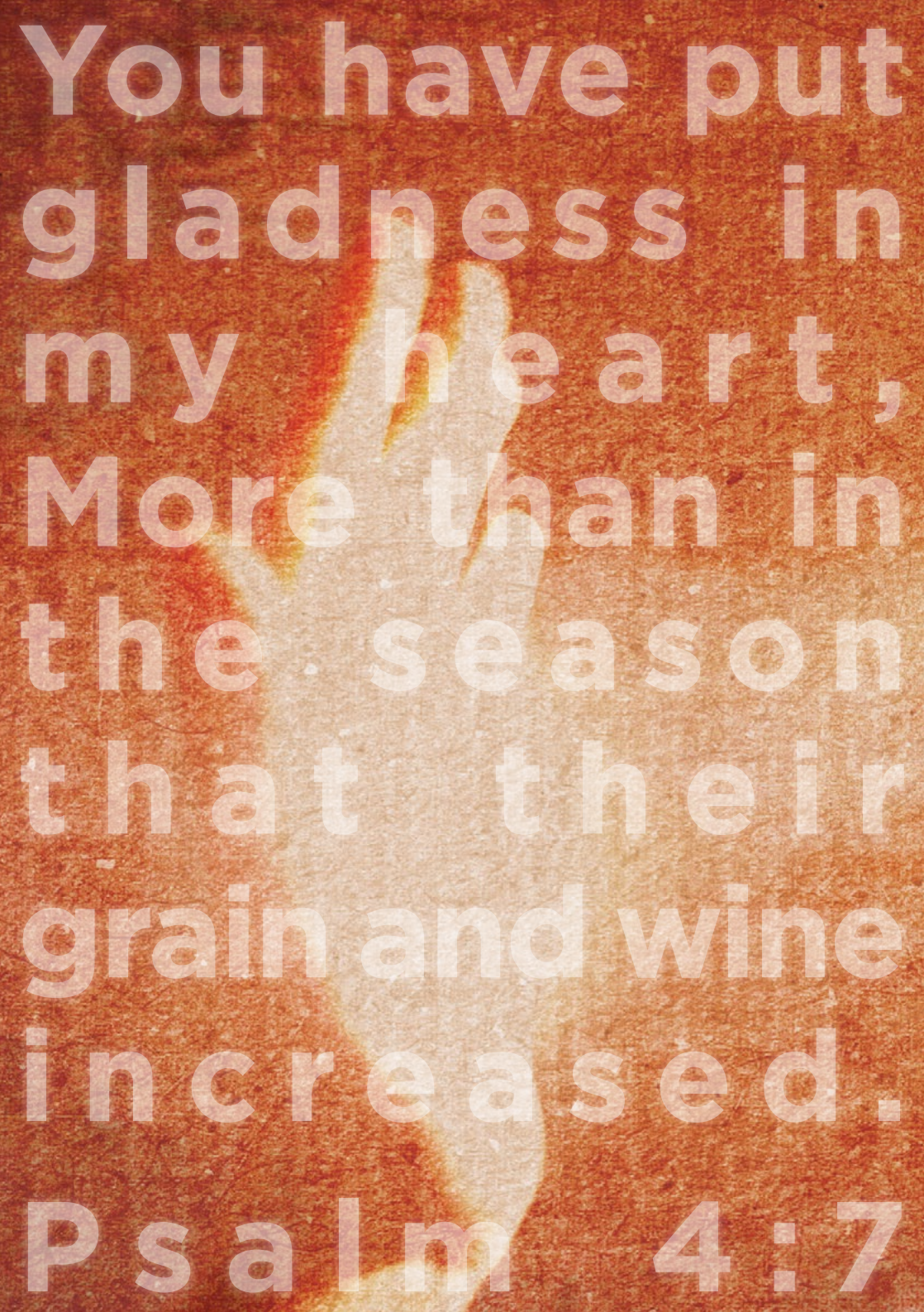


FASTING

Discovering Intimacy With God

A practical guide to
40 days of prayer and fasting

Ian Miller

A background image featuring a hand holding a lit matchstick. The matchstick is positioned vertically in the center, with a bright yellow and orange flame at the top. The hand is visible from the wrist up, holding the matchstick. The background is a textured, reddish-brown surface, possibly wood or stone, with a mottled appearance. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the matchstick.

You have put
gladness in
my heart,
More than in
the season
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Psalm 4:7

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**COMMUNITY
CHURCH
HORNSBY**

Contact Details:

Community Church Hornsby
PO Box 487
Hornsby NSW 2077

www.cch.net.au

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Section I

Fasting in the Festival

Authority and Power

Ever since becoming a Christian, fasting as a spiritual habit has remained a mystery to me. It is not really something that we talk about much, and to be honest, I have never really been inspired by any teaching I have read on it. It too often turns fasting into a way of gaining favour from God. That sort of teaching just does not sit well with the understanding of grace that is presented to us in the New Testament and the fact that Jesus delights in giving us the Kingdom itself. We do not have to convince him. The promises of God are already Yes in Christ. All we have to do is agree with them and pronounce our affirmation.

