'd love, read their Christmas wish list. Think about it, it may seem simple, but when someone writes down what they want, it tells me... wait for it... what they want. Some of us may be in a season where we feel distant from God, we feel we don't know him anymore. So when we are asked to 'ignite our faith' we are not sure where to start. Thankfully God wrote us a 'list.' He tells us in Romans, "you want greater faith, the read, listen, study, the word of God. Because in doing that the nature and character of God is revealed and we see he is a promise keeper, a loving father, and a powerful savior. The wonderful thing about God's 'lists,' is it seems all the gifts he asks are actually for us! God is good!!

- 1. When you think of someone who has 'great' faith, what comes to mind? Is there a person you know or a person in history that comes to mind?
- 2. How do you think they were able to have such 'great' faith? Was it sudden? Did they just decide to? Did they have to work for it?
- 3. One of the ways the bible tells us to have faith, is to ask for it? You want faith to overcome your situation, then ask God for it! You want greater faith so you can see God work in and through you, then ask for it!
- 4. Spend the next few moments praying God would give you a greater hunger for his word and greater faith in who God is. Trust me, these are prayers God answers.

WEEK1 DAY3

A GREATER FAITH

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. 21 And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." 22 And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. 25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11:20-25

REFLECTION:

A few years ago, I (Pastor Shane) remember walking through the grocery story shopping for my family. A couple aisles I remember hearing one of the biggest tantrums I had ever heard. Guess what aisle this kid was in... that's right, the candy aisle. This kid was screaming at the top of his lunges because he wanted candy and mom wasn't going to give it to him. I recall thinking, I hope she doesn't cave, and can I say, they walked out of that grocery store, and the kid was still crying. Have you ever spent time pleading to God for something; when you were younger? Maybe it was for a better car or for that guy or girl to like you... did those prayers come to pass? The great Billy Graham once said, there is only one place on earth I don't pray because God never answers those prayers... on a golf course. Often, I have heard people quote the above passage in saying "If you ask for it 'in Jesus' name' you'll get it... so ask in faith." Can I tell you, that's not what this verse is referring to. What this verse is saying is this, if you pray, asking in faith for something according to God's heart, you will receive it, but ask believing God's big enough and powerful enough to accomplish. My prayer is you increase in faith, that your prayers move from "God, I just want them to go to church" to "God, move mightily through our city and nation, drawing people to you!" I bet if the kid in the grocery story begged mom to buy him some broccoli, she would not have hesitated.

- 1. When you sit down to pray, are your prayers typically a list of wants and requests? Have you made a habit of praying for the things God wants?
- 2. Take a minute and make a list of things you know God wants to do in you, your neighborhood, and your city.
- 3. Spend some time praying specifically for the things on God's list... it's not wrong to ask for 'candy,' but we also need to be praying for the broccoli God wants in our lives.

WEEK1 DAY 4

PUTTING YOUR FAITH TO USE

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. James 1:22-25

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. James 2:14-18

REFLECTION:

Ugh! It's 7:00 in the morning and the face staring at me in the mirror is not the face I want to present to others that day. In fact, nothing I see there is good enough to show to the world. There's work to be done! So, I head for the shower and then I spend so much time getting cleaned up, shaped up, and made up in order to make myself presentable. It's off with the PJ's and on with clothes for the task of the day. Finally, I emerge from the bathroom feeling much more arranged and ready to see the world. Or should I say, ready for them to see me! Today I'm reminded by the words of James that God's Word is like a mirror that shows me myself as I am. When I look into it and see myself for what I really am, I have two choices. I can either walk away and forget about what I saw and the changes I need to make, or I can do the work necessary to change my life to be what God longs for me to be. Old attitudes, harmful habits, and sinful desires all need to be removed and replaced with the garments of Christlikeness. This work is a process and it won't happen all at once, but I must do what I can today. We can have all the faith in the world, we can memorize the whole Bible, but if we are not putting it into practice each day, then our faith is useless... let's do the hard work that we can do today.

- 1. When was the last time you read something in the Bible that hit you, made you feel uncomfortable, that you needed to change?
- 2. Pray that God would search your heart and reveal anything that might be hindering your faith. Pray God would show you where you need to change, and that he would empower you to do the necessary work, step by step, so you could reflect Him better.

