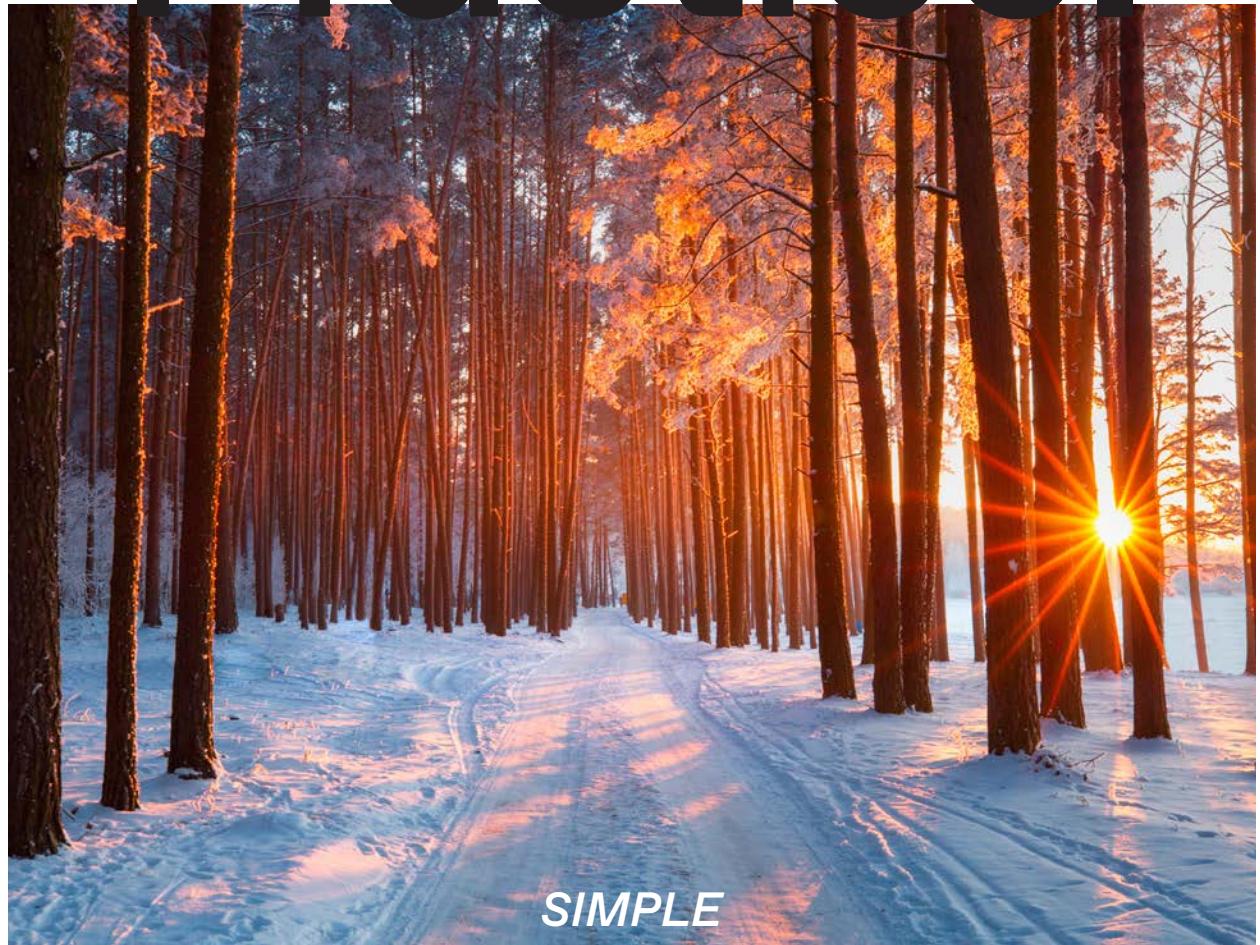


Practice.



BE PRESENT

One of the most profound ways to pay attention to the activity of God in our lives is in silence.

THE FREEDOM OF SIMPLICITY

Just like a closet or a drawer—there are things that need to stay and things that need to go.

SIMPLICITY IN ACTION A FASTING PRACTICE

Making time to be with Jesus in our daily lives has the incredible ability to change the way we engage with those around us.



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Welcome to the Intentional Life

The word “intention” is defined as an aim, target or purpose. Something that you shoot for, regardless of whether you hit it or not, it’s a direction.

At Open Door, we have a desire to be a community of people radically committed to spiritual formation (the ongoing, lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus), for the sake of others. This sort of commitment allows our very selves (mind, heart, soul and body) to be transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ.

This incredible and mysterious formation process requires both our attention and our intention, an aim and a bit of a rhythm to help us practice, together.