2 Corinthians 1:20

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

It begs the question, then, as to whether it is even a Christian practice or not. If it is not, end of story, but if it is, we need to be instructed because we may be missing out on something very important.

There are two key passages, both in Mark’s Gospel, that I have found very instructive in relation to fasting. They have changed my life.

The first is Mark 9:17-29. It is the account of Jesus casting a demon out of a young boy. The disciples had made the attempt earlier but had failed. They were confused because they had only recently gone out on their mission to the villages throughout the region. At that time, they had cast out many demons and healed many sick people. They had dealt with cases like this boy before but this time it did not work. So they asked why.

Mark 9:28-29

And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So he said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Jesus’ answer is at once confusing and instructive.

Confusing in that the very things that Jesus said the demon could only come out by, prayer and fasting, are the very things that Jesus did not do in dealing with the demon. He simply cast it out, like he cast every demon out. He did not go into a protracted season of prayer and fasting for the boy. He simply dealt with it in the same way that he dealt with all demons. He told it to leave and

it left. And yet he told the disciples that this kind of demon could only come out by prayer and fasting.

Jesus' response is instructive, though, when you discover an insight the father of the boy had, back in verse 18.

Mark 9:18

So I spoke to your disciples that they should cast it out, but they could not.

That is how it is translated, and acceptably so. The disciples 'could not' cast it out. That was how they themselves understood it as seen in their question. But the English translation of Mark 9:18 is not technically what the father had said. If you did a literal translation of the original Greek text it would go something like this...

And I spoke to your disciples in order that they should cast it out and they were not strong.

They were not strong. That is very informative. The disciples had authority, but they did not have strength to cast this demon out.

Jesus gives us authority, but he never intended that we should operate under authority alone. We need to be clothed with authority and power. They are not the same thing.

Luke 4:36

Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

Luke 9:1

Then he called his twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

Like the disciples, the problem facing Christians today is not a lack of authority. They may not be aware of their authority, but they already have authority nonetheless. Authority is ours in Christ.

Luke 10:19

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Authority is about position. It is about what God has said of us. We are seated in heavenly places. We are in Christ. We have authority.

Power is about walking under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Authority alone is not enough. We need power, and that power comes with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:49

Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.

This is not about our position. This is about the outworking of what God has done in us. Power is not an automatic outcome in the believer's life. We need to be filled with the Spirit. Many Christians confuse the filling of the Spirit with their position in Christ. But this is not so.

Ephesians 5:18

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.

A literal reading of the Greek language of that verse is most helpful.

And do not be being drunk with wine in which is the opposite of salvation, but be being filled with Spirit.

We are meant to experientially, practically, live daily being filled with the Spirit. And with the Spirit comes power. That is an important distinction. Authority is about Position. Power is about Practice. Authority comes from our positional union with Christ. Power comes from our practical union with the Spirit.

A Place of Strength

So, back to the account of the disciples' inability to cast out a demon. That particular demon was a strong one, and the disciples were not in a space where they were equipped to handle it. And that is where prayer and fasting fits in. It is part of our spiritual fitness.

And it is also why Jesus did not need to pray and fast in order for that demon to go. He already was strong in his spirit. Authority and Power lived side by side in Jesus' everyday world. He was ready.

He prayed regularly.

Luke 5:16

So he himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

He fasted regularly. This is not expressly stated, but it is important to note that Jesus' ministry started with a 40 day fast after the Holy Spirit descended on him at his baptism.

This is the first important discovery about fasting. It is about putting us into a place of spiritual strength. It is not about gaining access to God's favour.

New Wine

The second passage that is really helpful for us is found in Mark 2, where Jesus was questioned about his disciples not fasting.

Mark 2:18-22

The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

I used to be confused regularly by this passage. I understood the basis for the question. "Why does everyone fast except your disciples?" And I understood the first part of the answer. "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?" The Kingdom is about festival, not deprivation. It is about abundance, not lack. It is about celebration, not sorrow.

To me, that much of Jesus' answer made a lot of sense. The New Covenant is Good News. God takes our mourning clothes and replaces them with garments of praise.

Isaiah 61:3

To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

The Kingdom is likened to a Wedding Feast, the marriage of the Bridegroom (Jesus) with his Bride (the Church).

Revelation 19:6-7

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready.”

Jesus’ reply, that it was inappropriate for his disciples to fast because they had entered into the heavenly festival of salvation, makes a lot of sense in the context of the New Covenant and its Jubilee celebrations. But then he went on to say that the bridegroom would be taken away from them; and that then they would fast.

