

This year's back-to-school season really hit home for me when we took our youngest to pick out a backpack for kindergarten. There, in the aisles upon aisles of school supplies and knick-knacks for teachers, I could feel the rush of hundreds of families planning for the 2026–27 academic year kicking into high gear. Drop-off and pick-up schedules, homework, after-school programs, sports practices, screen time limits, and bedtime routines are all being negotiated in real time today across our community by families, teachers, and students (even as we look to make the most of the fleeting summer days).

So much to do. So little time. This mentality pervades many seasons of life.

Better hurry! Right? Or we'll fall behind. Our kids will fall behind. Or our finances. So, we have to pick up our pace. This is the story the culture tells us. And how I feel most days.

Yet, this way of being comes with a huge risk. In fact, according to spiritual writer John Mark Comer, "Hurry is violence on the soul." *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*

So how does our faith help us think about this season?

The prophet Isaiah provides a fascinating prescription for the pace at which God's people are to move. It's a little-recognized verse from a section of his writing where he is actually inspiring God's people to get ready for a big move and long journey—from exile to a return home—but even in this urgent call to action, he warns against a hurried life.

Isaiah 52:12 declares: "For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard."

Hasty decisions, flighty behavior, running from one thing to the next—these tendencies seem to be part of the default mode of most people today, both in the church and outside of it. But according to this ancient Word from Isaiah, our faith gives us two core insights that allow us to move differently.

(1) When we act in accordance with God's will in our lives, we can trust that "the Lord will go before" us. This reminds us that God has prepared good for us to walk into long before we ever enrolled our kids in their respective schools, signed up for a certain team, or committed to volunteer in a given ministry. The God of the Bible routinely goes before us to make a way, part the waters, open the doors, and prepare divine appointments. It's part of who He is.

(2) When we're moving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have the God of Israel as "our rear guard." The metaphor basically says God has our backs. So we don't have to be paranoid or anxious. We don't have to look over our shoulders every other moment, overfunction, or helicopter over our babies. Not because the world isn't filled with challenges and troubles, but because God will never leave or forsake us.

So, in the excitement and stress of this back-to-school season, as we find ourselves hurrying from this to that, let's pause. Check in on your soul. Remember the words of Isaiah. That date on the calendar you're worried about, the Lord has been working ahead of schedule to prepare you for it. That dear little one—child or grandchild—that you're watching walk off with a backpack, whether to TK or university, the God of Israel is big enough to have their back.

So let's take a step back, take a breath, and not hurry through this back-to-school season, but let our souls feel God's presence with us in the midst of it.

Peace,

-pastor brad

August 2026

New Life Community

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 <i>Memory Verse for this month: 1 John 4:18-19</i>	27 <i>"... We love each other because He loved us first."</i>	 BACK TO SCHOOL <i>Pray for students, teachers, staff, families</i>	29 <i>Open Gate Food Distribution</i> 6:30 PM Prayer	30 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	31	1 <i>Join us for a Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser tomorrow, & help send someone to Women's Retreat!</i>
2 10 AM Worship Service/ Communion 11:15 Fundraiser lunch 5 PM Youth Group	3	4	5 <i>Open Gate Food Distribution</i> 6:30 PM Prayer	6 <i>DUSD Meetings (all day)</i> 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	7 <i>Women's Retreat deposits due by Sunday</i>	8 <i>Give a donation for MCC school kit supplies or sew bags through August 16!</i>
9 10 AM Worship Service/ Baptism (Retreat deposits due) 5 PM Youth Group	10	11 10 AM Summer LIFT Women's Bible Study	12 <i>Dinuba, Immanuel & KCUSD schools begin Open Gate Food Distr.</i> 6:30 PM Prayer	13 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	14	15
16 10 AM Worship Service Kids' Promotion Day 5 PM Youth Group	17	18	19 <i>Open Gate Food Distribution</i> 6:30 PM Prayer	20 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	21	22
23 10 AM Worship Service 5 PM Youth Group	24	25	26 <i>Open Gate Food Distribution</i> 6:30 PM Prayer	27 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	28 <i>28-30 Hartland Fall Festival -----</i>	29 <i>Hartland Fall Festival, continued</i>
30 10 AM Worship Service (guest Angel Menchaca) 11:15 AM Family Meal 5 PM Youth Leaders Mtg	31 	NOTES SEPTEMBER PREVIEW: 6--Communion Sunday; 7--Labor Day holiday; 8--LIFT Women's Bible Study begins fall schedule; 9--Women's Retreat balances due; 11-13--Women's Retreat at Shaver Lake; 20--MBF Wills & Estate Planning Workshop; 23--"See You At the Pole" Prayer Gatherings; 27--Family Meal; TBA--Men's Bible Study resumes; TBA--Members' Meeting Calendar accurate as of 7/29/26--most events also on our website calendar at www.newlifedinuba.org				