That said, we have identified four seasonal rhythms that help us practice living more intentionally.

They include:
The Rooted Life
The Restful Life
The Simple Life
and The Generous Life.

These rhythms are informed by the ancient church calendar, and are a part of the larger desire we have to live an intentional life.

They invite us into and equip us to practice the Presence and Way of Jesus in an authentic way where we can grow in our faith while actively living in community and loving others.

The Simple Life

In the Simple Life, we are invited to let go of the ways our lives have become overly complicated and to more simply focus on the main thing: Jesus.

At the core of simplicity is the deep desire to practice the Presence and Way of Jesus. We are simply with Him, remaining in His love.

Our primary practice in this season is to cultivate and develop a regular rhythm of prayer that includes fasting, as we explore our journey, seeing what still fits and what does not.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

JOHN 15:9

Regardless of where you're at on the journey with prayer and simplicity, let's keep it simple...and simply be with Jesus.

In this booklet, you'll see a few ways that you can do just that! Ways that may invite you or spark a desire to incorporate a rhythm of prayer and fasting into your ordinary, everyday life.

Welcome to this wild journey to live openly to God in becoming more fully alive through prayer, enjoyment and satisfaction in the simplest things.



“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”

MATTHEW 6:25

Hungry for Jesus

GROWING IN INTIMACY THROUGH FASTING



Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). This is great news! ...And can I be honest, I can so quickly forget that Jesus is actually the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE. Jesus is the source of all life, and apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

Fasting is a way I get to practice staying awake and staying hungry for Jesus. There are so many other things that beg for my attention, time and affection in this world. There are so many things that I turn to instead of first turning to Jesus. Yet, I believe Jesus! I believe that He truly is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. I want to know Him more and live into His abundant life that He offers (John 10:10).

Fasting is an ancient practice, and the heart is simple: growing in intimacy with Jesus. By fasting, I am practicing turning to Him instead of turning to lesser things. Fasting can take on a variety of forms.

Some people feel led to fast from food, social media, watching tv, scrolling, over-working, and more. The practice of fasting is revealing: it disrupts our regular ways of processing, coping with life, hiding from pain, or looking to lesser things to fill us.

F Fasting is an ancient practice, and the heart is simple: growing in intimacy with Jesus. **J**

The practice of fasting has been such a gift in my journey with Jesus. It's kept me awake and hungry for His Spirit and Kingdom (Matthew 5:6). I used to be terrified of fasting, so afraid of the pain of being hungry. Now it's such a gift to practice a day or half a day of fasting from food once a week as a spiritual discipline.

I generally set an intention with Jesus that morning, asking Jesus what we can pray into together for that day. When I feel hungry, I get to pause and seek Jesus, asking for God's wisdom, guidance and His Kingdom to come as I pray. I have witnessed Jesus' breakthrough in my own life and in the lives of those I lift up in prayer through this practice (Isaiah 58:6-9)! Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. This is great news! Let's stay hungry and thirsty for Jesus!



ROSE LARSON
Pastor of Prayer Ministry &
Missional Life

Be Present

Our life of prayer has a journey. And like much of life, it goes through changes, seasons, ups and downs. The Simple Life offers us an opportunity to stop and take inventory of where we have been and where we are at now with prayer.

No shame or judgment—just noticing.

Practicing the Presence of God can be more simple than it sounds. When we become more aware of Him, listening and acknowledging His activity in our lives—we are practicing the Presence of God, with us.

He is with us, in us and all around us.

One of the most profound ways to pay attention to the activity of God in our lives is in silence. Silence allows us to turn down the volume of our lives to listen and to turn our attention towards Jesus. If this is a new practice for you, we recommend that you start small—with just a few minutes.

What do you notice? What comes to the surface?

PRACTICE

Spend some time in silence this week, quietly turning your attention to God. Start simply and realistically.

“Once I experienced a variety of ways to pray and listen to the Spirit, I began to get to know God, enjoy God, and be at peace with God’s creation a whole lot more. I stopped seeing prayer as a remedy and allowed it to become a living relationship with the living God.”

-Teresa A. Blythe, *50 Ways to Pray*

Reflect on how your prayer life has been shaped.

RECALL HOW YOU PRAYED AS A CHILD, AS A TEENAGER, AND AS A YOUNG ADULT



- Who and/or what has influenced your experience and practice in praying?
- How has your prayer life changed over time?

REFLECT ON HOW YOU CURRENTLY EXPERIENCE YOUR PRAYER LIFE



- What are your prayer practices today?
- What are your desires for being in relationship with God now?

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THE WAY FORWARD



- What is the Holy Spirit's invitation to you for your prayer life in this coming season?

