1 Peter 5:6-7 (ESV)
Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
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How to Sign Up:

On a Sunday: Turn in the form on page 12 at the Movement table and you will receive a printed booklet with all the devotions, memory verses, and weekly accountability reports.

By Email: Email the church office at churchoffice@locirvine.com and you will be emailed a PDF booklet with all the devotions, memory verses, and weekly accountability reports.

The last day to sign up is Sunday, December 27th.
31 Days of Humbling Ourselves Through Prayer and Fasting

This program is for Light of Christ members to come together and dedicate the first part of the new year to God. We humble ourselves before God through prayer and fasting. We focus on confession of our pride and sinfulness, the weakness of our flesh and our need of God. When we do this, we remember why we need Jesus. More specifically, why we need Jesus dead on a cross and risen from the dead on the third day.

What will the program consist of?

1. Daily prayer

   There will be items everyone will be praying for on certain days. You can pray for those things on other days too. Just make sure to at least pray about the daily prayer focus items every day. You will be joining other church members who will be doing the same. We will be raising one voice!

   We also ask, if you are physically able, to pray on your knees. Praying on your knees communicates something to God- that we humble ourselves before Him.

2. Fasting for a set amount of time during the week.

   See the Fasting FAQ on page 3.

3. Guided daily devotions.

   In this book are daily devotions for you to work through. They can take 5-10 minutes. They will involve a scripture reading, the prayer focus for the day, the weekly scripture memorization verse, and maybe some questions to answer about the reading.


   Memorization is less about storing information and more about spiritual formation.\(^1\) Psalm 119:11 says, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” We memorize scripture so we can be shaped by it. When you memorize scripture, it is always with you.

5. Participating in the 24-hour prayer vigil on January 29-30.

6. Turn in weekly accountability forms.

   Accountability is important in the faith journey. Knowing someone is helping you to stay on track is a blessing. You are not alone in this journey and we will help one another. The Accountability forms will be checked by the pastor or your assigned elder. You can read more information on this in the section that describes Movement – pages 6-8.

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\(^1\) https://www.charadox.com/posts/why-memorize-scripture-when-you-can-google-it written by Joey Schwartz, March 9, 2020
FASTERING FAQ

In the biblical context, fasting is not a way of asserting one’s will but a means of opening oneself to the work of God, expressing profound grief over sin and pointing to one’s ultimate dependence on God for all forms of sustenance. Fasting is the act of abstaining from food for spiritual reasons and primarily connotes an openness to divinity and a posture of humility.2

How do I Fast?

Proper fasting includes abstaining from food. There is no biblically mandated way to fast. Some will go for several days to a week with no food. Some will go one day a week, while others will go for multiple days a week. Others will choose to fast from the time they wake up in the morning until evening. Other types of fasting will involve simple meals, like just vegetables or soups.

If you have never fasted before, start simple. Maybe the first week, you eat just veggies or soup for a certain day or parts of a day. The second week you can go without food from the time you wake up until sundown. The third week you can try for a 24-hour period. The fourth week try another 24-hour time period or if you feel led, to do a 48 hour fast. Again, there is not any set rule, so plan out what you will do and go for it. Whatever you choose as your fast, remember, water is highly encouraged throughout a fast.

Is There Another Way to Fast?

While fasting involves abstaining from food, an alternative is to give up something else. Something like social media, the news, TV, sweets, etc. You can pick the time frames as mention regarding fasting from food. You can give up TV every night after 7pm. Spend that time praying, being with your family, or reading scripture.

What if I fail during my fast?

Since fasting is not a command of God, you don’t sin. This failure can teach you something. You can see how much you need God to help you daily. It can help us to be thankful for the food we do have and realize others are not as fortunate.

How can my hunger help me in my faith?

Let the hunger draw you to God. Fasting exposes our weakness, not our strength. It can be a reminder to pray to God in that moment.

How can being hungry help me to be humble?

When you feel hunger, you realize the weakness of your flesh. You can see how much power your stomach has over your life. As you experience hunger, take that moment to pray and confess to God your sins and your need of Him. “Fasting declares our inadequacies, both physical and spiritual. It’s intended to showcase our absolute dependence upon God’s grace. Apart from daily bread just look where you’d be”.3

Doesn’t the bible teach us that fasting should be kept secret?

No. In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus talks about fasting. He does say to not let others see you fast. However, his point in all of chapter 6 is easy to see. Jesus is warning about doing things to be seen by others. If you do these good things so others may see you and praise you for your great faith, your motivation is wrong and sinful.

In addition, we see times where groups or communities fast together. It is hard to fast with others and keep it a secret. Ezra 8:23 and Acts 14:9-23 are scriptural examples of groups of people fasting together and there are many others. bottom line, fasting in a community is biblical.

