

DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

PRAYER GUIDE



Welcome!

Have you ever had to exchange something before? We do this a lot in life, and I want to invite you to do it in a special way this week by fasting and praying. We're exchanging important things like food, time, and attention to create space to connect with God. There is hope and faith in this exchange because God wants to meet with us. He wants to fill that space with Himself. The invitation in the exchange is to taste and see that God is good. Fast and Pray to Taste and See.

That might sound strange to you, but we often need to do these kinds of things to create space in the flurry of activity we live out. Give up food to taste something greater and so life-infusing. God Himself - Father, Son, Holy Spirit is the offer for us in this exchange. Carve out time to pray, so that you can pay more attention to the Lord. God is always available to us, and when we create this space, we make this exchange; we choose to invite God even closer to us. That's amazing!

We have set five days aside for fasting and prayer. This is a five-day prayer guide to help you each day. You know your schedule best. Consider and plan intentionally how you can engage in fasting and prayer this week. Our team is planning to do a three day fast on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Some of us may do more; some of us may do less. We just want you to know that we are actively part of this together!

There are fasting guidelines in this guide. We recommend challenging yourself to a three day fast within the five days. Don't do this alone. Do this with your small group. Find one or two other people if you're not in a small group. Sharing this experience can be so encouraging and helpful. With that in mind, there's a Feast! We are going to get together as a church to wrap up these days of prayer and fasting. Sign up and join us for communion, a great meal, worship, and prayer on Sunday, October 25.

Experience His Goodness: A Five-Day Spiritual Formation Journey Through Psalm 34

The Good Life is found in the Good God.

Psalm 34 is an invitation. David has been through a lot. He has experienced God's protection, God's provision, God's nearness, and God's faithfulness. And his response is basically, "Come and see for yourself."

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Psalm 34:8

David doesn't just want us to **know** that God is good. He wants us to **experience** His goodness. That's what we're going to do together this week. Each day, we'll slow down a little. We'll pay attention. We'll pray. We'll ask God to open our eyes and our hearts. And we'll pray not only for ourselves, but for our church and for the city God has placed us in.

So, let's take five days and ask a simple question: **Where can I experience the goodness of God today?** Simple four-direction prayer rhythm every day:

- Pray for ourselves — What is God doing in me?
- Pray for our church — What is God doing among us?
- Pray for our city — What is God doing around us?
- Pray for our global partners — What is God doing around the world?

The goodness of God isn't meant to stop with us. We receive it, experience it together, and become people through whom that goodness reaches our city and the nations.

How Do I Fast?

I want you to know some key things about this week. Why do we fast and pray?

1. Jesus told us to do it.

Fasting and praying go well together because Jesus modeled them for us, the apostles did it, and it's a way of expressing our faith and taking promises of Scripture seriously.

2. It shows we want more of God in our lives.

Fasting and praying are ways to tell God that we are desperate for more of Him in our lives.

3. It's good for us.

Fasting is a profound spiritual practice that enriches our spirit, mind, emotions, and body. It's not just about abstaining from food; it's a cleansing and purifying process that reveals our true priorities and brings us closer to God.

4. It can bring us closer together.

Consider fasting with a friend or small group. Fasting and prayer can be challenging, but when done together, it fosters a sense of unity and togetherness. You can even break the fast together at the Feast, strengthening your bond as a community.

Some examples of fasting:

- Three-day solid food fast
We are inviting everyone to this type of fast if they can
- One meal per day for 1-5 days
- 16-24 hour fast
- Alternative fasts of media or caffeine or sugar – anything that is common in your life

If necessary, check with your physician. Be smart and engage how you can. We want to encourage a healthy relationship with Jesus, yourself, and each other.

You may want a separate journal, or journalling app – somewhere with more space to process your interactions with Jesus.

How to Plan This Week

Prepare for this special week by setting up your schedule in advance. This will help you make the most of the spiritual journey.

1. Focus on God. Fasting is ultimately about Him and not us. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and lead you. What is He trying to say and show you, and to us as a church?
2. Find your “why.” What do you want to talk to Jesus about during this time?
3. Find a fasting buddy – seriously, who will you fast and pray with?
4. Set some goals of a time, place, and what you are going to fast from.
For example, starting Wednesday, I will fast for three full days and pray with others during lunch.