The Freedom of Simplicity

Do you long for a simpler way of living, a way of living that is less complicated, less attached, less entangled and more free?

Life can get overwhelming with the daily management of our relationships, circumstances, commitments, responsibilities and possessions. We may even feel as though we have more than we can handle!

Just as our inward lives and hearts can get complicated and accumulate, so can the parts of our lives that are outward and exterior. Many of us have a drawer, a trunk or a closet that is overflowing and unorganized, a place where we can dump, shove or hide.

Our spiritual lives can be incredibly similar! And over time we can quickly pile on or accumulate messages, worries, relationships and responsibilities. And just like a closet or a drawer—there are things that need to stay and things that need to go.

The freedom of simplicity offers so much beauty when our inward longing to let go of worry and simplify, matches our outward expression of letting go and uncomplicating.

PRACTICE

Spend time in a cluttered space wondering if there are things you want to let go of or no longer need. What can you give away?

How can you consume less or make more space for the generosity of time and resources?

Talk to God as you declutter and ask Him to help you see where in your spiritual life things may need some decluttering as well.

Ask God to help you simplify.

Jesus' invitation to a simpler life in Matthew 6:34 allows us enough of a breather to see and to focus on what matters most.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

He invites us to pursue this kind of Kingdom, to experience His Presence, and to follow His Way.

As you lean into letting go of the worry of tomorrow, what you will wear, eat or drink and follow Jesus, take some time to wonder with God...

How might you like to practice simplicity in your life? What would it look like?

What feels challenging? What feels easy?

Is there anything that you sense God is inviting you to let go of?

**Blessed are
those who hunger
and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be filled.**

MATTHEW 5:6 (NIV)



The Simple Practice of Fasting

Joel 2:12 (NIV)

“Even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

We often say around here that practicing isn't about performance or perfection. More than checking off religious boxes, it's about making room, choosing to intentionally interrupt the “regularly scheduled programming” of our lives and cultivate a space for deeper intimacy with God.

Let's talk about the ancient and simple practice of fasting.

John Mark Comer, in his book *Practicing the Way* says that: “Fasting is one of the most essential and powerful of all the practices of Jesus and, arguably, the single most neglected in the modern Western church.”

Fasting is a way of praying with our bodies and taking a break from our “appetite”. This can help create

time with and attention to God right in the middle of our regular days. And pausing our appetite, denying ourselves something...anything, is hard! When we scratch the surface of suffering, it quickly puts us in touch with how hungry we really are. And in that hunger, we turn to Jesus.

What might that look like for you? Get creative and be wise.

As a church family, we want to encourage you not to be intimidated by this practice but to start somewhere.

Take one step, one movement towards this beautiful invitation to hunger for Jesus, together.



WHAT IS BIBLICAL FASTING,
AND WHY DO WE DO IT?
The Bible Project

Practice

Start with prayer:

Wonder with God if there's something that's consuming your attention or if there's an ordinary rhythm or habit that you could interrupt.

Notice what comes up and hold that with God.

Choose what to fast and decide how and when you will go without it.

Keep it clear, simple and doable.

During your fast, decide how you would like to make room to be with God instead.

Maybe go on a walk or bike ride, pray for a friend, give away the money you usually spend on coffee...

And remember, Beloved of God, that this isn't about performance or perfection. It's about intimacy with God. Be patient and compassionate with yourself.

Lent

Fasting has been a common practice during the season of Lent for centuries. How might you and God be together over those 40 days? What might you need to let go of in order to make room?



Write it out...

Write out some of your experience with fasting so far in your life.

Are you familiar with fasting?

Have you tried it?

Maybe it is a regular rhythm for you?

What are some of your questions or curiosities about practicing fasting? What might feel intimidating or challenging?

Think about your experience with fasting so far, and wonder with God what He may be inviting you into in this season around fasting.



CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE

Richard Foster

<https://a.co/d/6kJAemD>



SACRED RHYTHMS

Ruth Haley Barton

<https://a.co/d/57LRsfP>

SOURCES



PRAYING LIKE MONKS, LIVING LIKE FOOLS: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer

Tyler Staton

<https://a.co/d/crbsoftW>



PRACTICING THE WAY

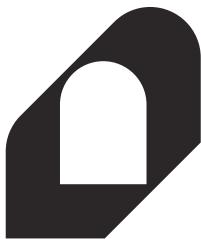
John Mark Comer

<https://amazn.so/YwlrfGG>

PRAYER ROOM

Anyone is welcome, and there are no sign-ups or time restrictions. Just take the elevator to the second floor and enjoy.

Open on Sundays.



Open Door

www.thedoctor.org

OPEN DOOR SERMONS SERIES PODCAST

<https://apple.co/4gxjmaN>