Now, fasting in the Old Testament was all about sackcloth and ashes, repentance and mourning, grieving over the pain of suffering due to the sins of the people. It was about recognising that people were in distress, suffering atrocities, and that God’s blessing was removed from the land because of injustice and iniquity.

You will see this throughout the Old Testament. Fasting and mourning go hand in hand.

Esther 4:3

And in every province where the king’s command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Joel 2:12

Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.

As was the way in the Old Testament, many people lost sight of the intent of the Law and got trapped in a pedantic, religious following of the regulation but missing the point: God cares about righteousness and overthrowing oppression.

Isaiah 58:5-6

Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

That was the Old Covenant expression of fasting. A day of mourning, sackcloth

and ashes. And the disciples of the Pharisees and John lived under that Covenant. But Jesus was ushering in a New Covenant. And the old forms would no longer apply.

When Jesus said the bridegroom would be taken away and then they would fast, that does seem to fit into the Old Covenant framework of mourning. But only just. You see, it sounds like Jesus was talking about his arrest, trial, death and burial. And from Thursday night through to Sunday morning, the disciples certainly did despair. Jesus' comment makes sense in that light. Of course they would fast. I can well imagine the disciples fasting Friday and Saturday. I am sure that eating would have been the last thing they wanted to do. Their Saviour was on a cross and then dead.

But it would only have worked for that limited time. Come Sunday night, it would have been celebration time! Jesus was alive.

Can you see the dilemma in Jesus' response?

It only makes sense for the three days of his crucifixion and death. And then to cap it all off, Jesus went straight into a discussion about not sewing new cloth onto old material and not putting new wine into old wineskins. What on earth does that have to do with the disciples fasting or not?

It is clear that Jesus was not talking about the period of his death and burial when he spoke of the disciples fasting. That was too fleeting a time in the overall scale of things. Once the resurrection occurred on Sunday morning, it would be the start of eternal wedding celebrations. And because that period of mourning would only last for a couple of days, Jesus would not have referred to it at all.

Jesus' discussion about the cloth and wineskins is actually full of revelation in all this. It shows us that he was not talking about his removal from the disciples in death, but his physical departure from them in the Gospel era. Fasting certainly is a New Covenant practice. And yet, celebration and festival is the overarching theme of that New Covenant, so fasting has to fit within the context of feasting.

And that is where the cloth and wineskins explanation makes sense. You see, the Old Covenant and New Covenant are completely different in their paradigms. God has always related to people on the basis of grace. It was never about performing to a set of rules and standards. That is why Abraham is such an important person in the Old Testament. Before the Law was introduced in Exodus, there is a long discussion of Abraham's relationship with God. That relationship was based on faith.

Genesis 15:6

And Abraham believed in the Lord, and he accounted it to him for righteousness.

Paul picked up on that thought and made much of it in his New Testament writings.

Romans 4:3-5

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

Galatians 3:23-24

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The point that is made is that Law was only ever introduced to teach us that there is something morally wrong with the human condition. We cannot approach God in our own strength, based on our own performance and abilities. So the Law, by showing us our failings, teaches us to look for grace.

Old Testament worship patterns reflect this. They were designed to show us our lack, the failure of our efforts to please God based on our own goodness. The main religious disciplines of the Old Testament are Sacrifice, Prayer and Fasting. These all reflect the Law’s intention to bind us in chains so that we look for grace through faith, just like Abraham.

That is why the Old Covenant is all about sorrow and beating our chest. It is about shame and condemnation.

- Sacrifice is about death of innocent animals because of our guilt.
- Prayer is about the lonely cry of the heart, “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” (Psalm 13:1)
- Fasting is about sackcloth and ashes, mourning and sorrow.

Jesus said in answer to the question on fasting that you cannot sew a new patch onto an old cloth or put new wine into an old wineskin. What he was saying was: a New Covenant is about to be made. It will be the answer to the crying heart of the Old Covenant. It will be the end of mourning and the beginning of praise.

- Sacrifice will be once and for all, the blood of Jesus. Any sacrifice after that will be a sacrifice of praise not death.
- Prayer will be a confident declaration of deliverance, authority and closeness to God that are ours in Christ.
- Fasting will be a joyous celebration of delighting in the Lord more than in food and wine.

You cannot put the Old and New together. It just does not work.

- You cannot see Sacrifice in terms of death in the New Covenant. It is all about Life.
- You cannot see Prayer in terms of desperation under a brass heaven. It is all about the Spirit's presence.
- You cannot see Fasting in terms of deprivation and loss. It is about feasting on God himself.

In that one statement, Jesus redefined fasting for all time. It is a time where we allow our physical hunger to radically remind us that we love God more than anything in our world and we would willingly give up all things to have him.

