



LONGING FOR HOME

A LENTEN PRAYER GUIDE

NEW VALLEY CHURCH 

*To an open house in the evening
Home shall all men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.*

G.K. Chesterton

Dear friends at New Valley Church,

As we begin this journey together, let me answer a couple of very common questions!

What is “Lent”?

Lent is the 40 days of praying and fasting that leads to Easter. So why 40 days? 40 is a significant number for trials and waiting in Scripture (The flood lasted for 40 days, Moses spent 40 days on Mt. Sinai, the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days). So what do we “do” during this season. Really, the main purpose of Lent is earnest prayer. We get to that place of earnest prayer by (1) fasting from some good thing(s) and (2) committing acts of compassion for the least, the lost, and the poor. These two things are what St. Augustine called the “two wings of prayer” —lifting our prayer life to more earnest heights.

Isn't Lent a Catholic thing?

Yes and no. Lent was practiced long before the divide between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and so, like many other things, it need not be a difference between the two groups. We affirm the rich protestant truth that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Praying, fasting and participating in Lent does not make us righteous or more acceptable before God. Participating in Lent is not a Scriptural mandate, nor should anyone's conscience be bound to do so. However, it is a helpful, wise, and time-honored tradition that draws us back to our need of Jesus Christ.

Please remember: Fasting for its own sake is not the point of this season! Fasting must lead us to greater intimacy with God and more earnest prayer. When you feel your need and your desires, THAT is the time to turn to God and see him as the answer to your longings.

I hope that this guide is helpful. I'm praying that in the midst of self-denial, you discover more of the One who denied himself for you.

Gray Ewing
Pastor, New Valley Downtown

Suggested practices of fasting:

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, food all day, all liquids but water, text messaging, all technology, media, caffeine, social media, reading, email, sugar, alcoholic beverages, bread, the news, chores, noise

Suggested practices of abundance:

Give something away, pray for someone you wouldn't normally pray for, write a note to a friend, send a text of encouragement, make something for someone, make cookies for a neighbor, do something for your spouse that you know will delight him or her, donate something, give a donation to a local cause, ask if you can pray for someone out loud

Home is found in the presence of God

All of us have deep longings. Many times they are hard to express. Is it easy for you to answer this question honestly: "What do I really want?" As human beings created in God's image, we have a deep desire TO RETURN HOME, though we often don't know where that home is found. Our conviction is that "home" is found in the presence of God. That home can be returned to by experiencing his presence individually, by experiencing it in a temporary sense in the church, and by ultimately closing our eyes in death and being welcomed into his presence for eternity.

How To Use This Guide

The purpose of these guides that we produce is to spark an interest in prayer, and to give you a running start. If you already have a practice of Scripture reading or prayer, this can be a quick supplement. If you don't, this is a great place to start. You may find the following guidelines helpful:

1. Allow at least 15-20 minutes for this practice so that your heart has time to settle into the presence of God.
2. SILENCE: Always begin with silence and noticing. What is going on in your heart, in your mind, in your body?
3. MEDITATE: Scriptures are kept short so you can say or read them over and over.
4. REFLECT: A corresponding quote from the Church fathers will deepen reflection.
5. PRAY: Do not forget to actually pray! The prompt is meant only to get you started.

Please note: The prayers of this guide have a somewhat negative tone. You will read a lot of words like "sin" "death" and "punishment." The reason for this is that it is the season of the church where we traditionally go into self-evaluation and repentance. This is necessary, because we believe that without understanding the "bad news" (that we are not righteous) we will never fully grasp the "good news" (that Jesus' righteousness has completely cleansed us). However, we do not mean to imply that repentance and self-examination are the only ways to approach God!

**This guide was written by Gray Ewing and edited and formatted by Carolyn Hunt at New Valley Church in Phoenix, AZ. Any church or ministry is permitted to copy and reuse, provided it stays in its original format. For all other permissions, please email downtownphoenix@newvalleychurch.org*

WEEK 1

February 26-March 1

Choose two practices for the next few days.
(If you need help choosing a practice, look at the beginning of the guide.)

This week I will fast from:

***This week I will practice
abundance through:***

LONGING FOR A CHANGED HEART

February 26

Silence

Sit still, rest. Try to only enjoy God in the present moment.