Can fasting be spiritually dangerous?

Yes. If your motivation is wrong your fasting can be sinful (Matthew 6:1). If you fast so others can see you and praise your righteousness, you shouldn’t fast. Another BIG DANGER you can run into is if you think you will earn salvation from God by prayer and fasting. Our salvation is a gift we already have. Our salvation is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our salvation is what He has done for us and not what we have done.

Fasting can remind us to help others.

Listen to these words from an article in the Lutheran Witness: “Bluntly speaking, fasting fights the temptation to navel-gaze by giving us opportunities for selfless attempts at improving the lives of others. Today when we give to the poor, it rarely changes our lifestyle. If I buy a coffee for a homeless person, I probably do not forego one from Starbucks myself. But in Bible times, giving someone your cloak meant that you went without. You experienced the consequence of your sacrifice, forced out of your comfort zone in order to share in the suffering of others. Although the Bible records various kinds of fasts, both individual and communal, they all contribute to the historic reputation of the Church: giving up of self for the welfare of others.”4

3 https://michigandistrict.org/healthy-workers/discipline-fasting-feast-christ/
Written by Steven Newberg, LCMS.
**PRAYER FAQ**

“Prayer should always be our first response- not our last resort!”\(^5\) We first turn to God in prayer. This is why we are starting a new year by focusing on prayer for both you as an individual and for us as a church. We humble ourselves before the Lord with others in prayer.

**Why do I need to pray? Doesn’t God know what is going on in my life?**

Prayer is not informing God about your realities. It's aligning your heart with His realities. Prayer is the place we cry out to God, "I need you!"\(^6\). We should pray- Lord, change me!\(^7\). God does not need to change, but you do.

**Do I only pray the daily focuses?**

No. Pray about anything and everything. There are many other things you can pray for during a time of prayer. We just want to make sure we as a community are praying for some of the same things every day.

**How long should I pray every day?**

There is no defined time to pray. It could be five minutes and it can be 1 hour a day. Everyone is different.

**Where can I pray?**

You can pray anywhere. You can pray while driving, sitting on your couch watching TV, in your office, during your daily walk, etc. BUT- for the 31 Days of Humbling Ourselves Through Prayer and Fasting, set aside dedicated time for the prayers. Be free from distractions- in other words, not while driving, sitting on the couch, etc. Find a quiet place, get on your knees, and let prayer be the only thing you are doing.

**Do I have to kneel?**

We can pray in any posture- standing, sitting, kneeling, walking, etc. For the 31 days, we will kneel to humble ourselves before God. We also kneel to acknowledge Him as our God- the Living God. Another possibility is lay prone while praying. If you are not physically able to do kneel or prone yourself, you can take a posture you are able to do safely.

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\(^5\) The Daniel Dilemma. Chris Hodges. Page. 146  
\(^6\) Ibid. Page 146  
\(^7\) Ibid, Page 147
MOVEMENT

Light of Christ leadership, pastor and elders, seeks to help members grow in their faith. This is one of our callings (Eph 4:11-16). To grow in your faith is to always put God first and love your neighbors. To help you in your faith journey, we have a program called Movement.

We can’t measure your faith and we can’t measure if you are growing in your faith. That is God’s doing. We can help you do things that the Holy Spirit uses to help you mature in your faith. Things like studying scripture, prayer, service projects, using the gifts God has given you to serve His Kingdom and as you serve others.

Christians should be intentional about their Spiritual growth. It’s like losing weight. Just wanting to lose weight doesn’t mean you will lose weight. You must plan on how you will lose weight. You have to plan your meals and how you will work out. The same is true of your faith journey, you must make plans and do things that will help you grow in your faith. So, be intentional about your journey. Plan how you will grow in your faith through reading scripture and praying and how you can serve the Kingdom of God and serve your neighbor. Movement is a part of helping you be intentional about your faith.

There are two key elements to Movement to remember:

1. Everyone is different

God has given followers of Jesus different gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 12). As a result, Christians will serve in different ways. One may serve by teaching Sunday School and another may serve the community homeless shelter. Movement recognizes everyone is gifted differently and allows for any number of ways to help people grow in their faith through serving others (1 Peter 4:10).

2. Accountability

The Christian faith is not to be lived alone. Christians do better when someone is walking with them in their journey of faith. Accountability is key in accomplishing anything in life and growing in our faith is no different. Light of Christ leadership wants to walk with people on their faith journey and to encourage them in it. Accountability is part of the 31 days of prayer and fasting through an initial sign up pledge, weekly check in reports, and attendance at the 24-hour prayer vigil.