Ask Jesus to do more than you can ask or imagine!

Here’s some space for you to write in your plan for this week:

1. I am fasting this week because _____

2. I want to talk to Jesus about _____

3. My fasting buddy is _____

4. I am going to fast during this time _____

5. I am going to fast in these places _____

6. I am going to fast from _____

7. I am going to be part of these activities _____

Praying for Local & Global Partners

At Heartland, we count it a privilege to be able to partner with other organizations and spread the good news of Jesus Christ. We have local and global partners. Going through the list below, invite the Holy Spirit to lead you and speak to you as you pray for the partners of Heartland.

Local Partners

A Safe Place

A Safe Place is a women's shelter supported by the non-profit organization Strathcona Shelter Society Ltd. Their mission is to end domestic abuse and violence in the lives of women and their children and impacting public policy through education and awareness.

Bridging the Gap

This collaborative support program provides services to help people in crisis get back on their feet. This is a partnership of government, churches, and non-profits coming together.

CapitalCare Strathcona

This facility provides long-term care for seniors. Heartland volunteers provide care and support to residents through visits, church services, and prayer.

Family & Community Services

Family & Community Services' goal is to help build a safe, supported, and connected community that encourages the well-being of children, youth, adults, older adults, and families.

Palm Ministries

Palm Ministries is a group of people compelled by God's love to share His love by word and deed with our new neighbours in Canada.

Pregnancy Care Centre

The PCC provides care and support for those facing an unexpected pregnancy. Services include pregnancy testing, parenting preparation, adoption support, and post-abortion care.

Saffron Centre – Sexual Assault Centre

The Saffron Centre is a non-profit organization working to support the healing and empowerment of those who have been affected by sexual trauma and violence.

Shiloh

Shiloh is a Christian organization that offers summer camp and year-round connections programs for children and youth ages 7-17 living in high-risk and vulnerable situations.

Volunteer Strathcona

Volunteer Strathcona connects volunteers with opportunities, enabling the development of local organizations to meet various social needs in our community.

Global Partners

SAM Ministries – Janette Stone

In seeking to love God and love people, SAM Ministries trains and develops leaders and cares for children through various means. Janette works as a Child Sponsorship Coordinator with SAM Ministries.

Swaziland – Bezulu

We partner with the town of Bezulu, an abandoned mining town taken over for housing orphans in Swaziland. Bezulu also operates many viable businesses such as a honey-making operation, bottled drinking water facility, lumber mill, and bakery.

El Salvador – Shelter Canada

Shelter Canada is an organization that works with families to build homes in El Salvador. Heartland's partnership with them has helped to build approximately 115 houses and raised funds for 25 more.

The Alliance Canada – International Workers

The Alliance's International Workers are supported through the Global Advance Fund. To learn more about this ministry check out thealliancecanada.ca.

New Beginnings – Mexico

New Beginnings works to break the cycle of poverty through education, aid programs, and opportunities for individual income generation.

Pablo & Silvina Papavero – Olivo Verde Ministry

The Papavero's serve to create healthy faith communities that help individuals grow and develop a Christ-like character, bringing fruit to God's Kingdom.

Day 1: Slow Down — Taste and See

Read Psalm 34:1–3, 8.

“Taste and see that the LORD is good...”

I love that phrase. **Taste and see.** David doesn't say, “Think about God's goodness.” He says, **“Taste it. Experience it. Pay attention to it.”** The Good God is always good. The question is whether we're slowing down enough to notice.

We live in a hurry.

There is always another email. Another text. Another meeting. Another thing on the list. Even good things can keep us moving so fast that we miss what God is doing right in front of us.

So maybe the first step this week is really simple: **Slow down.**

God's goodness isn't something we have to manufacture. It's already there.

Like the warmth of the sun. Like breathing fresh air. Like laughter with a friend. Like the beauty of creation. Like worship.

Like a moment when you realize, *“God, You really are here.”*

The goodness of God is all around us.

But have we slowed down enough to taste and see?

Prayer Exercise: A Goodness Pause

Let's try something together. Find five quiet minutes today. Put your phone away. Sit somewhere comfortable. Take a few slow breaths. You don't have to accomplish anything.

Just be with God.

Then ask: **“Good God, where have You been good to me?”**

Don't force an answer. Just pay attention. Maybe something comes to mind immediately. Maybe it doesn't. Either way, simply sit with God and notice.

