

# OAKS

**Prayer & Fasting  
Devotional Guide**



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Day 1 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
JP Cannon

## **A Heart for Growth**

Growing up my family worked hard to build and maintain the flower beds around our home. I can still feel the bouncing and rattling of the front end tiller I was given to use to help prepare the ground. Each time the metal tines struck a rock or compact soil, the machine would leap off the ground. My small 9 year old frame felt the extremes like wrestling a bull! All of the effort was to ensure the soil was prepared to receive and produce. The lesson I learned tilling and working the soil is fresh in my mind when I read Jesus's Parable of the Sower. He taught that only the good soil — one who hears His word and puts it into practice — produces a crop.

You can read the Parable of the Sower in the following passages:  
Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15

Two scripture verses come to mind concerning this principle:

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10 ESV.*

*"So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls." James 1:21 NLT.*

### Application

As you fast and pray ask the Lord to till up your heart breaking through any unforgiveness, bitterness, shame, and pain. Allow Him to prepare it to be good soil, ready to receive His Word, and able to produce a great harvest!

### Prayer Focus

Lord, bless our stewardship and faithfulness with an abundant harvest this year!

Day 2 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Richard Bass

### ***Help with the Harvest***

In my life, I was counted among those people living in darkness — a life of drugs with no hope. Throughout those years, I can remember different times God would send people into my path to plant dormant seeds of hope that were hidden deep inside the chaos and confusion I called life. I had no understanding of the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus. I didn't have an awe inspiring moment when Jesus stepped in and everything changed. What I did have was men who walked into my life and loved me where I was, especially when I couldn't even love myself. The Gospel is the beginning, and a lot of times it's not hearing the gospel — it's the action of living out of a heart filled with enough love to get real. This helps you see the value in someone else's life on the other side of the cross. Today, because of the selfless acts of love in my darkest hours of men and women planting seeds that wouldn't sprout for years along with many years of others helping cultivate and nourish those sprouts, I have 12 years sober a wife who chases Jesus and kids who love the Lord. I have had opportunities to go back into prisons, rehabs, and even traveling the south sharing my testimony of what one person stopping to plant or water these seeds of hope in someone else's life can and will do.

Bible reference — Ananias being sent to help Paul:  
Acts 9:10-18

The scripture that is on my heart:

*"No one has a greater love [nor a stronger commitment] than to lay down his own life for his friends." John 15:13*

#### Application

As you read this there was probably a moment etched in the fabric of time that you wanted to share with someone and didn't, or maybe you even felt it was a waste to share. It wasn't. Keep sharing, keep loving, keep on holding on — God's hand is on you to be a helper with the harvest. As you fast and pray ask God to give you divine appointment and boldness to share where your hope comes from and how change came about in your life.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for the harvest, and bless us with more laborers to work along side of us!

Day 3 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025

Matt Brock

### ***Developing the Design***

Like most of us, at some point in your life you took on the task of putting together a puzzle. Whether it's a 300 or 3000 piece puzzle, you are locked in getting it put together. You start with the edges of the puzzle and, piece by piece, slowly and diligently get it done. But, just when you think you are landing the plane to put those final pieces together, someone bumps the table and the puzzle slides off — breaking into pieces. It's like slow motion watching everything you've worked so hard to put together fall to the ground. The anger, the frustration, and all the feelings rush to the surface as if all of life fell to the ground. Or maybe you stand there silently in disbelief. Perhaps you want to cuss. The holier ones may even want to pray for the person that bumped the table and messed things up. All the feelings! However, you gather yourself, take a deep breath, take a knee, and start gathering each little piece, put them in the box, and start all over. Has that ever happened to you? SO annoying.

The same can be said about our lives. You start developing the design of your life piece by piece, decision after decision, working towards a beautiful picture of the life you dreamed of having. You are so close to putting the final pieces together, then all of a sudden something happens! Whether out of your control or not, the life you were putting together gets bumped and the pieces are scattered all around you. The anger, the frustration, and all the feelings rush to the surface as you stand there silently in disbelief. After assessing the damage you take a breath, kneel down, and start picking up the pieces as you start trying to put them back together. Unfortunately, some of the pieces are too damaged to put back together so you have to pivot. It stings. It hurts. It's painful. It's confusing. All the things. The rebuilding process can be daunting and exhausting, causing you to want to throw in the towel and quit. In Romans 8, the whole chapter is basically talking about how Jesus literally came into the world, will come into our personal lives, take the scattered pieces, and give us the strength to move forward. He can take all the broken pieces, add some new ones, and develop you into the person He designed you designed to be.