Meditate

I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of Thy Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore You, a heart to delight in You, to follow and enjoy You, for Christ's sake. Amen.

—Ambrose of Milan, 4th century

Pray

That God would give you a changed heart!

LONGING FOR A DEEP EXPERIENCE OF GOD

February 27

Silence

Be still and know that God is God.

Meditate

My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jeremiah 2:13

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

You can do more than pray after you have prayed; but you can never do more than pray until you have prayed.

—Adoniram Judson Gordon, 19th century

Pray

That God would be your satisfaction and delight today!

LONGING FOR NEW LIFE

February 28

Silence

Ask God to speak!

Meditate

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:9

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

You came to taste death, yet You were the Life and had come to bring it to the dead.

—Gregory the Great, 6th century

Pray

That God would give you a heart of thanksgiving, brimming with delight over the good news of Jesus.

LONGING FOR SOLID FAITH

February 29

Silence

Breathe deeply. Picture the grace you have received as a deep well or overflowing cup

Meditate

Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? John 11:26

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

You said, O my Christ, "Whoever believes in Me shall live and never die." If then, faith in You saves the lost, then save me....O Lord, from now on let me love You as intensely as I have loved sin.

—John Chrysostom, 4th century

Pray

That your desire for Christ would be greater than the desire for sin.

SUNDAY FEAST!

March 1

Enjoy the good gifts God has given.

Sabbath Feast Prayer

O Lord, refresh our sensibilities.

Give us this day our daily taste.

Restore to us soups that spoons will not sink in, and sauces which are never the same twice.

Raise up among us stews with more gravy than we have bread to blot it with, and casseroles that put starch and substance in our limp modernity.

Take away our fear of fat, and make us glad of the oil that ran upon Aaron's beard. Give us pasta with a hundred fillings, and rice in a thousand variations.

Above all, give us grace to live as true people—to fast till we come to a refreshed sense of what we have and then to dine gratefully on all that comes to hand.

Drive far from us, O Most Bountiful, all creatures of air and darkness; cast out the demons that possess us; deliver us from the fear of calories and the bondage of nutrition; and set us free once more in our own land, where we shall serve thee as thou hast blessed

us—

with the dew of heaven,
the fatness of the earth,
and plenty of corn and wine.

Amen

-Robert Farrar Capon

WEEK 2
March 2-8

Choose two practices for the next few days.
(If you need help choosing a practice, look at the beginning of the guide.)

This week I will fast from:

***This week I will practice
abundance through:***

**LONGING FOR VICTORY
OVER DARKNESS**

March 2

Silence

*Sit in silence and enjoy God's presence
for a few minutes.*

Meditate

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Seek God in all things and we shall find
God by our side.
—St. Peter Claver, 17th century

Pray

That God would be near and help you overcome
whatever darkness is in your life.

LONGING FOR THE NEARNESS OF GOD

March 3

Silence

Review the last 24 hours. Notice all that God has provided. What are the little gifts?

Meditate

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundation of humility.

—Saint Augustine, 4th century

Pray

That God would help you to acknowledge him in all your ways today (Prov. 3:6)

LONGING FOR EVERYTHING TO BE MADE RIGHT

March 4

Silence

Try to picture as best you can the love of God. Ask Him to sustain you today.

Meditate

The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants...and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

Revelation 11:18

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride. Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair. Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance, because He shows us both God and our own wretchedness.

—Blaise Pascal, 17th century

Pray

Ask Jesus to come quickly!

LONGING FOR HUMILITY

March 5

Silence

Posture your heart toward the living God.

Meditate

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Philippians. 2:3

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, I, know, or do?

Reflect

There is more value in a little study of humility and in a single act of it than in all the knowledge in the world.

—Teresa of Avila, 16th century

Pray

That God would give you an abundance of time, patience and care with those around you today.

LONGING FOR TRUST IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD

March 6

Silence

Rest and take deep breaths. God is here

Meditate

I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them." Jeremiah 32:40

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness, I am Your sin. You took on You what was mine; yet set on me what was Yours. You became what You were not, that I might become what I was not.

—Martin Luther, 16th century

Pray

That your heart would be full of assurance of God's love for you, assurance of your salvation, and assurance in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

LONGING FOR TRANSFORMATION

March 7

Silence

Sit still, rest. Try to only enjoy God in the present moment.