WEEK1 DAY5

WORSHIPPING UNASHAMEDI Y

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn. 16 As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. 17 And they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. 18 And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts 19 and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house. 2 Samuel 6:14-19

REFLECTION:

One of the greatest ways I connect with God is through worship. Yes, worship is a lifestyle, but when I sing truths about who God is and what he's done, it stirs me at the core. Much Like we see with David, he's bringing back the ark of the Lord to Israel, and he was excited, and nothing was going to stop that. Ultimately, worship is about God, not us. God can truly be glorified in everything we say and do, so this list represents just a fraction of the ways you can exalt him. Whatever you do, do it for him. Honor him in all that you say and do, and he will be praised. While worship is not about us, there is still a deep connection between us and God when we choose to praise him in good and bad circumstances. While we should not worship God for the sake of getting something in return, he is still a gracious God and gives us something anyway in the form of his presence.

- 1. Spend a few moments worshipping God. There are many great songs you can find on www.youtube.com that can help. I suggest anything by Chris Tomlin or Housefires.
- 2. After you have spent some time worshipping, ask God to give you a heart of worship, and that a song would be in your heart, stirring up greater faith, all day.



WEEK1 DAY6

SERVING BEYOND

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." Luke 10:25-37

REFLECTION:

I (Pastor Shane) remember years ago I took a group of high school students to Skid row in Los Angeles to serve the homeless. This was one of the most powerful events I did for many reasons. Casey was one of the girls that had gone with us, but she was hesitant in going because she had so much gone on at home. Her mother just re-enter drug rehab and her father had lived in another state. She was now living with her grandparents and was graduating in a year not know what she was going to do or really who she was. I remember chatting with her towards the end of the trip asking how she was doing, and she told me something I will never forget. She said she was so glad she had come because she was able to see that no matter what life brings her way, God is still in control. She realized this when serving other. Just like she was being Jesus to others in this moment, others had been Jesus to her when they had served her. I am absolutely convinced that serving others gets us out of ourselves, lout of our own situations, and reminds us that God deeply loves us all.

- 1. When you think of some of the hardest seasons in your life, can you remember if there was anyone who was there, by your side, being Jesus? How did that feel?
- 2. Have you ever come alongside someone in their season of darkness and been Jesus to them? What did you do? How did you help?
- 3. Pray that God would help you see how you can serve others, so that in doing so, you can be Jesus and be reminded yourself that he has and never will leave you.





WEEK2 DAY1

IGNITE YOUR INTIMACY

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

Luke 22:14-20 14 "And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

REFLECTION:

This week we are focusing on Igniting our Church, which is obviously beyond the four walls of the church, but is the collection of all those who gather at Seven Oaks. In order to Ignite our church, we need to understand that God desires not only to be intimate with us individually, but also to have a deep relationship with his whole body, all his children. I take pleasure when I'm with one of my kids, but when they are all together, enjoying time together with me, that's something else. In many ways, this is what was happening when Jesus took communion with his disciples, they were all enjoying intimacy with God, together. How do we pursue intimacy with God and each other? By praying for each other, by gathering consistently together as a family, by encouraging each other, and by seeking to know Jesus better, together. Do you see the theme here? Intimacy with God and each other is found when we pursue God... together. Look at what Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." See the theme... it's a good one!

- 1. When you think of having an intimate relationship with God what comes to mind? Is it a hard concept to see happen? Is it scary? Is it encouraging?
- 2. When you think of being in an intimate relationship with the people of God's church, what comes to mind? What are roadblocks for you to helping create this? Would you be considered a familiar face at church?
- 3. Spend some time praying that God would build strong, deep, encouraging relationships within the church. That we would become an acts 2 type church (read it if you have time)



WEEK2 DAY2

IGNITE YOUR PRAYER

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 6:5-15 5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread,
12 and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

REFLECTION:

It's no secret that in order to ignite our faith or our church we need to pray... that's what this 21 Days of Prayer is all about. But prayer is so much more that pleading with God to do something... If you read the above verse, you'll notice something, most of the prayer references is about others: "Forgive us," "lead us," "deliver us," forgive others." You see, there is something powerful when we seek to pray for proper relationships not only with God, but with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

- 1.Is there someone at church that you would say you need to forgive or ask forgiveness of?
- 2. If you think back to your prayers over the past month, has there been anyone specifically at church that you have been praying for?
- 3. Spend some time and jot down a list of people you can think of at church that you can pray for. Maybe you don't know their name, you can put 'the red hair gal,' or the guy with the great shoes...' God knows who you mean.