Key verse to focus on while praying and fasting:

*“Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God’s Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That’s why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.”*  
Romans 8:26-28

### Application

As you pray and fast be reminded that life happens, the good and the bad will happen. Be encouraged that God sent Jesus to walk with us through the valleys of whatever we face. He is able to take it all, the good and the bad, put it all together and develop the designed life He has for you.

### Prayer Focus

Lord, help us steward the talents and gifts of others well with instruction and opportunities to grow.

Day 4 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Brandy Williams

### ***Serving the Saints***

Have you ever walked through a season of life where you knew you were going to need help? Most of us have, and if you haven't yet, get ready! God clearly calls us to actively care for and support each other during times like sickness, crisis, death, life changes, births, weddings, and the list could keep going! This is done through demonstrating love and compassion to jump in and meet needs — physical, emotional, and spiritual. We are to function as a community that takes care of one another...serving the saints.

This may seem overwhelming, and you might even wonder where would you even begin? Sometimes it's as simple as sharing a verse with someone going through a hard time or stopping to pray with someone. Another small thing that make a big impact is being present (offering encouragement and listening with empathy) in a time of illness, a crisis, or the death of someone close to that person. You are also serving the saints when you participate in church activities, build relationships with other members, and get involved in a Serve Team.

This concept can be seen in the Parable of the Good Samaritan:  
Luke 10:25-37

A few scripture verses to keep in mind regarding this principle:

*“Equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12 CSB*

*“For God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you demonstrated for His name by serving the saints—and by continuing to serve them.” Hebrews 6:10 CSB*

*“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45 CSB*

#### Application

As you fast and pray ask the Lord to increase your desire to serve others within your family, your friend group, your workplace, and your church community. Allow Him to give you opportunities, guidance, and strength as you choose to be present for those in need while acting with generosity and compassion as you serve others!

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, help us to see the opportunities to support and encourage others as they serve.

Day 5 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Phillip Williams

### **Christ in Commerce**

Did you know that your workplace is a mission field? That even working at a secular job is working in ministry? Christian values like ethical conduct, integrity, fairness, and love can be interwoven throughout the work day as you apply Christian principles into your workplace interactions. As a Christian, people are watching how you live your life — customers, other employees, your boss, and even competitors.

As believers we are a chosen people, set apart. We are called to shine the light of Jesus through all we do, even while at work. Being a follower of Christ should be so entwined in our DNA that we don't settle for just being a "Sunday Christian" but actively live out the faith that has transformed every area of our life. While today's economy can be a bit precarious at times, it's even more important to live out your faith on display through your actions and interactions with others!

Verses to consider:

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." Colossians 3:23*

*"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8*

#### Application

As you fast and pray today, ask God to show you ways that you can be used by Him to share the Gospel, spoken or unspoken, in every interaction with others in your workplace. Allow Him to guide and direct the way you live every day and not just on Sundays.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, give us favor in the market place and influence to reach others.

Day 6 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Heather Bates

### **Honoring Others**

The Bible is pretty clear that we should show honor to others (1 Peter 2:17), and not just the ones we “feel” deserve to be honored. While I’m sure we can agree that all honor belongs to God — He honored us by creating each one of us to bear His image. The level of value that God has for us is the catalyst that prompts us to honor each other, our fellow image bearers.

As I’m sure you’ve experienced, at times this can be difficult to do! Especially if you feel as though you have NOT been shown honor. But the call to honor others does not come with a disclaimer of “show honor unless they have done x, y, or z.” During times like this, we have to rely on and submit to the power of the Holy Spirit to both guard and guide our actions and reactions. It’s a tall order, but it’s SO worth it!

Scripture to consider:

*“Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor.”*  
*Romans 12:10*

*“Honor everyone. Love the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”* 1 Peter 2:17

### Application

While praying and fasting, ask God to reveal ways you need to make adjustments in the ways you show honor to others and show you how He sees the people in your life. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your words and actions to show honor as you make an intentional effort to uplift and encourage those around you, treating others with the same grace and compassion that have been so freely given to you!

### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for giving us the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the service and sacrifice of others. We pray that they see you in our actions!



