



# <sup>the</sup> Deep Season

HUNGER & THIRST   DESPERATION & DEPENDANCE



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A season of refocus and passionate seeking  
resulting in a desperate desire and longing  
to know, experience, and live for God  
that is greater than any other desire in life.

I long to drink of you, O God, drinking deeply from the streams of pleasure  
flowing from your presence. My longings overwhelm me for more of you!  
My soul thirsts, pants, and longs for the living God.  
I want to come and see the face of God.  
Psalm 42:1-2 TPT

God, you are my God; I eagerly seek you.  
I thirst for you;  
my body faints for you in a land that is dry,  
desolate, and without water.  
Psalm 63:1 CSB

“When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I’ll listen.  
When you come looking for me, you’ll find me.  
Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else,  
I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed.”  
Jeremiah 29:12–13 MSG

June 23 - July 21

June 23	Thirst: A Desperate Longing for More
June 30	Disciplines of Desperation: A Pace of Peace
July 7	Postures of Prayer and Praise
July 14	Abandonment and Total Trust
July 21	A Solemn Assembly and Northway Family Feast

## The 21 Day Challenge of Prayer and Fasting

Monday, July 3 - Sunday July 23

Please consider participating in as many of the following as you can:

### **SLOWING: Ruthlessly eliminate hurry and find rest in His Easy Yoke.**

- **Evaluate your time commitments.** Is there anything that could be eliminated, even just for the next 3 weeks?
- **Choose to place yourself in positions where you simply have to wait.**
  - Deliberately drive in the slow lane. Pray for those who pass you in a rush.
  - Declare a fast from honking.
  - Eat your food slowly.
  - Get in the longest line at the grocery store. Let someone ahead of you.
  - Go through one day without a watch.

### **PAUSING: Practicing the presence of God by taking brief, intentional breaks throughout your day to refocus your heart and be reminded that God is with you.**

- **First Things First:** Consider kneeling as soon as you get out of bed to pause and commit your day to God. Use The Lord's Prayer, recite the 23rd Psalm, or simply use your own words to commit to living in his presence for the day.
- **Momentary Prayers:** Several times throughout the day, pray a 5 second prayer something like this: *"Thank you Lord for your presence. Your kingdom come and will be done right here in my life."* (Tip: Set up reminders on your smart phone to help you develop the habit.)
- **Pray with the Church:** Using the provided link at [NWC.FYI](#), "pray the hours" with us in the morning, midday, and afternoon. Evening prayers are also provided.
  - Also, join us at Northway Church on **Wednesday mornings at 7 AM** for corporate prayer if you're available. Leave when you need to. (July 3, 10, 17)

### **STOPPING: The routine practice of extended periods of rest, renewal, and restoration.**

- **Sabbath:** Consider observing a true, weekly Sabbath. Perhaps beginning Saturday evening and ending on Sunday evening. Use the section on Sabbath in this guide for more tips.
- **Solitude and Silence**
  - Consider Early Morning for solitude and silence.
  - Consider taking a Spiritual Retreat at some point in the next three weeks

**FASTING: “The voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.”**

- **Determine Your Fast for The Deep Season:** Will you fast one meal per day, or for a full day once a week? Will it be food or a media fast of some kind? Both?
- **Participate in our 24 Hour Fast:** From noon Saturday, July 20 through noon Sunday, July 21.
- **Solemn Assembly & Northway Feast:** Join us Sunday morning, July 21 for an extra special day of prayer, praise, and breaking our fast with a feast at lunch!

## My Plan for the Deep Season 21 Day Challenge

Using the previous list of challenges,  
write out your specific plan for what your next 21 days might look like:

[illegible]

# PRAYING THE HOURS WITH THE CHURCH (SAMPLE)

*(Find a link to the actual prayers at NWC.FYT)*

## THE MIDDAY OFFICE

To Be Observed on the Hour or Half Hour Between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m

## THE CALL TO PRAYER

Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God!\* how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!

Psalms 147:1

## THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Remember me, O LORD, with the favor you have for your people,\* and visit me with your saving help;  
That I may see the prosperity of your elect and be glad with the gladness of your people,\* that I may glory  
with your inheritance.

Psalms 106:4-5

## THE GREETING

In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge,\* let me never be ashamed.