When something good comes to mind, say: **“Thank You, Good God.”**

Pray for Our Church

Today, let's pray that we would become a church that **notices God**.

Pray that we wouldn't be so busy doing things for God that we miss God Himself.

Pray for a deeper awareness of His presence among us.

Pray that our worship, our conversations, our serving and our everyday lives would become places where we recognize His goodness.

Pray for Our City

Take a few minutes to think about our city. Where do you see goodness? Where do you see people serving, caring, creating, helping, and loving? Ask God to help you see what He is already doing.

And then pray: **“God, show me where You are already at work in our city, and show me how I can join You.”**

Pray for Our Global Partners:

Pray that our global partners would have space to slow down and notice God's goodness in the middle of their work and ministry.

Pray for moments when they can rest, worship, listen and become aware of God's presence.

Pray especially for partners who are carrying heavy responsibilities or living in places where ministry can be exhausting.

Pray: **“Good God, help our partners around the world to slow down and see where You are already at work. Refresh them with Your presence and goodness.”**

Today: Slow down. Look around. Notice something good.

And when you do, simply say: **“Thank You, Good God.”**

Bottom Line: The Good Life is found in the Good God.

DAY 2: Bow Down — Ask God for New Eyes

Read Psalm 34:4–10.

We need to recognize something. The problem isn't that God isn't good. Sometimes we've simply stopped seeing it. Our eyes get distracted. Our hearts get crowded.

Our spiritual taste buds can become a little... dull.

Jesus talked about this when He told Nicodemus that we need to be **born again** — born of the Spirit. We need God to do something in us that we can't do on our own.

We need new eyes.

We need new desires.

We need a new capacity to see and taste God's goodness.

So today, we're going to **bow down**. If you can take the physical posture, that's great, but more than anything, it's a heart posture, a spiritual posture.

Not because God is distant or harsh. But because He is God—and we're not.

The world doesn't revolve around me. And it doesn't revolve around you either.

The endlessly good God is at the center of everything. And that's actually really good news.

Prayer Exercise: Ask for New Eyes

Find a quiet place. Open your hands as a physical way of saying, “God, I'm open to You.”

Then pray slowly: **“Good God, give me new eyes.”**

Ask Him:

- What have I stopped noticing?
- Where have I become distracted?
- What have I started believing about You that isn't true?
- Where are You inviting me to see differently?
- What do You want me to notice today?

Don't rush.

Let God speak.

You may want to write down whatever comes to mind.

And then simply pray: **“Holy Spirit, open the eyes of my heart.”**

Pray for Our Church

Pray that God would give our church **spiritual eyes**.

Pray for discernment.

Pray that we would recognize what the Holy Spirit is doing among us.

Pray that Scripture would come alive to us—not simply as information, but as the living Word of God, shaping us.

Pray that we would become increasingly sensitive to God's presence and God's direction.

Pray for Our City

Pray for the people in our city who are searching.

Some may not know what they're searching for.

Some may be asking questions about God.

Some may be far from faith but surprisingly close to Jesus.

Pray that God would open their eyes.

And pray that He would use us to help people **taste and see** His goodness.

Pray for Our Global Partners

Pray that God would give our global partners new eyes to see what He is doing.

Pray for wisdom, discernment, and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Pray that they would know how to respond to the opportunities God puts in front of them and that people they serve would have their own eyes opened to the goodness of God.

Pray: *“Holy Spirit, give our partners new eyes. Help them see what You are doing, and help the people they serve taste and see that You are good.”*

Today: At some point today, stop and ask: **“God, what are You helping me see right now?”**

Pay attention.

Bottom Line: Bow down and ask God for new eyes.

DAY 3: Receive His Protection — Let Him Protect You

Read Psalm 34:4–7.

David says:

“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

And then comes this beautiful picture:

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”

David has experienced God's protection.

And he's inviting us to trust the same God.

This doesn't mean life will always be easy.

Psalm 34 doesn't promise that God's people will never experience trouble. In fact, later David says, “The righteous person may have many troubles.”

But the promise is that **God is with us in them.**

He's got you. That's sometimes what we need to hear.

We spend so much energy trying to control everything.

We worry about our families.

Our future.

Our finances.