Day 7 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Tamara Cannon

### **One Body**

Every part of our physical body needs to work together for it to function the way God intended. From our skeletal system to our muscular system to our neurological system, every part has to be in alignment for us to feel our best. Think about a time you've been sick or had an injury. Your thoughts are so focused on feeling bad or what hurts that it's hard to find the energy to do (let alone enjoy doing) what needs to be done at work or even at home. The same is true for the Body of Christ — the church. While it's made up of individuals, we are a part of a bigger whole...just like the human body! Regardless of what gifts and abilities you have to offer, you have a role to play in serving others and building up the Body of Christ. So even though each of us is just one person (one part of the body), we are designed to act in unity to BE the church as we come together to Reach, Worship, Disciple, and Serve!

Read more about the Church being the Body of Christ:  
1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Romans 12:4-8

Key Verses:

*“From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”*  
Ephesians 4:16

*“And Jesus is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent.”* Colossians 1:18

### Application

As you fast and pray, ask the Lord to help you see (1) your function within the Body of Christ, and (2) how your brothers and sisters in Christ are functioning towards that same goal. Allow Him to cultivate a spirit of unity within you that you can then share with others!

### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for the partnerships we have with missionaries and other ministries. Bless our common work with effective strategy and resources to reach others.

Day 8 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Chris Bates

### ***Expanding Our Field***

Throughout the Bible, there are lesser known individuals that provide us with powerful lessons. The brief mention of Jabez in the Old Testament is yet another example that highlights God hearing our prayers. This short, but impactful, prayer highlights four key components: Blessing, Influence, Presence, and Protection. His plea for God to “enlarge my territory” mirrors our request for God to help us grow the church through new members, outreach efforts, and planting additional campuses in the future.

Like Jabez, we also need to be in prayer for the Lord to expand our individual and collective sphere of influence and territory. Jabez also highlights his (and our) need for God’s presence and protection, two essential components for a successful life, ministry, and future church expansion. Jabez received God’s blessing because it aligned with the plan God wanted to execute through his life. Keep in mind that God knows how the things He allows or gives us, even the things we wouldn’t classify as blessings, will ultimately end up blessing our life and expanding our territory!

The life of Jabez is documented in only two verses:  
1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Key verses for reflection:

*“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us. To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21*

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19*

### Application

As you fast and pray today, ask the Lord to give you a heart like Jabez — one that recognizes your own weakness and limitations but also one that relies on Him for strength. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you how to pray while trusting God with His vision, His provision, and His timing.

### Prayer Focus

Lord, as we submit to your will, help us to understand the right timing, see the next step clearly, and plan wisely.

Day 9 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Aubry Moffett

### **The Word In Me**

When you have a toddler running around the house there's a lot of things in life that change. For us lucky fathers who become girl dads, in an instant ALL of your clothes somehow have remnants of sparkles on them, and manly phrases like "night-night," "no more monkeys jumping on the bed," and "big squeeze hug" become a part of your everyday vocabulary. You change. And not just your external reality, but who you ARE changes. What's important to you shifts, and every thought or decision is now weighed with that beautiful little girl in mind.

The crazy part about these changes is that it's not something that you really work at or have to force to happen. They just take place because this relationship has captivated your heart and soul. In John 15 Jesus starts a beautiful, powerful depiction of our relationship with Him with a three word charge: abide in Me. Just as my life has changed by my daughter having my heart, when we abide in Jesus our every thought and decision is now weighed with Jesus in mind.

Read what Jesus says about us abiding in Him:  
John 15: 4-11

Additional scriptures on this topic:

*"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old things have passed away, behold, and all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17*

*"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:29*

### Application

Today as you fast and pray, ask Jesus to reveal to you just how close His spirit is, and talk with Him about any decisions that have to be made today — big or small. He delights in the details of your life, and as you allow Him to captivate your heart everything will change! It may not be sparkles on your clothes, but it will be that you can love the unlovable, reach the unreachable, and walk fully into the plans God has for your life!

### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for the fruitfulness of your Word. Give us favor as we share with others what you have produced in each of us.

Day 10 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Kelli Southern

### **Diversity of Spiritual Gifts**

Have you ever felt small in a room full of people? Looking around as if you are the only one with nothing special to offer? I have. In fact, there was a time I thought I couldn't write a simple devotion like this one. "Me? I don't have what so and so has. I could never write or speak like they do." Comparison weaves a web of lies that Satan loves to use in order to entrap our minds. As long as I compared my weakness to others strengths, I remained blind to see the gifts and strengths God had personally given to me. As children of God, we all have something unique to offer the body of Christ. What God has placed inside of you is greatly needed in our church and in our community.