Honouring the Fast

Jesus started his earthly ministry with a 40 day fast. It was a celebration of relationship with his heavenly Father.

Mark 1:10-13

And immediately, coming up from the water, he saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.

Did you notice that it was important for the Father to declare Jesus' Sonship, not just give him the Spirit? And did you notice that the Father declared he was pleased with Jesus, even though Jesus had not even begun his ministry yet? And did you notice that the wilderness was the Spirit's idea, even though it meant the devil would put Jesus' identity as God's Son to the test?

That is so helpful for us. The Father wants to fill us with his Spirit, both to work in us and through us. And he wants us individually to hear his voice, so that we would know that we are his sons and daughters and that he is already

pleased with us, not based on our performance. All of this needs to be refined in us, so that we know we are filled with the Spirit and we know that Papa loves us unconditionally. So we never fear the wilderness. It is our haven of being strengthened. And, like Jesus, it is there that we are ministered to by the angels.

This is the second important discovery about fasting. It is about developing intimacy with our great God.

I want that! What about you? Fasting is not beating my chest, unable to lift my head to heaven. Fasting is embracing Papa God with both hands and feasting on him and him alone. You cannot put new wine in old wineskins. You cannot follow the old form with a new relationship. New wine goes in new wineskins.

Our Response

This is why in the New Testament, fasting is not so much a teaching as it is an activity of the early church. Apart from the passages we have already looked at, there is little said about the subject in the New Testament. This is because it is more about urgency within the confines of relationship. It cannot really be taught. It has to be witnessed.

At the commencement of Jesus' ministry, the Holy Spirit led him on a 40 day fast as we have already seen. But it was not only true of Jesus.

Acts 13:1-3

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Fasting is about being filled with the Spirit, growing in intimacy with the Father, following Jesus wherever he calls. If we lose that focus, we lose the power of the fast.

The exciting news is that when we embrace the fast in this way, then new wine fills the new wineskin. We are made stronger because we know the Strong One more closely. Authority and Power come together.

When we fast, we position ourselves to be strengthened for ministry, by growing in intimacy with the One who calls us into partnership with himself.



Section II

Practical Guidelines
for the 40 Day Fast

In this booklet, we are developing a schedule for a 40 Day Fast that we are intending to unite around as a church. It is about intimacy with Papa. Here are some helpful tips about the actual fast.

Our Father – because he is our Father, not just my Father, we can do the fast as a church or small group or individually. Most of you will hear the Holy Spirit’s encouragement to engage in the fast. But if you do not, that does not mean that the Holy Spirit does not want you to join in with the family of the church and embrace what they are embracing. This is an opportunity for us all to unite around the most precious Person in our world and to declare our love and passion for him in a beautiful way.

Meals – we are not recommending that you fast every meal for 40 Days. You would need a doctor to monitor your health if you ate nothing at all. Ask the Holy Spirit what your fast should look like. It may be one meal a day for the 40 Days. Or you may fast all meals on one or two days per week. If you are fit and strong, the Spirit may direct you to fast two meals a day. Be sensible. It is about focusing on your relationship with God, not about putting your body under physical stress.

Seek medical advice – if you are aged, infirm or have medical conditions. It may be inappropriate for you to go without food, even for one meal. If this is you, ask the Holy Spirit what the fast might look like for you. It is not about you killing yourself. Seek advice from a doctor. If your work requires a lot of physical energy, be cautious with your fast. If you are the type of person that is given to extremes, seek wise counsel.

Shoot high – going to extremes is probably not a problem for most people. Do not be too soft on yourself and make this too easy an experience. Example, giving up chocolate might be good, but maybe that does not constitute a fast.

Do not be religious – if something comes up and it would be rude of you not to eat, break your fast for the day. There are many things that might come up – you need to go to a work function, visitors come from interstate, your unbelieving spouse would not understand. Eat. The fast is not a rule or obligation. It is part of a celebration.

Only exercise moderately – Jesus was in the wilderness for his 40 day fast, far away from the high demands on his energy levels. This is not the time to be pushing for personal best on your bench press weights. Rest as much as you can. If this is impractical for you, you may need to consider an alternate to fasting food.

If you cannot fast for one reason or another – you can always do something else that will bring your hunger for God to the fore. Fast TV/computer games/videos. At the least, give up coffee – surely there is something that the Holy

Spirit will put his finger on. Be creative. And ask the Holy Spirit, he will guide you for sure.

Drink water – your body cannot survive without water. Avoid fizzy drinks. Tea and coffee is fine. Water is excellent.

Clean your teeth – just because you are not eating, does not mean that you do not need to clean your teeth.

When you break your fast – after 40 days, you need to ease your body back into its normal routine. Do not have a massive feast. Soups and light meals would be far better. And not in large quantity. Ease yourself back into a normal eating pattern over three or four days. If in doubt, seek advice.



