

# Seven Steps Toward Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual Disciplines to Prepare You for Easter 2018



## How to Use this Book

Happy Easter. Well . . . almost. This short booklet is designed to better prepare you for Easter through the season of Lent in 2018. This year that period lasts from February 14 (Ash Wednesday) to April 1 (Easter). Each section is a spiritual discipline you may choose to employ to prepare yourself.

On the front side of each section are directions regarding how you may employ that discipline if you choose to visit the church during the time indicated. Dedicated space for these disciplines will be made in the small chapel at church, and you may come down at your leisure to use that space. Should you need to access the church outside of normal hours and do not possess an entry card please contact the church office 712-323-4498.

On the back side of each section are directions regarding how you may employ that discipline if you instead choose to practice at home.

Please note at the end of each section will be a few sentences about how what you do in your time of preparation will be continued in that week's worship. Hopefully you will be able to attend all worships for which you prepare.

May the peace of Jesus Christ dwell with you as you prepare your spirit for this time of renewal.

February 14-18--At the Church

## Be Still

Reflect on the Scripture Psalms 46:10

*Be Still and Know that I am God*

### Instructions

We are busy. There is more stuff to do than we have time to do. In this space recognize the importance, and the power, of being still before God. This can be challenging to just sit and listen, but this is so much more than “doing nothing.” We are preparing ourselves to hear God for today and for the entire season of Lent.



- Pick up a stone
- Find a comfortable place to sit down or even lay down
- Close your eyes, and rest in God's presence
- Reflect upon God's influence in your life. That he is our creator and our rock
- Then begin to cast your doubts, your temptations, and your shortcomings onto the rock. Let the rock hold them.
- Carry the rock with you throughout the week.
- Each time you feel less than perfect, feel the presence of that rock and give your imperfections to it.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on February 18

At church you will be asked to face your temptations and you will symbolize this bravery by leaving your stones at the church during worship.

February 14-18--At Home

## Be Still

**Reflect on the Scripture Psalms 46:10**

*Be Still and Know that I am God*

### Instructions

We are busy. There is more stuff to do than we have time to do. This week you are asked to find the importance, and the power, of being still before God. It can be challenging to just sit and listen, but this is so much more than “doing nothing.” We are preparing ourselves to hear God for today and for the entire season of Lent.



- Go for a short walk and look for a stone (in a park, on the street, etc).
- Find a comfortable place after your walk to sit down or even lay down with your rock.
- Close your eyes, and rest in God’s presence
- Reflect upon God’s influence in your life. That he is our creator and our rock
- Then begin to cast your doubts, your temptations, and your shortcomings onto the rock. Let the rock hold them.
- Carry the rock with you throughout the week.
- Each time you feel less than perfect, feel the presence of that rock and give your imperfections to it.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on February 18

At church you will be asked to face your temptations and you will symbolize this bravery by leaving your stones at the church during worship.

February 19-25--At the Church

## Pray

**Reflect on the scripture from  
Thessalonians 5:17**

*Always be joyful. Never stop  
praying. Be thankful in all  
circumstances*



### **Instructions:**

Sometimes, when we are asked if we have anything that we want to pray about, our mind goes blank as we quickly rummage our thoughts. Before we've had time to really think of anything, the moment for prayer has passed. This space will give you time to think about what's on your mind and heart.

- Spend time searching yourself for what is weighing you down, whether it is something personal, or something happening to another. Joy can be found in talking with God about these matters.
- Write down 10 things that come to your mind on post-it notes. Stick them to the wall.
- When you are done writing, take a few prayers from others off the wall and pray for them.
- Put the back up on the wall when you are done.

### **Reflections:**

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### **How it will connect at church on February 25**

At church you will be asked to lose your life. There will be a time during church for you to contemplate (or write additional) things you must lose in order to commune with Christ.

February 19-25--At Home

## Pray

**Reflect on the scripture from  
Thessalonians 5:17**

*Always be joyful. Never stop  
praying. Be thankful in all  
circumstances*



### **Instructions:**

Sometimes, when we are asked if we have anything that we want to pray about, our mind goes blank as we quickly rummage our thoughts. Before we've had time to really think of anything, the moment for prayer has passed. This space will give you time to think about what's on your mind and heart.

- Spend time searching yourself for what is weighing you down, whether it is something personal, or something happening to another. Joy can be found in talking with God about these matters.
- Write down 10 things that come to your mind in the space below. You will be asked to copy some of them onto post-it notes at church on Sunday.
- When you are done writing, take a few moments to pray for the needs of others.

### **Reflections:**

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### **How it will connect at church on February 25**

At church you will be asked to lose your life. There will be a time during church for you to contemplate (and/or write) your prayer concerns and pray for the needs of yourself and others.