Take a moment to read about spiritual gifts:  
Romans 12:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-31

Scriptures to reflect on:

*"Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else." Galatians 6:4 NLT*

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." Psalms 139:13-14 NIV*

#### Application

As you pray and fast, let go of any feelings or thoughts saying you have nothing to offer the body of Christ or those around you. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the unique gifting and talents He's placed within you. I pray you find joy and purpose as you focus on your own unique abilities while you discover the ways God wants to use you for His glory.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, we thank you that your plan involves all of the believers. Help each of us see how we can contribute to connecting with, teaching, and learning from others. Guide us as we build community for support and sharpening.

Day 11 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
*Bre Moffett*

### ***Becoming Spiritually Mature***

The church was my second home—literally. As a pastor’s kid, I grew up in the pews, classrooms, and hallways. My childhood was filled with late nights building stage sets for children’s ministry, organizing closets stuffed with old vacation Bible school decorations, folding bulletins, and vacuuming the sanctuary floors after events. I’ve cleaned bathrooms, repaired puppets, and spent hours playing the piano in the sanctuary. Church wasn’t just where we went—it was where life happened. I was in love with the church. Every opportunity I had to be a part of a service, a Bible study, or an event, I was there.

It wasn’t until I left home, no longer surrounded by the routines and rhythms of church life, that I realized my faith wasn’t as deep as I thought. I knew about God, but I didn’t know Him. The sermons, worship, and Bible studies were powerful, but they were not enough to spiritually nourish me through life’s battles. Being connected to church is amazing, but connection with church without connection with Jesus does not produce fruit that lasts.

John 15:4 says, “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine.” Growing up in church gave me a foundation, but spiritual maturity requires more than proximity to the Word—it requires intimacy with the One who is the Word. It’s about seeking Him personally, outside the busyness of ministry, and allowing Him to transform every part of your life.

Scriptures to reflect on:

Ephesians 4:1-15, Colossians 1:9-10, Colossians 2:6-7, James 1:22-25, John 15

#### Application

As we continue to pray and fast, I pray that you would discover the joy of knowing Jesus beyond the church walls. May He be your anchor in the storms of life. Even now as you read this, you may be thinking of situations that have held you in unhealthy cycles that have kept you from growing in your walk with Christ. I invite you to write down scriptures to combat those struggles and plaster them around your house where you will see it. God is kind to walk with you through the growth.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for faith-filled connections that help feed my soul and build my faith. Guide us as we provide opportunities to connect and grow with other believers.

Day 12 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
David and Elaine Fox

### **Welcome to the Family**

Family is an interesting word. In the traditional form it includes parents and their biological and/or adopted children. But family is who we are as a unit. When we receive Christ as our Savior, we become a part of the Body of Christ. We become family. When our son got married, his wife became a part of our family through her marriage to him. We as “In-Laws” had the opportunity to treat her differently or the same as our three biological daughters. We chose to envelope her in our family as a member and everything that involves. She is our daughter. We applied that same concept of adoption when our daughters got married — we gained two new sons.

Christ does the same thing for each of us. Ephesians 2:19 says, “So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family.” This means when you ask Christ into your heart and life, you have become a part of the family of God.

Read more about how God chose us to be adopted into His family:  
Ephesians 1:4-8

Verses to reflect on:

*“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35*

### Application

Fast and pray on what it means to be a part of the family of God. What is your role as part of the family of God? What do you do to love the people who are part of the family of God? Who do you show the love of Christ to so they too can become a part of the family of God?

### Prayer Focus

Lord, help us steward the harvest and connect leaders with opportunities to serve. Thank you for adding to our community!

Day 13 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025

Tamara Cannon

### ***Starting Your Journey***

I hope you grew up with grandparents whose home instantly made you feel loved and welcomed from the moment you walked through their door. That's how we hope all who walk through the doors of Oaks Church feel. Maybe you've experienced it, and we are often told that's something that stands out when someone visits Oaks Church for the first time.

The journey of faith starts on and continues with dependence on and giving praise to God. Starting any journey can feel unsettling and unknown. One of our four core principles is Disciple. We do that through OAKS DNA and soon through our new believer class. Discipleship is also found through Life Groups - a place where you can start your journey of faith alongside fellow believers. This is where true community begins to happen and deep friendships are forged. You may have started your journey with just you and the Lord, but that's not how it was intended to remain!