WEEK2 DAY3

IGNITE YOUR FAITH

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 16:1-10 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. 5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!" 6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her. 7 The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." 9 The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

REFLECTION:

How many times do we tell people that are going through difficult times not to worry, that everything is going to be okay? That God is in control of everything. But when we are experiencing the same need, why can't we declare that God is in control of my problem? Faith grows and is nourished by hearing the Word of God. Romans 10:1 says "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In Genesis 16 God declares a blessing to Hagar. Verse 10 says "The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." God the Almighty, the one who knows everything and can do everything, makes that promise to Hagar. Did she believe? No. Hagar states that her son is going to die in the desert. But, before she reached the desert, had not God declared the blessing for her son? In difficult times, do I believe what I see or what I feel? Or, do I believe in what God promised?

- 1. Emotions can be a tricky thing, one minute they excite me, the next they scare me. One thing that doesn't waver like my emotions is God's promises. Can you recall any promises that God has given regarding the church? Read the verse and write the promise: Matthew 16:18, John 17:15, 1 Peter 2;9-10, Ephesians 2:20-22, Revelation 3:10
- 2. Take one of the above promises and use it as a prayer for yourself and for our church.



WEEK2 DAY4

IGNITE YOUR UNITY

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

John 17:10-12, 20-23 "All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. Il And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

REFLECTION:

When we read the Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that share Jesus' story), one of the things we see over and over is Jesus praying. He prayed for the sick, for the lost, and for the people of Israel. He also prayed for the lame, the blind, and the forgotten by the water. But did you know Jesus also prayed for you? It's true! He specifically prayed for you and I today. And what was that prayer? That we would all be unified. So, here's the thing, if Jesus, who is God and knows everything, saw that the church was going to be fractured (if you haven't noticed it is), and felt it was important to pray for unity (because the enemy is working for disunity), then maybe we should be praying for the same thing. And maybe we should be pursuing the same thing.

- 1. What are some reasons, that you have either seen or heard about, the church is not unified?
- 2. Here's a deeper question, there are obviously many denominations (which is not a bad thing), what are the things we should be unified over?
- 3. Spend some time praying for unity within Seven Oaks, it's leadership, it's purpose, and it's congregation.



WEEK2 DAY5

IGNITE YOUR ATITTUDE

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 100:1-5 "I Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! 2 Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! 3 Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! 5 For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

REFLECTION:

Have you ever made your way to church, walked through the doors, sat down thinking of your horrible night or the frustrating phone call you had the other day, and then when worship started, wondered why you didn't connect? I can't be the only one that has done that, right? When that happens, I'm forced to ask myself why? And if I'm honest, my hopes were that the music would lift up my spirits or would somehow help me forget about my problems, even just for a second. But here's the problem, first they don't help you forget, they remind you who can rescue you in them. Secondly, I often find that I have not prepared my heart for worship. You might be saying to yourself right now, "What? Prepare my heart? Isn't church about preparing me for my week ahead?" Can I kindly answer that question... NO! Think about it, when I go for an interview, I prepare myself, when I give a presentation, I prepare myself, but when I go to worship, I expect a magic pill to change everything. Look at what Psalm 100:2 says, "come into his presence with singing," verse 4 says "enter his gates with thanksgiving." There is something to be said about preparing our hearts for worship and the word. We can do this through praying before service that God would steady my mind and heart, or, dare I say, reading your bible before you ever get to church. Attitude can be everything, but attitude is decided when you turn your hearts to Jesus before you ever worship, not worshipping so God can change your attitude.

- 1. What would it look like for you personally to 'enter His courts,' or the church doors, with praise and thanksgiving?
- 2. Just imagine, if we are talking about Igniting our church, what do you think it would look like if the whole church prepared their hearts to enter into God's presence?
- 3. Pray now for an attitude of thankfulness and praise. And... this next Sunday take a moment and prepare your heart before you start worshipping.