Our health.

Our kids.

Our church.

Our city.

The list can get pretty long.

Today, what if we simply let God be God?

Let Him protect you.

Prayer Exercise: Release Your Fears

Think of three things you're carrying right now.

Maybe they're big.

Maybe they're small.

Name them before God.

One at a time pray, **“God, this is bigger than me. But it isn't bigger than You.”**

Then physically open your hands.

Imagine placing that concern into God's hands.

You don't have to pretend the fear isn't real.

You're simply choosing not to carry it alone.

Finish with, **“Good God, You are here. You've got me.”**

Pray for Our Church

Pray for God's protection over our church.

Pray for our families.

Pray for our leaders.

Pray for our children and students.

Pray for those who are walking through difficult circumstances.

Ask God to protect us from fear, division, discouragement, and anything that would pull us away from Jesus.

And pray that our church would become a place where people experience the safety and goodness of God.

Pray for Our City

Think about people in our city who are vulnerable.

People who are struggling financially.

People who are isolated.

People who are experiencing homelessness.

People who are working difficult jobs.

People who are walking through crisis.

Pray: **“God, protect those who need Your protection today.”**

And then ask, **“Is there somewhere You want me to be part of that protection?”**

Sometimes God answers our prayers by inviting us to participate in them.

Pray for Our Global Partners

Pray for God's protection and presence over our global partners, their families and their ministries.

Some serve in places where there is instability, opposition, poverty, danger or significant uncertainty. Pray that they would know that God is with them.

Pray that fear would not control them and that they would experience God's peace and protection.

Pray: **“Good God, protect our partners. Be near to them and their families. Give them courage when they are afraid and remind them, ‘You've got me.’”**

Today: When fear rises today, don't immediately try to solve it.

Stop.

Breathe.

And pray, **“God, You are here. You've got me.”**

Bottom Line: Let the Good God protect you.

DAY 4: Get Close — God Is Near the Brokenhearted

Read Psalm 34:15–20.

This might be one of the most beautiful parts of Psalm 34.

David says:

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

God is not distant from people who are hurting.

He gets close.

His eyes are watching.

His ears are listening.

His face is turned toward His people.

Sometimes we carry an image of God that isn't actually God.

Maybe we imagine Him as disappointed.

Gloomy.

Far away.

Hard to please.

But a gloomy God is a deficient God.

The Good God comes close.

And that's exactly what we see in Jesus.

God didn't stay far away.

He came near.

He took on flesh.

He entered our world.

Jesus gets close.

And He still gets close today.

So today, we're going to practice doing the same.

Prayer Exercise: Sit With God

Find five quiet minutes.

Don't read anything.

Don't try to fix anything.

Just sit with God.

If you're hurting, tell Him.

If you're tired, tell Him.

If you're angry, tell Him.

If you're grateful, tell Him.

If you don't know what you're feeling, that's okay too.

Simply pray, **“Jesus, I'm here. And I'm glad You're here.”**

Then sit quietly.

You may not feel anything dramatic.

That's okay.

This isn't about creating an emotional experience.

It's about becoming aware of the God who is already near.

Pray for Our Church

There are people in our church who are hurting right now.

Some of us know their stories.

Some of us don't.

Some people are carrying grief.

Some are carrying disappointment.

Some are lonely.

Some are exhausted.

Some are quietly wondering if anyone sees them.

Pray that they would experience the nearness of God.

And pray that **we would become the kind of church that gets close.**

That we would notice.

That we would listen.

That we would care.

That we would show up.

Pray for Our City

Think about the people in our city who are often unseen.

The lonely.

The elderly.

The newcomer.

The single parent.

The person struggling with addiction.

The person who has no one to call.

The person who looks fine on the outside but is falling apart inside.

Pray: **“Jesus, come close to the brokenhearted in our city.”**

And then ask, **“Jesus, is there someone You want me to get close to?”**

Pray for Our Global Partners

Pray that our global partners would experience the nearness of God, especially when they are lonely, discouraged, grieving or far from home.

Pray that God would surround them with good people who listen, encourage and care for them.

And pray for the people they serve—that those who are brokenhearted or forgotten would experience the love and nearness of Jesus.

Pray: **“Jesus, come close to our partners today. Meet them in their loneliness and strengthen them. And come close to the brokenhearted and hurting people they serve.”**

Today: Reach out to one person today.