Several scriptures to provide guidance of navigating the start of a journey:

Romans 10:17 (reading the Word); Psalm 95:6 (worship); Hebrews 10:24-25 (getting plugged in)

Another verse to consider:

*"Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith, always believing and holding on to hope that God will do what He said He'll do." Hebrew 12:2*

### Application

As you continue to pray and fast, reflect on how your faith has or can deepen through intentional time in prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other believers. Allow time throughout your day to cultivate a deeper relationship with God as your faith starts to increase!

### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for allowing us to disciple others. Give us wisdom in our approach and clarity in our communication as we help others grow in understanding and faith.

Day 14 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting  
Doug Pollock

### ***Running the Race***

In a race, all the runners run but only one gets the prize. In our effort to “be a good Christian” and run this race, it is important that we not easily get caught up in the comparison trap. When God created the Body with all its many parts, they were designed to complement and not compete.

Do you have the tendency to look at the way someone else is “running their race” and compare it to yours? Do you find yourself being critical of yourself when your life is not just like someone else’s? Galatians 6:4 (NLT) is a great reminder to take pride in us alone, without comparing ourselves to someone else: “Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won’t need to compare yourself to anyone else.”

For further study:

Galatians 6:4 NIV; Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV; I Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV

Scripture to reflect on:

*“And let us run with perseverance (cheerful, hopeful, and enduring) the race (obstacle course) marked out for us (personally), fixing (to the extent we are one mind) our eyes on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” Hebrews 12:1b-2*

### Application

Today you can be free from the need to compare. Your race has been personally created by the Creator of the world and is a journey like no other. Discover your value as you shift your gaze (thoughts) and affections to HIM.

### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for the race you’ve given us all to run. Help us become more supportive of all of our fellow runners regardless of what their pace and track look like compared to our own. Guide us as we seek to support others with ministry specific to their stage of life.



Day 15 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Ashley Brock

### ***Compassion for All***

Growing up, we worked hard. Even though I was a small girl, my grandfather expected me to work just as hard as my bigger and stronger male cousins. Hard work was something he deeply valued and believed it shaped young people into dependable, trustworthy, and successful adults. Of course, as pre-teens and teens, spending the sweltering heat of Louisiana summer digging, raking, lifting, and shoveling until your hands bled was not something we looked forward to. However, if we had a negative attitude, we would have to write hundreds of lines on paper listing how grateful we were for the roof over our heads, the food in the kitchen, the clothes and shoes we wore, as well as the vehicles we owned to carry us back and forth to nice schools. After writing lines, we would then begin and complete our chores. My papaw taught us that the attitude and posture of your heart on WHY you were working hard was more important than the work itself. Also, he taught us how your attitude would also greatly affect the results and outcome of your work. That principle has greatly impacted my education, career, parenting, and salvation. That life lesson makes me think of James 2 when James argues that genuine faith cannot exist without corresponding actions of compassion; simply claiming faith without demonstrating it through deeds is considered empty.

James essentially applies the "love your neighbor as yourself" principle by emphasizing the need to actively care for those less fortunate and with a gracious and merciful heart while doing so. If you yourself have truly experienced grace, mercy, and the transition that occurs within one's soul from a relationship with God, then naturally you begin to do anything you can for others that may even bring the lost to Christ so they can experience the same, no matter who they are or where they have been.

In James chapter 2, the central theme is a call for "compassion for all," meaning Christians should show equal love and care to everyone regardless of their social status, wealth, or appearance, essentially condemning any form of favoritism or partiality, and demonstrating this compassion through actions not just words. This is often summarized by the phrase "mercy triumphs over judgment" found in verse 1. Jesus isn't saying that our acts toward the poor and needy are what save us. But if our hearts have truly been transformed, we will demonstrate that by being compassionate, welcoming, loving, and generous to others—especially the "least of these."

#### Application

As we fast and pray, let us ask the Lord to soften our hearts and open our eyes to what we are called to do, who we are to do it for, and WHY.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, help us to see others as you see them, to share hope boldly, and guide with compassion.

Day 16 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Courtney Brasher

### ***Fishers of Men***

I am not a master fisherman. I'm sure that comes as no surprise. However, I found myself by the water with a fishing pole in my hand on New Year's Day with my seven year old nephew. The shad were schooling in the shallows - visible just beneath the surface. Each school had to have been hundreds of decently sized fish. We watched them move like ribbons under the water, when every now and then they would breach the surface to escape predators we couldn't see (bigger fish, snapping turtles, or maybe even the river otters that have started making an appearance).