Meditate

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand. Ephesians 2:10

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

It is not you that shapes God, it is God that shapes you. If you are the work of God, await the hand of the artist who does all things in due season.

—Irenaeus of Lyon, 2nd century

Pray

That God would make clear today all the good works that he has prepared for you to do.

SUNDAY FEAST!

March 8

Enjoy the good gifts God has given.

Sabbath Feast Prayer

Be gentle, when you touch bread,
Let it not be uncared for, unwanted.
So often bread is taken for granted.

There is so much beauty in bread,
Beauty of sun and soil,
Beauty of patient toil.

Winds and rain have caressed it,
Christ often blessed it;
Be gentle when you touch bread.

Be loving when you drink wine,
So freely received and joyfully shared
in the spirit of him who cared;
Warm as a flowing river,
Shining as clear as the sun,
Deep as the soil
Of human toil,
The winds and air caressed it,
Christ often blessed it,
Be loving when you drink wine.
—Unknown, Celtic Prayer

WEEK 3
March 9-15

Choose two practices for the next few days.
(If you need help choosing a practice, look at the beginning of the guide.)

This week I will fast from:

This week I will practice abundance through:

LONGING FOR MERCY
March 9

Silence

Be still and know that God is God.

Meditate

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but He does what is still more wonderful: He makes saints out of sinners.

—Soren Kierkegaard, 19th century

Pray

Thank God for his new mercies and faithfulness today.

**LONGING FOR A HEART
DEVOTED TO GOD**

March 10

Silence

Ask God to speak.

Meditate

Return to me with all your heart...rend your hearts
and not your garments. Joel 2:13-13

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

O Lord, the house of my soul is narrow; enlarge it
that you may enter in. It is ruinous, O repair it! It
displeases Your sight. I confess it, I know. But who
shall cleanse it? To whom shall I cry but to You?
Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord, and
spare Your servant from strange sins.
—Augustine, 5th century

Pray

That God would enlarge the house of your soul to
be fully devoted to him.

LONGING FOR FREEDOM FROM SIN

March 11

Silence

*Breathe deeply. Picture the grace you have re-
ceived as a deep well or overflowing cup*

Mediate

God shows His love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might
come among us; and, because we are sorely
hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and
mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus
Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy
Spirit, be honor and glory
now and forever. Amen.
—Thomas Cranmer, 16th century

Pray

That you would be so captivated by God's grace
today, that sin would seem distant
and uninteresting.

LONGING TO FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN

March 12

Silence

*Sit in silence and enjoy God's presence
for a few minutes.*

Meditate

Lord, how often will my brother sin against me,
and I forgive him? As many as seven times?'
Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times,
but seventy-seven times.'" Matthew 18:21-22

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

No man knows how bad he is 'til he has tried
very hard to be good. A silly idea is current
that good people do not know what temptation
means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try
to resist temptation know how strong it is. After
all, you find out the strength of the German army
by fighting it, not by giving in. A man who gives
in to temptation after five minutes simply does not
know what it would have been like an hour later.
That is why bad people, in one sense, know very
little about badness. They have lived a sheltered
life by always giving in. We never find out the
strength of the evil impulse inside us until
we try to fight it.
—C.S. Lewis, 20th century

Pray

For your enemies and those who have
wounded you.

LONGING FOR SELF-CONTROL

March 13

Silence

*Review the last 24 hours. Notice all that God has
provided. What are the little gifts?*

Meditate

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and
love and self-control. II Timothy 1:7

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

Lord and Master of my life, keep from me the
spirit of indifference and discouragement, lust of
power and idle chatter. Instead, grant to me, Your
servant, the Spirit of wholeness of being, hum-
ble-mindedness, patience, and love.
—Ephraim of Syria, 4th century

Pray

That God would give you "wholeness of being"
to pursue what is good, true, and beautiful.

LONGING TO LIVE WITH GOD FOREVER

March 14

Silence

Try to picture as best you can the love of God. Ask Him to sustain you today.