You don't need to fix anything.

Just get close.

Send a text.

Make a phone call.

Sit with someone.

Ask a better question.

Listen.

Sometimes love looks like simply being there.

Bottom Line: The Good God is near. Get close.

DAY 5: Experience His Goodness Together — Give Away What You've Received

Read Psalm 34:1–3, 11–14.

Psalm 34 begins with David saying:

“I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.”

And then he says:

“Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.”

Do you hear it?

Together.

David doesn't want to experience God's goodness by himself.

He wants other people to experience it too.

That's part of what it means to be the church.

God has designed us to experience His goodness through one another.

And He's designed us to **be His goodness to one another.**

We receive. And then we give. We experience. And then we share. We taste and see.

And then we invite someone else to the table.

That's the beautiful cycle of the Christian life.

Prayer Exercise: Remember and Give Thanks

Take a few minutes today and look back over the past week. Where have you experienced God's goodness? Maybe it was something big. Maybe it was incredibly ordinary. Maybe God protected you. Maybe He gave you wisdom. Maybe He met you in a hard moment. Maybe someone encouraged you. Maybe you simply became aware of His presence.

Write down three things.

Then thank God for each one.

After that, ask: **“Good God, who could I encourage with this?”**

Maybe there's someone who needs to hear your story. Maybe there's someone who needs prayer. Maybe there's someone who needs a meal, a phone call, an invitation or simply some encouragement.

Don't keep the goodness to yourself.

Pray for Our Church

Today, let's pray for our church to become a people who:

Know God's goodness.

Notice God's goodness.

Talk about God's goodness.

Live God's goodness.

Share God's goodness.

Pray that we would be a church where people encounter Jesus.

A church where people belong.

A church where people discover their gifts and use them for the common good.

A church where the goodness of God becomes visible in the way we love one another and serve our community.

Pray for Our City

Today, let's pray a blessing over our city.

Pray for our schools.

Our businesses.

Our neighbourhoods. Our families.

Our government and civic leaders. Our churches.

Our community organizations.

The people who are struggling. The people who are thriving. The people who are searching for hope. Ask God to bring His goodness into every corner of our city.

And then pray: **“Good God, make us part of what You are doing here.”**

Pray for Our Global Partners

Pray that our global partners would experience the goodness of God through community.

Pray for healthy relationships between our church and our partners. Pray that we wouldn't simply support them from a distance, but that we would genuinely be connected with what God is doing through them.

Pray that our partners would see the fruit of their ministry and have opportunities to share God's goodness with others.

And pray that we would be a blessing to them as they are a blessing to others.

Pray: **“Good God, thank You for our global partners. Help us experience Your goodness together. Show us how to encourage, support and bless them as they serve You around the world.”**

Today: Give some goodness away. Encourage someone. Serve someone.

Invite someone.

Pray for someone.

Share your story.

Do something kind that costs you a little time or attention.

And remember:

You don't have to manufacture God's goodness. You've already received it.

Now give it away.

Bottom Line: The Good Life is found in the Good God—and it's meant to be experienced together.

A Final Prayer

Good God,

Thank You that You are always good.

Thank You for Your protection.

Thank You for Your wisdom.

Thank You for Your nearness.

Thank You that You are just and that one day You will make all things right.

Jesus, thank You for coming near.

Thank You that You don't leave us to figure out life on our own.

You are our Good Shepherd.

You are our way, our truth and our life.

Holy Spirit, open our eyes.

Wake up our hearts.

Give us spiritual taste buds to recognize and experience God's goodness all around us.

Help us slow down.

Help us bow down.

Help us get close.

And then help us give away what we've received.

Make us a church that knows Your goodness, notices Your goodness, talks about Your goodness, and embodies Your goodness in our city.

And as we go into this week, keep bringing us back to the invitation of Psalm 34,
“Taste and see that the LORD is good.”

Amen.

This Week: Don't make this complicated.

Just keep coming back to three simple invitations:

Slow Down. Pay attention to God.

Bow Down. Ask God for new eyes.

Get Close. Receive His presence and give His goodness away.

And every day, ask yourself, “Where can I taste and see the goodness of God today?”

Because here's the truth we're going to keep coming back to:

The Good Life is found in the Good God.