My thoughts began to wander as I cast the line over and over just past the schools of shad hoping to catch something bigger that I couldn't see. I began to remember Jesus' call to the fishermen to become fishers of men. They knew all too well that a fisherman cannot control the outcome of what he catches, much like I was unable to catch any fish New Year's Day. Like the fishermen who became fishers of men, we too can be faithful to cast and leave the results to the Holy Spirit. Fishermen use bait and skill to catch fish. As fishers of men we use our words, actions, and example to point others to Jesus!

You can read about the call to be fishers of men here:  
Matthew 4:18-25; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; John 21:1-19

Two scripture verses come to mind concerning how to prepare to be a fisher of men:

*"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." 1 Peter 3:15 ESV*

*"Do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Luke 12:11b-12 ESV*

#### Application

As you fast and pray, thank the Lord for calling you to be a fisher of men - for giving you a new life, new identity, and new purpose much like he did for the fishermen you just read about in the Gospels. Ask Him to transform your plans and intentions into lining up with His as you look for opportunities wherever you are. Allow Him to work through you to give "a reason for the hope that is in you" as you go about your day working, running errands, and encountering the people He has placed in your path.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, give us favor and innovative strategy to reach others in ways that are relevant, life giving, and effective for building your kingdom.

Day 17 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025

Tina Bass

### ***The Holy Spirit Comforts and Counsels***

When I was new to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I prayed and asked God to reveal to me how to feel when the Holy Spirit was ministering to me. Shortly after that prayer I woke up from a deep sleep, grabbed my notebook, and began to write. The pencil was whipping so fast I couldn't keep up with what was being written. As I read it, I remembered the scripture in John 14:16-17 that talks about the Spirit lives within you. This is what was written that day:

I Am the Spirit that lives inside you, intertwined with your bone and marrow. I Am wrapped in your muscles, and saturated in your mind, will, and emotions. When you hurt, I feel sorrow. When you are joyful, I leap inside you. When I speak to you, bumps that raise on your skin is Me. I Am that still, small voice and that heavy nudge. What you listen to drowns me out. When you fill your eyes with things of this world, you become blind to My counsel. When you consume things that I warn you against, I weep inside while I feel you die. Everyone you lay with intertwines with you and consumes you with the darkness of the world. I will not leave nor forsake you. Everything you do, everywhere you go, all that you go through- I will be with you.

This has stuck with me for the past 17 years, and it has reminded me that the Holy Spirit is there to comfort me, counsel me, and correct me. I no longer feel I am walking through this life alone, and I am very mindful of what I do with Him dwelling within me.

You can read about Jesus sending the Holy Spirit back to be in us:  
John 14:16-17, 26

Scripture to apply:

*"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." John 14:26*

*"For He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5*

#### Application

Take this time of fasting and praying to remember when you felt comfort in times of hardships. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the ways He counsels you, and be sure to lay anything down that may be blinding you or muffling the Holy Spirit's counsel from your ears.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your plan for healing and restoration. Give us favor, resources, and wisdom as we seek to reach and serve more in our community.

Day 18 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025

Dan Lord

### **Using Your Resources**

You are called to utilizing all the gifts, talents, time, money, and influence God has given you to actively serve and spread the message of Christianity. This essentially puts your abilities to work in order to further the cause of Christ and help others in need, which aligns your actions with Christian principles.

Key Aspects —

Stewardship: Viewing everything you have as a gift from God and managing it responsibly to serve others.

Sharing with the needy: Using your finances to support those in need, whether through donations to charities or direct assistance.

Time Commitment: Devoting your time to volunteer work, church activities, or outreach programs.

Sharing the Gospel: Actively sharing your faith with others through conversation, witnessing, or personal example.

Talents and Skills: Employing your natural abilities, like teaching, leadership, artistic talent, or technical expertise, to serve the church community.

Read about the emphasis placed on caring for others with the Parable of the sheep and goats: Matthew 25:35-40

Scripture to consider:

*“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10*

*“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” Proverbs 3:9-10*

### Application

As you fast and pray ask the Lord to show you ways that He has blessed you so that you can be a blessing to others. Allow Him to work through you as you serve others with your time, talents, and resources.

### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for the resources you have blessed us with. Guide us as we continue to develop, innovate, and invest all that you have provided.