Psalms 71:1

## THE REFRAIN FOR THE MIDDAY LESSONS

Your statutes have been like songs to me\* wherever I have lived like a stranger.

Psalms 119:54

## A READING

YAHWEH says this: 'Accursed be the one who trusts in human beings, who relies on human strength,  
and whose heart turns from YAHWEH. Such a person is like scrub in the wastelands: when good comes,  
it does not affect him since he lives in the parched places of the desert, uninhabited, salt land. Blessed is  
the man who trusts in YAHWEH, with YAHWEH for his reliance. He is like a tree by the waterside that  
thrusts its roots to the stream: when the heat comes it has nothing to fear, its foliage stays green;  
untroubled in a year of drought, it never stops bearing fruit.'

Jeremiah 17:5-8

## THE REFRAIN

Your statutes have been like songs to me\* wherever I have lived like a stranger.

## **THE MIDDAY PSALM**

I Am the LORD Your God

Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you:\* O Israel, if you would but listen to me! There shall be no strange god among you,\* you shall not worship a foreign god. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and said,\* "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."

Psalm 81:8-10

## **THE REFRAIN**

Your statutes have been like songs to me\* wherever I have lived like a stranger.

## **THE CRY OF THE CHURCH**

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your Name. May your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## **THE PRAYER APPOINTED FOR THE WEEK**

Lord, make me have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures: Grant that I, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of public worship, and grant as well that my Sabbath upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**SABBATH** Ex. 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God...For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Mark 2:27 - And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

**Here is what a true "shabbat" looks like:**

- A 24 hour sanctuary of time.
- Devoted completely to rest, worship, and delighting in God.
- That's it!
  - Could begin on Saturday evening and end on Sunday evening - in the Jewish tradition (though of course, their's begins on Friday evening.)

**What is it really?**

- The absence of labor for the sake of rest and experiencing God and His gifts.
- A rhythm of working six days and then rest.
- An enjoyment not necessarily for solitude - but to enjoy family and the community of God.
- It is not just a law to be kept, but a gift to be enjoyed.

**To truly experience Shabbat some tough decisions need to be made:**

- Paid work is contained to five days.
- Chores, shopping, errands are wrapped up on the sixth day.
- No buying or selling.
- Worry should be kept to a minimum - bills, taxes, to-do lists, etc.

**Ruth Haley Barton suggests these are the benefits of honoring the Shabbat:**

- **Resting the body.**
  - Not just sitting or sleeping, though those are certainly great first choices!
  - A walk, bike ride, bubble bath, sitting in the sun, lighting candles.
- **Replenishing the spirit.**
  - Usually, television and technology are not really replenishing, but rather distractions from God's more meaningful gifts.
  - Family conversation - book reading - you decide!
  - Special dinner time with candles and everyone around the table reflecting on specific moments of God's goodness throughout the week.
- **Restoring the soul.**
  - Worship in community.
  - Family devotions.
  - Journaling.
  - Slow meditative walks - alone or with family.



**Solitude:** Temporarily pulling away to privacy for spiritual purposes. Could be a few minutes to a few hours, a day, or even several days. It's either employed to engage in other practices or it could be simply to be alone with God.

**Silence:** Abstaining from talking for spiritual purposes. There may be an inner conversation with yourself and with God - described by some as "outward silence," or other times the goal is to simply be silent and listen for God's still, small voice.

Christ's Example:

- Luke 4:42 - Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. (NLT)
- Matt. 14:22, 23 - As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night. (MSG)
- Mark 1:35 - Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. (NLT)
- Matt. 4:1,2 - Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. (NLT)

**We respond not to a suggestion, but to His command.**

Zephaniah 1:7 - Stand in silence in the presence of the Sovereign Lord... (NLT)

**We humble ourselves in awe of His greatness.**

Habakkuk 2:20 - But the Lord is in his holy Temple. Let all the earth be silent before him. (NLT)

**We recover from our hectic lives. Our soul is restored.**

Mark 6:30, 31 - The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat.

**We find that true success is found not in doing, but in resting.**

Isaiah 30:15 - This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength."

**We are reminded that our victory is in Him, not ourselves.**

Psalm 62:1-2 - I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.

**We discover that best decisions are made in the counsel of His presence.**

Luke 6:12-13 - One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles.