For more information on Movement please check out the next two pages.
MOVEMENT
Definitions, Types of Projects, and Scriptural Support

DEFINITIONS:
Movement: Christians are called to walk in the good works God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:8-10). Christians use language like Spiritual growth/Maturing in the faith/walk with Christ, etc. Movement is the name of the process Light of Christ uses to help people take intentional steps to ‘move’ in their daily walk with Christ. Movement is also the way Light of Christ will make sure we are leading people into opportunities (projects) to move in their faith.

Project: Commitment to engage in an activity to help you mature in our daily walk with Christ. Crucial to a project is sitting down and thinking about what you want to do. Once you define a project, you will be assigned an elder, staff member, or group for encouragement and accountability as you complete that project. Sample projects can be reading the New Testament, A biblical book study, a service project, a bible study, etc.

Object of a project: These are ministries that need people to serve. Another way to look at this is to say, “Mission Fields need Missionaries.” These are areas for you to serve and that service is considered a project.

TWO TYPES OF PROJECTS
The first type of project is a specialized project that an individual or small group of people undertake on their own. They pick a particular way to be intentional about maturing in their faith. This can be reading the bible cover to cover, serving a homeless ministry, using their gifts to serve others in some way. Everyone is gifted differently and will be drawn to different things.

The second type of project is one where the whole church participates. These will include January prayer and fasting, A biblical book study and a Christian book study. This project is done as a community. There is strength in numbers.

SCRIPTURE:
The Great Commandment: What we want to see people living out
Mark 12:30-31: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
All Christians should put God first in all areas of their life and in all that they do. This is maturing in your faith. When God is first, our actions, reactions, thoughts and life flow from this reality. God first, others second is a great reminder of we all should do every day.

Are we supposed to serve?

Ephesians 2:8-10: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, \(^9\) not a result of works, so that no one may boast. \(^{10}\) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God has already prepared good works for you to do. It is also crucial to understand that this verse is telling us we already have salvation. We are saved through faith and this is not our doing. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Since we already have salvation, we live in response to what God has blessed us with and do the good works God has already prepared for us to do. Projects are a way to walk in those good works.

Encouraging Others: What we call accountability

1 Thessalonians 5:11: Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Hebrews 10:24-25: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. \(^{24}\) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, \(^{25}\) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

A key component to Movement is the encouragement you will receive as you do projects. This accountability is proven to help people complete tasks. We want to help you as you walk on your faith journey.
Sample Daily Devotion

1 Timothy 2:1-4: First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Pray. Many Christians neglect to see how much the bible talks about prayer. Prayer is important. It is equally important to pray for others. We do pray for ourselves, but this should not be the only focus of our prayers. What a blessing it is to have church members praying for you during a difficult time, especially a health challenge.

We are also told to pray for those in high positions- bosses, parents, government officials, etc. Ask God to help them live a godly life. This pleases God. And yes, that even means praying for the politician you disagree with.

1. Why is it hard for you to pray?

2. If you were going through a difficult time, what would it mean to you if everyone at church was praying for you?

Prayer Focus for Today:

1. Use the church prayer list and pray for a category or specific names on that list.
2. How might church be different if everyone was praying for one another?

Scripture memorization for this week:

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
Matthew 16:13-20: Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

The Holy Spirit works to bring us to faith. Jesus asks His disciples “But who do you say that I am?” Peter proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Peter was right.

It is a matter of eternal life and eternal death. Jesus tells Peter that this was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. This is the work the Holy Spirit does in our life- bring us to faith. The Holy Spirit can work through any of us to do this work. In Light of Christ Preschool, the Holy Spirit is working through all of our staff to share the love of Christ with the kids in this mission field. Even though many of these families don’t have faith in Jesus, those kids are hearing about Jesus every day! May the Holy Spirit bring these kids and their families to faith!

1. How has the Holy Spirit worked in your life to bring you to faith?

2. How can the Holy Spirit work through you to share Jesus with others?

Prayer Focus for Today:
1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be active at Light of Christ preschool in bringing people to faith.
2. Pray for all of the non-Christian families in our preschool that they are brought to faith by the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray for more families to sign up for our preschool. Ask God to bring families to one of our mission fields.
31 DAYS OF HUMBLING OURSELVES THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING
January 2021

1 Peter 5:6-7 (ESV)
Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Commitment:

• I want to dedicate the first month of 2021 to focusing on humbling myself through prayer and fasting.

• I want to participate in this program. I will do everything I possibly can to complete all of the daily devotions, memorize the weekly scripture verse, pray the daily prayer focuses, set a aside time to pray and if physically able, kneel while doing so.

• I understand I will be assigned an Elder for this project. They will review my weekly reports and encourage me during this program.

Name (Please Print): ________________________________________________

Email Address: ________________________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________________________

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