Day 19 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Kristin Pollock

### ***Hospitality and Care***

Creation is an act of divine hospitality in which God extends his hospitality to summon into existence what was not. God provided a way to welcome us through the death of Jesus. Jesus ate with sinners throughout his earthly ministry. He received children gladly. He taught us to invite the lowly to parties and to welcome strangers. He prepared breakfast for his wayward disciples. Jesus teaches that when we practice hospitality and care for the needs of others, we are also serving him.

You can read here as Jesus teaches the correlation between Humility and Hospitality:  
Luke 14:7-24 TPT.

Two scripture verses to increase your understanding of Hospitality and Care:

*"Share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help." Isaiah 58:7 NLT*

*"No matter what, make room in your heart to love every believer." Hebrews 13:1 TPT*

#### Application

Set apart time to reflect on these truths and putting them into practice as a way of life. My hope is you feel his heart of hospitality reaching out to you, embracing you with open arms, providing a place of belonging and acceptance. Much like a gracious host would welcome guests into their home.

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, thank you for every individual you have set in our path. We pray that they experience the love and compassion that you have for them through thoughtfulness and provision.

Day 20 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
Courtney Brasher

### ***Cultivate the Calling***

My life has been a bit of a journey. As a young kid, I wanted to be a marine biologist and work at Sea World. Then as a teenager, I saw the work speech therapists did with younger cousins and thought that was the route God had for my life and pursued it as a career. Then I finally began to seek God's guidance about how to best use the gifts and talents He gave me, which again took me back to school to be a family therapist (with a brief stint as an English teacher). Even now at Oaks Church, He found a way to use parts from all aspects of my varied interests to best serve Him.

Isn't that just like God? Once we finally surrender our goals and dreams to Him, He takes all our plans and interests to find ways to use them for His glory. He has created *you* for a purpose too- to use your God-given gifts and talents to serve others and glorify Him. Not sure what that looks like? Ask Him. He'll show you!

You can read how God uses our diverse gifts (or lack thereof) through the following passage: Exodus 4:10-12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Two scripture verses come to mind regarding this:

*"And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified." Romans 8:30 CSB*

*"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12 CSB*

#### Application

As you fast and pray ask the Lord to reveal ways to weave your interests and talents into ministry opportunities (both current and upcoming) at Oaks Church, within your family, and at your job. Allow Him to prepare your heart to be used by Him and for His glory!

#### Prayer Focus

Lord, give us wisdom as we provide opportunities for learning and leadership development. Thank you for the function of discipleship.

Day 21 of 21: Oaks Prayer and Fasting 2025  
JP Cannon

### ***Unfailing Love***

The word love has many different applications and degrees in life. Despite the usage, one thing is certain: love is very motivating. In a milder application of the word I often tell people that I love Tillamook Ice Cream, (this is not a paid advertisement and my views are solely my own and do not express the views of Oaks Church — some of us like Blue Bell, and that's ok too).

My motivation runs deeper than just the product. Tillamook is a town on the Oregon Coast where Tamara's parents and siblings live with 11 nieces and nephews and another on the way. The creamery is just down the road from her parent's home. It's open for daily self-guided tours with exhibits on dairy farming, free samples of cheese, a gift shop, a cafe, and ice cream shop featuring exclusive flavors not sold in stores. My favorite thing for years has been instigating a riot with the nieces and nephews to go get ice cream at the factory!

There are so many memories connected to the product that I easily overlook rare quality inconsistencies and enjoy it anyway. It's comical when I find myself and others in my family going on and on about the product to complete strangers in the freezer aisle. Our passion is rooted in our love for family, the small town on the coast, and of course ice cream.

Love is such a powerful force that it will supersede flaws and cultural norms to keep us engaged in our pursuit that others would easily abandon. The apostle Paul wrote an incredible description of Love:

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a NIV*

"Love Never Fails" is the theme for Oaks Church this year. In order to truly put love into practice we must pursue truth and champion others. We will intentionally "Pursue Truth," guided by His Word, and "Champion Others," fueled by His Command: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35 ESV

A great example of Jesus demonstrating this quality can be found in John 21:15-19

More scriptures to read on this principle: 1 John 4:7-21

### **Application**

Rewrite or reread the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 substituting your name as you go. How confident do you feel in those statements concerning yourself? Did you think of instances that you need to reconcile or repent of? What steps can you take to bring these statements to life in you?