Section III

How to Use the 40
Day Fast Schedule

Throughout this 40 day period, we will be focusing on the heart of God. Relationship is what it is all about. Real relationship. So instead of the word Father, in the 40 Day Fast Schedule you will mostly read Papa. It is a way to help us focus on God's loving, nurturing, encouraging relationship with us. He is not removed from us, but like a Daddy with his small children, he loves to be with us.

Rather than making this a prescriptive programme, we have opted to take a more creative approach. Each week there will be a focus theme (eg. in week one, that theme will be Discovering the Father's Heart for Us). Be creative in your relationship with God and importantly, be yourself. If you are artistic, then draw or paint as part of your devotion. If you are a writer, then write as part of your devotion. If you are a dancer or musician or craftsperson or... God made you to be uniquely you. So be you!

To help keep us all focussed on the same thing, you will find in the Schedule for each week a list of Key Verses, a Declaration, a number of Devotional Songs, a Prayer, and a Petition guide for specific prayers. Also you will see a reminder to share with others what God is doing in your life.

This booklet was put together by Community Church Hornsby (CCH). We have made it as generic as possible so that it can be used as a guide for any church. If you are from another church, you may need to modify the Declaration and Petition sections of each week to tailor them specifically to your local setting. This guide will show you how CCH outworked this.

Key Verses – each day take one verse that speaks to you. Meditate on it. Maybe memorise it. Or make a poem out of it. Or a song. Share on Facebook and other social media the verse that is really speaking to you.

Declaration – each day there is a declaration. Read it aloud, slowly, with meaning. Or write your own.

Devotion Songs – each day listen to a devotional song. Worship along with it. If you have a favourite worship album, listen to those songs that speak to the aspect of God's heart that we are focusing on for that week.

Prayer – pray the written prayer thoughtfully. Write out your own if you would rather. Or let the written prayer be a starting place for your own prayers.

Petition – the Petition section is meant to give you direction of what to pray so that we stay on the same page together. But it is only a guide – if the Holy Spirit speaks to you in one way or another, go with that.

Testimony – if you are not in the church Facebook group, then join it so you can post your testimonies of what God is saying to you and doing in your world.

To join, just go to the Search Facebook bar at the top of your Home page and type the church name in. You will see the Closed Group come up as an option, click on it and when the page loads, you will see at the top of it an option to join the group. Most churches these days have such a group. There are a lot of us, so keep your testimonies and encouragements short, under 50 words. If you have made something creative, take a pic and share it with us. Start off your Facebook testimonies with the words, 40 Day Testimony.

Journal – you may find it helpful to collate your thoughts, reflections, insights and revelations of what God shows you through this time. Keep a journal, hard copy or digital.

And have fun! The Kingdom of God is not about rules and regulations, what you eat or not; it is about righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Joy! Peace! Righteousness! They are three exciting words that revolutionise life.

Section IV

40 Day Fast Schedule

Week One

Discovering the Father's Heart ...for us

Key Verses

Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Luke 12:32

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

John 16:27

For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from God.

Romans 8:15-17

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Matthew 7:9-11

Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

1 John 3:1

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

1 John 4:16

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Luke 11:13

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Jeremiah 31:3

The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.”

Galatians 4:6-7

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

Declaration

I am my Papa’s son/daughter.

I am deeply loved because he is a Father who loves deeply.

I am not a slave, but have authority in my Papa’s Kingdom.

I am not an orphan.

I have my Father’s Spirit within me.

His Spirit DNA is mine.

My Papa gives me good gifts because he delights in my joy in him.

Nothing in my world can devalue the worth that my Papa speaks over me.

I live every day encompassed by his everlasting love for me.

I am treasured.

I am deeply loved.

I am my Papa’s son/daughter.

Devotion Songs

▶ “Our Father” (Bethel Music)

▶ “Good Good Father” (Chris Tomlin)

▶ “Covered” (Israel Houghton)

- ▶ “He Knows My Name” (Francesca Battistelli)
- ▶ “Holy” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Come Away” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Dance With Me” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Everything” (Jesus Culture)

Prayer

“Papa, you are a good, good father and I know I am loved by you. I want to know you more, to know your heart, to spend time with you, intimate time. More and more and more. In everything that happens today, can we walk through it together? Can you show me what my day looks like through your eyes? And fill me with your love for all those who call on your Name, who like me, are people of destiny, deeply loved.”