## Extended Solitude and Silence

Consider taking a Spiritual Retreat during the Deep Season.

The following recommendations are for a full day retreat, but you could adjust the schedule for a half day.

(From John Ortberg's book *The Life You Always Wanted*)

1. Find a place where you can be uninterrupted and alone, such as a park or a retreat center.
2. Spend a brief time the night before to get ready, to ask God to bless the day, and to tell him you want to devote the day to him. This day is your gift to God, but even more, it is a gift God wants to give you. What do you need from the Lord: a sense of healing and forgiveness? Conviction for an apathetic heart? Compassion? A renewed sense of mission? Ask him for this.
3. Arrange the day around listening to God. The following format is adapted from Glandion Carney's book *The Spiritual Formation Toolkit*.

8:00-9:00     Prepare your mind and heart, take a walk, or do whatever will help you set aside concerns over tasks and responsibilities. Try to arrange your morning so you can remain in silence from the time you awaken.

9:00-11:00    Read and meditate on Scripture, taking time to stop and reflect when God seems to be speaking to you through the text.

11:00-12:00   Write down responses to what you have read. Speak to God about them.

12:00-1:00    Eat lunch (unless you're also fasting for the day) and take a walk, reflecting on the morning.

1:00-2:00     Take a Nap.

2:00-3:00     Set goals that emerge from the day's reflection. Write down these goals and other thoughts in a journal. You may want to do this in the form of a letter to God.

3:00-4:00     Prepare to reenter society.

# FASTING

Richard Foster defines fasting as “the voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.” The role of fasting is to teach us the sufficiency of God even when we are deprived. It is a real-life way of to practice the self-denial required of anyone who would follow Christ.

It could mean a technology fast, or a fast from some other particular life-function, but biblically it refers to a fast from food.

## Types of fasts:

- Normal fast: abstinence from food - but not water. Often juices are used.
- Partial fast: also known as a Daniel fast. Limited to small portions of vegetables.
- Congregational fasts: When a church is called to fast for a particular reason - often repentance and renewal.
- Regular fasts: commanded under the Old Covenant - e.g. fasting on the Day of Atonement
- Occasional fasts: as the need arises.

## Length of Fasts

- 40 Days - Jesus
- 21 Days - Daniel
- 3 Days - Esther
- 1 Day - Day of Atonement

## Fasting is expected in the life of a believer by Christ.

### Matthew 6

- vv 2-3: When you pray...
- vv 5-7: When you give...
- vv 16-18: When you fast...
- God will reward you.

## Purposes for Fasting

The desired outcome of fasting is a stronger spirit and a deeper focus on God instead of earthly matters.

## It goes hand in hand in times of intense prayer.

Ezra 8:23 NLT - So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer.

*“Fasting does not change God’s hearing so much as it changes our praying.”*

## It helps us to know God’s will.

Acts 14:23 NLT - Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

*Fasting doesn’t necessarily make God do anything out of the ordinary, it makes us hear more clearly.*

### **It heightens our expression of repentance.**

- Joel 2:12 NLT - That is why the Lord says, “Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.”
- *In one sense, it is a symbol of grief and mourning for our sin.*

### **It expresses our willingness to humble ourselves before God.**

- Think of this in the same way kneeling or bowing before God is a physical symbol or gesture toward humbling.
- Look at what happens even in the life of a wicked king:
  - 1 Kings 21:27-29 ESV - And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days...”

### **It should also give us a mindset of serving others.**

- Isaiah 58 - You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist. The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground.

“This is the kind of fast day I'm after:

to break the chains of injustice,  
get rid of exploitation in the workplace,  
free the oppressed, cancel debts.

What I'm interested in seeing you do is:

sharing your food with the hungry,  
inviting the homeless poor into your homes,  
putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,  
being available to your own families.

Do this and the lights will turn on,

and your lives will turn around at once.

Your righteousness will pave your way.

The God of glory will secure your passage.

Then when you pray, God will answer.

You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'

- ***What could you do for others with the time and resources that are freed up from your fasting?***

### **It strengthens us against temptation and renews our commitment to God.**

- Matthew 4:1-11 - The temptation of Christ.
- In the spiritual strength of the fast, Christ was empowered to face His toughest temptations.
- He also dedicated Himself to His public ministry.