Meditate

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflection

“I live here as a fish in a vessel of water, only enough to keep me alive, but in heaven I shall swim in the ocean. Here I have little air in me to keep me breathing, but there I shall have sweet and fresh gales; Here I have a beam of sun to lighten my darkness, a warm ray to keep me from freezing; yonder I shall live in light and warmth for ever.”
—Valley of Vision

Pray

That heaven would break in to earth today and you would experience the richness of the presence of God!

SUNDAY FEAST!

March 15

Enjoy the good gifts God has given.

Sabbath Feast Prayer

Lord behold our family here assembled.

We thank thee for this place in which

We dwell, for the love that unites us, for

The peace accorded us this day,

For the health, the work, the food, and the bright

Skies that make our lives delight, for

Our friends in all parts of the earth.

Give us courage, gaiety, and the quiet mind.

Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies.

Bless us, if it may be,

in all our innocent endeavours.

If it may not, give us the strength to encounter
that which is to come.

May we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation,
temperate in wrath,

And in all changes of fortune loyal
and loving to one another.

—Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894),
Scottish novelist

WEEK 4
March 16-22

Choose two practices for the next few days.
(If you need help choosing a practice, look at the beginning of the guide.)

This week I will fast from:

***This week I will practice
abundance through:***

**LONGING FOR AN
AWARENESS OF GOD**

March 16

Silence

Posture your heart toward the living God.

Meditate

Who is a God like you? Micah 7:18

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

You humble the pride of the proud; You destroy the plans of nations; You exalt the humble and humble the exalted; You make rich and make poor; You kill and make alive.

—Clement of Alexandria, 2nd century

Pray

Think of every unique blessing you have by being a follower of God and give God thanks for who he is.

LONGING FOR A DEEP DEPENDENCE ON GOD

March 17

Silence

Rest and take deep breaths. God is here.

Meditate

They said to one another, 'What is it?'...And Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat'. Exodus 16:15

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Gracious and holy Father, give me wisdom to perceive You, intelligence to fathom You, patience to wait for You, eyes to behold You, a heart to meditate upon You, and a life to proclaim You, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.
—Benedict of Nursia, 6th century

Pray

That today, God would provide all that is needed and that you would recognize that it is from him.

LONGING FOR IT TO BE LIGHT AND EASY TO OBEY GOD

March 18

Silence

Sit still, rest. Try to only enjoy God in the present moment.

Meditate

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:3

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

May I consent to and delight in thy law after the inner man, never complain over the strictness of thy demands, but mourn over my want of conformity to them; never question thy commandments, but esteem them to be right. By thy spirit within me, may my practice spring from principle, and my dispositions be conformable with duty.
—Valley of Vision

Pray

That the yoke of Christ would be easy and light today. That you would delight in following him.

LONGING FOR A CONTRITE HEART

March 19

Silence

Be still and know that God is God.

Meditate

The sacrifice acceptable to God
is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,

○ God, you will not despise. Psalm 51:17

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

○ God, make me worthy of this calling, that the name of Jesus may be glorified in me and I in him
—Valley of Vision

Pray

For an appropriate mourning over sin that does not lead to despair.

LONGING TO SERVE OTHERS LIKE JESUS

March 20

Silence

Ask God to speak!

Meditate

For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. John 13:15

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others. So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great.

—John Chrysostom, 4th century

Pray

For opportunities to lay down your pride, rights, privileges, and time so that you can help someone

LONGING FOR A LOVE FOR OTHER PEOPLE

March 21

Silence

Breathe deeply. Picture the grace you have received as a deep well or overflowing cup

Meditate

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor? Luke 10:29

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Show Your mercy to me and gladden my heart. I am like the man on the way to Jericho who was overtaken by robbers, wounded, and left for dead: O Good Samaritan, come to my aid. I am like the sheep that went astray: O Good Shepherd, seek me out and bring me home in accord with Your will. Let me dwell in Your house all the days of my life and praise You forever and ever
—Jerome, 4th century

Pray

For a soft heart toward anyone today who may annoy, anger, disrespect or sadden you today.

SUNDAY FEAST!

March 22

Enjoy the good gifts God has given.

Sabbath Feast Prayer

Whatever is foreseen in joy
Must be lived out from day to day.
Vision held open in the dark
By our ten thousand days of work.
Harvest will fill the barn; for that
The hand must ache, the face must sweat.