Petition

During this week, pray for:

Our Church

- that we resonate with Papa’s love for us
- that we love each other with his love
- that people coming in find a place of love, acceptance and belonging
- that we emulate the Father’s love by being spiritual fathers and mothers that pursue sons and daughters
- that we have a sense of family with all the churches of our community

Our Families

- that our dads and mums (and mature men and women in the church) are great role models, reflecting God’s glory and showing the heart of Papa in their lives
- that those who do not have such role models will find their place of belonging in our church family
- that our kids will have great futures with great families
- that our families will be protected

- that our families will develop great family values for all aspects of their life together
- that we would grasp and be overwhelmed by Papa's love for everyone in our church family and to show that love practically in acts of kindness and service

Us Individually

- that you would have a healthy esteem based on Papa's view of you
- that you would be physically healthy
- that you would be psychologically healthy
- that you would be relationally healthy
- that you would be socially healthy
- that you would prosper in every way

Testimony

Go to our church Facebook group and post testimonies of what God is telling you and encounters you are having with him.

Journal

Write down any key thoughts Papa speaks to you this week.

Week Two

Discovering the Father's Heart ...for our community

Key Verses

Matthew 18:12-14

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

1 John 4:9-11

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Luke 15:20

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry.

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Isaiah 62:6-7

I have set watchmen on your walls, O City of God; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give him no rest till he establishes and till he makes his City a praise in the earth.

Jeremiah 29:7

And seek the prosperity of the city where I have caused you to be carried away, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its prosperity you will have prosperity.

Jonah 4:11

And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?

Hebrews 13:1-2

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Declaration

Hornsby and its districts are loved by Papa.

He stands at heaven's gates seeking for sign of them coming to him.

Every single person in our community matters, because Papa does not will for any to perish.

He longs for this region to prosper in every way, spiritually, socially, economically.

We declare revival over this land.

We declare a new day where people awaken to the love of their heavenly Father.

We declare freedom from judgement because the love of God has stepped in on behalf of this land.

Devotion Songs

- ▶ “For The Sake Of The World” (Bethel Music)
- ▶ “Glorious” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “The First And The Last” (Hillsong)
- ▶ “God Of The City” (Chris Tomlin)
- ▶ “Others” (Israel Houghton)
- ▶ “Tear Down The Walls” (Hillsong)

Prayer

“Papa, our suburbs need you. We know you love the many tens of thousands of people around us. Fill us with your love for them so we can truly reflect you to our world. Show us how to love in word and deed, in message and action. Cause us, your people, to rise up in believing prayer for our community. Establish your Kingdom within our community, Papa.”

Petition

During this week, pray for:

Our Community

- for a spiritual awakening to the Father’s love
- for protection over the vulnerable in our community
- for homes to be safe havens of love and honour
- for businesses to prosper in opportunity, influence and favour
- for schools to flourish
- for youth to discover the purpose they were designed for
- for new Australians to find a home and place to give into our society
- for our government to be based on vision and your values
- for our streets to be filled with dancing and celebration and peace
- for our health to prosper
- for creativity to flourish

Our Church

- for us to all gain Papa's love for our people
- for our individual witness to our families, streets, workplaces to increase
- for our Kickstart Holiday programmes to impact kids and families alike and many to find the love of God
- for our English Classes to impact new Australians and bring many of them into relationship with Papa God
- for our Wildcats Youth ministry to introduce revival across the teenagers of our community
- for our Not2Young kids outreach to grow in impact into the children of our community
- for our Street Ministry to prosper in taking the power and love of Papa God into our streets
- for our outreach ministry to homeless people to prosper in bringing hope to those in the margins of our society

Testimony

Go to our church Facebook group and post testimonies of what God is telling you and encounters you are having with him.

Journal

Write down any key thoughts Papa speaks to you this week.

Week Three

Discovering Jesus' Heart ...for us

Key Verses

John 8:36

Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 6:45

It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

Hebrews 9:14

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

John 15:15-16

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Matthew 12:49-50

And he stretched out his hand toward his disciples and said, "Here are my

mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

John 14:1

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:21

He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

John 15:9

As the Father loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love.

Romans 8:37-39

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3:17-19

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Declaration

I am loved by Jesus, who gave himself for me on the cross.

Nothing can separate me from his love.

He chose me, saved me, and appointed me to bear fruit in his Kingdom.

I live in his love and can never be shaken from his love for me.

In his Name, I am victorious, I conquer devils, I extend freedom, I am blessed.

I walk in light and shine Jesus' light to all around me.

I am bold in faith because I am loved by the One who inspires faith and hope in me.

My old life is over and I now live for the One who died for me.

Through his affection and desire, I am Jesus' friend, no longer a servant without privilege in his courts.

He shares his secrets with me and reveals his heart to me.

I am free from performance, expectations, addictions, anxiety, hopelessness, and helplessness.

Jesus is my brother and lover.

He is mine and I am his.

I am loved by the Saviour who died for me.