WEEK2 DAY6&7

IGNITE YOUR POWER IN ME

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

2 Timothy 1:3-7 "I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayer's night and day. 4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

REFLECTION:

It is sad to see Christians every day become more distant from the presence of God. We see then when pastors leave their call, or brothers and sisters giving their talents to glorify the world instead of God. We also see this when churches close for lack of leadership, or a lack of sacrifice. Matthew 24:12 says that "the love of many was going to grow cold because of wickedness." How many will grow cold? All, some, a few? It is necessary that we look at which group of people we belong to. The Bible says many will grow cold, but not all. That means that not everyone's love for God and for others, but many will. Now the questions is this, am I one of those who are on fire spiritually or one of those who faith would be described as cold? Let's look at the advice that Paul gives young Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:6, "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God." What do you see? If you look closely, you'll notice something... Timothy had to do something. There was a responsibility in his life, he had to fan the fire to make it hotter. That means that for the fire to be effective, it has to be at a certain temperature. The brighter the fire, the more effective it is. How is your fire? How is your faith?

- 1. Here's the obvious question: If you were to describe your faith, how strong your trust and belief in God's love and grace, would you describe it as on fire, consuming, powerful? Or would you describe it as cold, dying, maybe nonexistent?
- 2. No matter where you are at the reality is you can also grow hotter, stronger, bolder. Thinking of your answer to the above question, what do you think you can do to fan into a flame your faith and love?
- 3. Spend some time praying that your faith, the churches faith, would grow brighter and more consuming. If you don't know how to fan your love and faith, spend some time praying for God to show you how and to increase your desire to fan into flame the gift of God.



WEEKS DAY1

GROWTH IN UNITY

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,

and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:1-8

REFLECTION:

Paul's letter to the Ephesians includes a series of "one" statements that describe the Church, and they appear in today's reading from chapter four. The Church, preserved by the unity of the Holy Spirit, is one Body (Ephesians 4:4), has one Spirit (v.4), has one hope (v.4), with one Lord (v.5), one faith (v.5), one baptism (v.5), and one God and Father of all (v.6).

Like wet clay on a pottery wheel, these seven statements spin together the foundation of the Church. Without form, clay stays lumpy, spread out, without shape or purpose. But when run through the wet hands of a skilled potter, the purpose, form, and intent become clear. The Church is made up of humans, fallible and foolish. But in the skilled and steadfast hands of our Father, the Church becomes beautiful, useful and good.

Through humility, gentleness, and patience our goal as the body is maintaining peace and unity. When we are unified, it doesn't seem so insurmountable.

In serving together, our strength allows us to create harmony, serving as a unified body begins with the efforts of each person, serving alongside the other. This week as we focus on our community, we are serving with love, focusing on our ability to serve with humility, gentleness and patience.

- 1.Is there something that you struggle with in the manner of calling? (humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love)
- 2. When you think of the church today would you say we are United?
- 3. Are you united? What are you currently doing for the body of Christ that is unifying the church? (i.e. are you plugged in, do you serve, have you invited anyone to church?)



WEEKS DAY2

GROWTH IN BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:9-16

REFLECTION:

Metaphors in the Bible help us understand who we are as a people of God, but none more than the body of Christ. When the Bible says that we are the body of Christ, the metaphor begins with a picture of Jesus as the head of the body. Meaning He is Lord. He is the one who has literally come from Heaven into this world, taking a body unto himself. In his life on earth, Jesus never ceased being God, but he took fully to himself our humanity, and now that he has ascended after his crucifixion and resurrection, his body in our midst, the way by which he does his Kingdom work, he reveals his commitment to make all things new is through literally his body. Men and women that he died for, that he now has called forth to live in union with himself. The body of Christ celebrates that image, that metaphor. It celebrates that we belong to Jesus

The one and only qualification in the Bible for being a member of the Body of Christ is to place trust in Jesus. Ephesians 2:8-9 is clear that no work is required for salvation: "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (ESV)

- 1. Have you been trying to prove yourself to God? Do you feel you have to work for salvation?
- 2. Do you hold on to the false belief of karma? (What comes around goes around?)
- 3. Are you in a place that you feel like there is no salvation for you, I ask that you look pray to God and repent because you are already forgiven.