And yet no leaf or grain is filled
By work of ours; the field is tilled
And left to grace. That we may reap,
Great work is done while we're asleep.

When we work well, a Sabbath mood
Rests on our day, and finds it good.
—Wendell Berry,
Sabbath 1979 X, A Timbered Choir

WEEK 5
March 23-29

Choose two practices for the next few days.
(If you need help choosing a practice, look at the beginning of the guide.)

This week I will fast from:

***This week I will practice
abundance through:***

LONGING TO ESCAPE CONDEMNATION

March 23

Silence

*Sit in silence and enjoy God's presence
for a few minutes.*

Meditate

God may turn and relent and turn from
His fierce anger. Jonah 3:10

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

We believe that God—Who is perfectly merciful
and also very just—sent His Son to assume the
nature in which the disobedience had been com-
mitted, in order to bear in it the punishment of sin
by His most bitter passion and death.
—The Belgic Confession, 16th century

Pray

Thank God that there is no condemnation for
those who are in Christ Jesus

LONGING FOR TRUE GLORY

March 24

Silence

Review the last 24 hours. Notice all that God has provided. What are the little gifts?

Meditate

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? John 5:44

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

O Lord, I cannot plead my love of Thee:
I plead Thy Love of me;

The shallow conduit hails the unfathomed sea.
—Christina Rossetti, 19th century

Pray

That God would give you a sense of his unfathomable grace and that you would be able to walk with freedom and joy.

LONGING FOR A PASSIONATE FAITH

March 25

Silence

Try to picture as best you can the love of God. Ask Him to sustain you today.

Meditate

Draw me after you; let us run.
Song of Solomon 1:4

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

LORD, we would come to Thee, but do Thou come to us. Draw us and we will run after Thee.
—Charles Spurgeon, 19th century

Pray

God, Turn my sense of duty into delight! Give me energy and desire to live in your way.

LONGING FOR PURITY

March 26

Silence

Posture your heart toward the living God.

Meditate

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

I cannot pray, except I sin; I cannot preach, but I sin; I cannot administer or receive the holy sacrament, but I sin. My very repentance needs to be repented of; and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ.

—William Beveridge, 17th century

Pray

That God would make you aware of how thoroughly Christ's blood has pardoned and cleansed you!

LONGING FOR CHARITY TOWARD OTHER'S FAULTS

March 27

Silence

Rest and take deep breaths. God is here.

Meditate

Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more. John 8:10-11

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

It is easier to cry against one thousand sins of others than to kill one of your own.

— John Flavel, 17th century

Pray

That your thoughts and actions would not be condemning of others but would rather turn you to be reflective of what God is doing in you.

LONGING FOR TRUE REPENTANCE

March 28

Silence

*Sit still, rest. Try to only enjoy God
in the present moment.*

Meditate

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

Work in me more profound and abiding repentance; Give me the fullness of godly grief, that trembles and fears, yet ever trust and loves, which is ever powerful, and ever confident; Grant through the tears of repentance I may see more clearly the brightness and glories of the saving cross.
—Valley of Vision

Pray

For repentance for the sins of the last 24 hours. Ask God for godly grief, that neither excuses nor condemns.

SUNDAY FEAST!

March 29

Enjoy the good gifts God has given

Sabbath Feast Prayer

Be a gardener,
dig a ditch,
toil and sweat,
and turn the earth upside down
and seek the deepness
and water the plants in time.

Continue this labour
and make sweet floods to run
and noble and abundant fruits
to spring.

Take this food and drink
and carry it to God
as your true worship.
—Julian of Norwich

WEEK 6

March 29-April 5

Choose two practices for the next few days.
(If you need help choosing a practice, look at the beginning of the guide.)

This week I will fast from:

*This week I will practice
abundance through:*

LONGING FOR GOD'S FAVOR

March 30

Silence

Be still and know that God is God.

Meditate

I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy... To us, O LORD, belongs open shame... To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness.

Daniel 9:3, 8-9

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

According to God's righteous judgment, we deserve punishment both in this world and forever after: how then can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor? God requires that His justice be satisfied. Therefore, the claims of His justice must be paid in full,
either by ourselves or another

—Heidelberg Catechism 12, 16th century

Pray

That the favor, mercy and forgiveness that God gives freely would free your heart and cleanse your conscience today.