Devotion Songs

- ▶ "You Won't Relent" (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ "Simple Gospel" (United Pursuit)
- ▶ "Jesus At The Centre" (Israel Houghton)
- ▶ "Breathe Your Name" (Israel Houghton)
- ▶ "Forgiven" (Bethel Music)
- ▶ "Healer" (Bethel Music)
- ▶ "Let Heaven Shout" (Bethel Music)
- ▶ "My Soul Longs" (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ "I'm Never Going Back" (United Pursuit)
- ▶ "Unstoppable Love" (Jesus Culture)

Prayer

"Jesus, you shower me with your love and faith. I love you. I want to live more and more for you. Be my centre, the core of who I am. You paid such a wonderful price for me that I stand in awe of how greatly you value me. Cause my life to reflect the wonder of your passion, your faith, and your extravagant love. Fill me with compassion for those you are compassionate towards and lift me out of thinking of my life as mundane or meaningless. Help me to comprehend the immeasurable value you placed on me when you died to redeem me. I want

to love you more and more each day. Help me to grow closer to you with my every thought and desire.”

Petition

During this week, pray for:

Our Church

- for Jesus to be held in the highest honour
- for us to embrace each other as family
- for new people coming in to discover the power of Jesus’ Gospel
- for Jesus to remain at the centre of all we do

Our Families

- for devotion to Christ to take the central place
- for our homes to be places known for the unconditional, accepting love of Christ
- for a celebration of all that Jesus is doing every day

Us Individually

- to know Jesus personally
- to know our identity is found in Christ
- to be secure in his love
- to love what he loves
- to hear his voice
- to be committed to live for him in all our decision making and choices

Testimony

Go to our church Facebook group and post testimonies of what God is telling you and encounters you are having with him.

Journal

Write down any key thoughts Jesus speaks to you this week.

Week Four

Discovering Jesus' Heart ...for our community

Key Verses

1 Timothy 2:5-6

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 10:7-8

And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Matthew 13:45-46

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Matthew 9:36-39

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then he

said to his disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.”

Isaiah 40:11

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.

Matthew 23:37

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

John 10:15-16

As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Acts 10:38

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.

Declaration

We declare over Hornsby and its surrounding suburbs: The Kingdom is Near!

Awake Hornsby! This is your Year of Jubilee. Salvation has come.

The devil has no hold within these borders because Jesus has won the victory.

We claim the harvest that Jesus died to bring in.

Awake Hornsby! You are loved! Jesus holds his arms open to you.

Your richness does not consist of your wealth, but your people. They are precious pearls in Jesus' sight.

We declare a day of Harvest. Rise up all churches! Hold out the Good News of Jesus. Cast your nets wide. Prepare for a new day of revival.

The Kingdom is Here!

Devotion Songs

- ▶ “At The Cross” (Chris Tomlin)
- ▶ “Break Every Chain” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Did You Feel The Mountains Tremble” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “King Of Glory” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Revelation Song” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “More And More” (Israel Houghton)

Prayer

“Jesus, you appointed us to carry the Gospel to this community. Cause us to see those around us with your eyes. Build a passion among us to recognise those in our community that are far from you and to realise that we carry the hope of eternity. Teach us how to adopt our community and bring them into your family of love and acceptance. According to your promise, make us fishers of men, that we would become all things to all people that by all means we would save those you are calling into your Kingdom. Use us, Lord.”

Petition

During this week, pray for:

Our Community

- for the person of Jesus to be lifted above religion
- for an increased receptivity to the Gospel
- for people to begin hearing Jesus’ voice
- for an anthem of praise to rise from our streets
- for the name of Jesus to be held in honour

Our Church

- for us to grow in our understanding of the power and relevance of the Gospel
- for us to be equipped with practical tools to help us as we hold out the Good News

- for our various ministries to discover ways to enhance our outreach into our community
- to preach Jesus in word and action
- for us to unite together to embrace those that Jesus brings to us

Testimony

Go to our church Facebook group and post testimonies of what God is telling you and encounters you are having with him.

Journal

Write down any key thoughts Jesus speaks to you this week.

Week Five

Discovering the Spirit's Heart ...for us

Key Verses

Ephesians 1:12-14

That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of his glory. In him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Acts 1:8

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Zechariah 4:6

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts.

John 7:38-39

“He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those

believing in him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 14:16-18

And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Helper, that he may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; but you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 16:7

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you.

John 16:13-14

However, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak; and he will tell you things to come. He will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:5

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Ephesians 1:17

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Ephesians 5:18

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

Ephesians 6:17-18

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

Titus 3:5-6

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Declaration

I am loved and filled by the Spirit of God.

I delight in him and live to be filled to overflowing with his intoxicating Presence.

I walk in him, set free from guilt and condemnation, and renewed daily by his abundant blessing.

I do not trust in my own abilities because I walk in a realm of miracles, signs and wonders.