WEEKS DAYS

GROWTH IN NEW RELATIONSHIPS

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:36-40

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17

REFLECTION:

One of the most important elements of life is healthy relationships. However, a relationship with God is the most important relationship. It sets the tone for every relationship we have. Jesus gives us "the greatest commandment" in Matthew 22:37-39, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

A loving relationship with God is of first importance; but loving relationships with others is second. In seeking new relationships with others, it is vital that we go into these relationships with compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience as Paul outlines in Colossians 3. If each of us carries these qualities, the opportunity to establish new healthy relationships increases, while allowing our personalities and gifts to flourish in environments that are welcoming and built around our love for God and His love for us. New relationships that will reflect the glory of God to others and the community around us.

- 1. What qualities may you be lacking from Colossians 3? How can you pray and act to acquire these qualities.
- 2. Are actively pursuing new relationships, and what are we doing to use our qualities to help foster a better community around us?



WEEKS DAY4

GROWTH IN SHOWING A DIFFERENT LOVE

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

32 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

REFLECTION:

Trust and forgiveness within our relationships and our community is a foundational and vital part of healthy relationships. When our trust is broken in a relationship the pain we experience can be overwhelming. We are left to doubt everyone around us and even our own judgement.

Forgiveness is our pathway to rebuilding trust. Forgiveness and trust are so closely related, that they are often confused. If we are to show the fullness of God's love, forgiveness and trust must be a significant part of that love. This is so different than the love that is often spoken of, written about, and seen within our society. Often love is associated with physical touch, what a person looks like, and is often focused on what others around us can do for us.

To love differently is to love in the way our Father loves us. Love that is not centered on what we can receive, but what we can give. Love that is centered on grace, mercy, and yes... forgiveness. Through this type of love, the gospel has an opportunity to be seen, heard, and felt.

- 1. Trust can only start once you have forgiveness. Have you forgiven yourself, and/or someone you were hurt by?
- 2. Are you a trustworthy person, do you live a life of integrity? If not, how can that change? If yes, how are you being an example?
- 3. You don't marry someone only to see what they bring to you, but to truly love your significant other, you look at what you can do for them. Are you loving your community by giving back, are you serving anywhere?



WEEKS DAY5

GROWTH IN LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. 33 And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. Mark 12:28-34

REFLECTION:

Earlier this week we focused on new relationships and our ability to love others in a way that will reflect the glory of God. Mark highlights the importance of how we love our neighbor. To love our family with all our heart, all our understanding, and with all of our strength can be hard. To love our family as we love ourselves can be difficult. To love our neighbor in this way... maybe a person we do not even know. More than likely, it is individuals we do not know, especially as well as our family.

However, when we are able to love in this way, the impact is significant within our church and within our friends and family. In fact, Jesus says "You are not far from the kingdom of God". Stop and meditate on that statement for a minute. We are not far from the kingdom of God. How often have we sought God, tried with all that we have to be close to Jesus. Jesus is literally saying... if you want to be close to me, love your neighbor. How challenging this can be... but how rewarding.

- 1. How are we reflecting love to our neighbor that speaks "The Kingdom of God is near"
- 2. What would your neighborhood look like if it resmebled the kingdom of God? How can you start the transformation in your neighborhood?



WEEKS DAY 6&7

GROWTH IN LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:

13 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

REFLECTION:

How often have you walked away from a conversation with a person in your family and thought... I did not do that well. Our family sees all sides of us. It is hard to hide the parts of us that we are working on. To love our family well means and can be given in so many ways. Our heart and our desire is to love well, to give them all that we have. Yet, we are human. We make mistakes, we are sinners. Our ability to love can be dictated by so many things around us.

The Apostle Paul gives us a road map to loving our family well. In moments of frustration our anger... our love should be patient. In moments where we might have done better or accomplished more that one could ever imagine... like the entire house is clean, laundry is done, dinner is made, yards are mowed, garage is cleaned... Paul says that is not the time to boast or be arrogant, but to love with humility and gracefully. Through our ability to love with patience and grace, our hope and faith becomes evident. Our hope and love that we have in Christ becomes clearer. It gives us a greater opportunity to be loved and most importantly to give love.

- 1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and Put your name before characteristic of love, and ask yourself is this true about me?
- 2. Each day you should reflect on the characteristics of love and ask yourself, "Did I resemble love well with those I encountered?", including are family (sometimes the hardest to love).



SEVEN OAKS

21 DAYS







PRAYER

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