LONGING FOR A DEEP PRAYER LIFE

March 31

Silence

Ask God to speak!

Meditate

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.

—Martin Luther, 16th Century

Pray

That God would create in you such a longing for a relationship with him, that you would naturally turn to your Father all day today.

LONGING FOR THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE TO MATCH

April 1

Silence

Breathe deeply. Picture the grace you have received as a deep well or overflowing cup

Meditate

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Matthew 12:34

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

In short, a man must be set free from the sin he is, which makes him do the sin he does.

—George MacDonald, 19th century

Pray

That your heart would be so aligned with Christ today, that your speech would reflect security, love, truth and grace.

LONGING TO BE FREE OF KEEPING A GOOD TRACK RECORD

April 2

Silence

*Sit in silence and enjoy God's presence
for a few minutes.*

Meditate

If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who
could stand? Psalm 130:3

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

My transgressions and short-comings
present me with a list of accusations,
But I bless thee that they will not
stand against me,
for all have been laid on Christ;
Go on to subdue my corruptions,
and grant me grace to live above them.
—Valley of Vision

Pray

Confess that you often feel that your closeness
to God is based on your good track record, and
your distance from him comes only from that
failure. Ask for his assurance today, that he is not
keeping tabs of your wrongdoing, but constantly
pouring out his grace.

LONGING TO BE CONFIDENT IN GOD'S LOVE

April 3

Silence

*Review the last 24 hours. Notice all that God has
provided. What are the little gifts?*

Meditate

We love because he first loved us. I John 4:19

*Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to
think, feel, know, or do?*

Reflect

You have loved us first, O God, alas! We speak
of it in terms of history as if You have only loved
us first but a single time, rather than that without
ceasing You have loved us first many times and
every day and our whole life through.
—Søren Kierkegaard, 19th century

Pray

That your soul would awaken to this fact: God
does not love you in a distant or historical or
clinical way. His love overflows for you in this
present moment.

**LONGING TO BE CERTAIN
THAT GOD IS REAL**

April 4

Silence

Posture your heart toward the living God.

Meditate

He is not God of the dead, but of the living.

Matthew 22:32

Read again slowly. What is the Spirit inviting you to think, feel, know, or do?

Reflect

May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to.

—C.S. Lewis, 20th century

Pray

That your doubts and fears would be swallowed up in a deep and abiding confidence in the presence of God.

PALM SUNDAY FEAST!

April 5

Enjoy the good gifts God has given.

Palm Sunday Reflection (By Scotty Smith)

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
Zechariah 9:9*

Dear Lord Jesus...You are the King of Zechariah's vision, and on this Palm Sunday, we worship, honor, and bless you. No other king could show up to conquer warhorses and warriors, humbly riding on the foal of a donkey. No other king could break the battle bow and the backbone of all warfare, by the brokenness of the cross. No other king could supplant the politics of evil and tyranny of power, with an eternal reign of peace.

No other king could offer his life and death, for the redemption and restoration, of rebels and idolaters like us. No other king could possibly make prisoners of sin, death, and "waterless pits," into prisoners of hope.

Lord Jesus, you are that King—the King of glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords—the Monarch of mercy, the Governor of grace, the Prince of Peace. Great is our rejoicing, for you have come to us, righteous and victorious, loving and sovereign.

By the riches of your grace, continue to free us from waterless pits, broken cisterns and worthless idols. By the power of the gospel, enable us to live as prisoners of hope and agents of redemption until the Day you return to finish making all things new.
So very Amen we pray, in your holy and matchless name.



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We are not citizens of this world trying to make our way to heaven; we are citizens of heaven trying to make our way through this world. That radical Christian insight can be life-changing. We are not to live so as to earn God's love, inherit heaven, and purchase our salvation. All those are given to us as gifts; gifts bought by Jesus on the cross and handed over to us. We are to live as God's redeemed, as heirs of heaven, and as citizens of another land: the Kingdom of God... We live as those who are on a journey home; a home we know will have the lights on and the door open and our Father waiting for us when we arrive. That means in all adversity our worship of God is joyful, our life is hopeful, our future is secure. There is nothing we can lose on earth that can rob us of the treasures God has given us and will give us.

John Oxenham, *Patches of Godlight*