Because I have the Holy Spirit, I have access to all his fruit that transforms me into the image of my Saviour.

My inheritance in the Kingdom is guaranteed because I have the Holy Spirit, the assurance of all that is mine in Christ.

I am a Temple of the Holy Spirit, set apart, made glorious and radiant.

Because I am bought with a price and indwelt by the Holy One, I glorify God in my body and spirit, which are gloriously and wonderfully his.

I wield the Spirit's sword and my prayers are empowered by his indwelling presence.

The Holy Spirit teaches me, guides me and reveals the mind of God to me.

I have the greatest advantage in life, because in the Holy Spirit, I have the

constant presence of the One who delights in me and showers me with favour, authority and power.

I am loved by the Spirit of God.

Devotion Songs

- ▶ “Mighty Breath Of God” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “I Need You More” (Bethel Music)
- ▶ “Pursuit” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Song Of Solomon” (Jesus Culture)
- ▶ “Holy Spirit” (Jesus Culture)

Prayer

“Holy Spirit, you bring wisdom, truth, revelation and freedom. I love your Presence. I want you more and more. I love your gifts because in them I see you. I love the tangible sense of your Presence because I love you. You captivate my heart and fill my imagination with endless possibilities. Fill me again and again. I love hearing your voice. Speak to me again and again. Transform me daily into your image so that I may be a beautiful reflection of you to the world around me.”

Petition

During this week, pray for:

Our Church

- to become hungry for more of the Presence of the Spirit in our gatherings
- to long for more of the gifts of the Spirit
- to be a place where stepping out in the supernatural power of the Spirit is the norm
- to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit
- to keep in step with the Spirit
- to hold others accountable to what heaven says about them

Our Families

- to be places where we depend on the leading of the Spirit

- that prayer and dependence on the Spirit's power would be our first option during difficulties
- to be filled with the character traits of the Spirit

Us Individually

- to be filled with the Spirit
- to hear and follow the Spirit's leading
- to be hungry for all the supernatural gifts of the Spirit
- to be known as someone full of the fruits of the Spirit
- to pray in the Spirit
- to have prophetic insight into what the Spirit is saying

Testimony

Go to our church Facebook group and post testimonies of what God is telling you and encounters you are having with him.

Journal

Write down any key thoughts the Holy Spirit speaks to you this week.

Week Six

Discovering the Spirit's Heart ...for our community

Key Verses

Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Joel 2:28-29

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

John 16:8-11

And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Romans 15:16

That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-20

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies.

Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Declaration

Hornsby and districts, today is the day of salvation.

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me to proclaim freedom to you.

Your deliverance is here.

The Good News is for you.

This is a day of Holy Spirit outpouring.

I see a flood of the Spirit washing over this people.

Young and old together will step into their supernatural identity.

Together with all the saints, I declare that the promised Holy Spirit is poured out over cities just like Hornsby.

This is the day of Revival.

This is the day of reclaiming the lost inheritance.

Of all that the devil has stolen from this community, we declare a restoration.

Hornsby is set on the hills of Sydney, prophetically as a beacon.

We declare freedom, peace, and Holy Spirit awakening.

Devotion Songs

▶ "Holy Spirit" (Jesus Culture)

▶ "I Want To Know You More" (Jesus Culture)

▶ "Let It Rain" (Jesus Culture)

▶ “In Your Presence” (Jesus Culture)

▶ “Awakening” (Chris Tomlin)

Prayer

“Come Holy Spirit. Come in your power. Come in your grace. Set the captives free. Raise up your people, filled with your Spirit and power, and cause them to heal all who are being oppressed by the devil in this place. We need a revival, Holy Spirit, so we invite you into our hearts to burn afresh in us. Ignite in us the passion of our first love for you, and supernaturally increase our influence. Raise up your people in all the churches across our city and fill us again with a mighty Spirit baptism. Renew the day of your power and transform our city.”

Petition

During this week, pray for:

Our Community

- for revival
- for salvations
- for signs and wonders
- for heartfelt repentance
- for abandoned desire for your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven
- for opportunities to tell others what heaven says about them
- for deep conviction of our need for more of you
- for love to fill our streets

Our Church

- to be carriers of the Spirit’s Presence
- to be filled to overflowing with more and more of the Spirit
- to reflect the Spirit’s nature in us with increasing measure
- to be passionate ambassadors of heaven on earth

Testimony

Go to our church Facebook group and post testimonies of what God is telling you and encounters you are having with him.

Journal

Write down any key thoughts the Holy Spirit speaks to you this week.

You have put
gladness in
my heart,
More than in
the season
that their
grain and wine
increased.
Psalm 4:7



**COMMUNITY
CHURCH
HORNSBY**

www.cch.net.au

PO Box 487
Hornsby NSW 1630