February 26-March 4--At the Church

## Meditate

Reflect on the scripture from Exodus 3:5.

Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.



### Instructions:

Scripture can feel overwhelming at times, but it is meant to give life! This practice will help you slow down and chew on the flavor of each word. One simple way to do this is to write out or read scripture, emphasizing a different word each time. Example:

The place on which you are standing is holy ground  
The place on which **you are standing** is holy ground  
The place on which you are standing **is** holy ground  
The place on which you are standing is **holy ground**

- Choose a verse important to you from the Bibles provided or use the verse above.
- Meditate upon that verse trying to empty your thoughts of everything but those words.
- Allow the words to fill you.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 4

During church you will be led through a guided meditation regarding the scripture above from Exodus.



February 26-March 4--At Home

## Meditate

Reflect on the scripture from Exodus 3:5.

Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.



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### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 4

During church you will be led through a guided meditation regarding the scripture above from Exodus.



March 5-11--At the Church

## Eat

Reflect on the scripture from Luke 22:19

*This is my body, which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.*

### Instructions:



You may have received communion at church hundreds of times. If you were at church on March 4 you took place in the Lord's meal. But how often have you had the chance to truly reflect upon its meaning before placing the emblems to your lips? This space is reserved for you to take your time with the Lord's Supper so that you do not rush through the motions of receiving Christ.

- Read the Communion Prayers. The emblems before you have already been blessed.
- How do you remember the body of Christ?
- How do you remember the blood of Christ?
- How do you honor the name of Jesus?
- How can you keep his commandments?
- Remove the cloth covering the emblems and partake of both.
- Replace to cloth in order to keep the emblems fresh for the next person.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 11

During worship the congregation will partake in what is commonly known as an "agape meal" We will fill one another with kindness by using the symbol of bread.

March 5-11--Home

## Eat

Reflect on the scripture from Luke 22:19

*This is my body, which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.*

### Instructions:



You may have received communion at church hundreds of times. If you were at church on March 4 you took place in the Lord’s meal. But how often have you had the chance to truly reflect upon its meaning before placing the emblems to your lips? This space is reserved for you to take your time with the Lord’s Supper so that you do not rush through the motions of receiving Christ.

- Buy or make a special loaf of bread and grape juice or wine
- Read the Communion Prayers. Found at <https://www.cofchrist.org/communion-prayers>
- How do you remember the body of Christ?
- How do you remember the blood of Christ?
- How do you honor the name of Jesus?
- How can you keep his commandments?
- Eat and Drink. Tear into the bread with your bare hands.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 11

During worship the congregation will partake in what is commonly known as an “agape meal” We will fill one another with kindness by using the symbol of bread.

March 12-18--At the Church

## Seek

Reflect on the scripture from  
**Matthew 7:7.**

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek,  
and you will find; knock, and it will be  
opened to you.*



### Instructions:

All who seek Christ require courage . . . the courage to become who God wants them to be. Look to Peter as an example. Even though “Peter” means “Rock”, Peter found he lacked the courage required to be that rock when he denied knowing Jesus three times. In this space you are to pray about the person God wants you to become.

- Sit quietly and reflect upon who you were as a child.
- Then who you were as a young adult.
- Continue to the present time.
- Ask God about your next steps and identify what courage you will need to get there.
- Write down what you will require on an index card and nail it to the cross with provided hammer and nails
- Reflect upon Christ’s courage as he faced his cross.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 18

The cross used for nailing your needs will be used as a focal point of the message on this Sunday as Jesus addresses his need to face the cross himself.

March 12-18--At Home

## Seek

Reflect on the scripture from  
**Matthew 7:7.**

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek,  
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opened to you.*



### Instructions:

All who seek Christ require courage . . . the courage to become who God wants them to be. Look to Peter as an example. Even though “Peter” means “Rock”, Peter found he lacked the courage required to be that rock when he denied knowing Jesus three times. In this space you are to pray about the person God wants you to become.

- Sit quietly and reflect upon who you were as a child.
- Then who you were as a young adult.
- Continue to the present time.
- Ask God about your next steps and identify what courage you will need to get there.
- Write down what you will require on a 3 x 5 card and bring that card to church.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 18

The cross will be a central focus of the worship on March 18. You will be asked to nail your cards to it--asking God for the same courage Jesus had when he had to face his own cross.

March 19-25--At the Church

## Surrender

Reflect on the scripture from  
**James 5:16**

*Confess your sins to one another  
and pray for one another, that you  
may be healed*



### Instructions:

If you were talking to someone, with your back turned to them, how does that affect the conversation? When we use the positions of our body in prayer we are turning more than just our words and thoughts to God; we are turning everything. When we surrender our body to God, we are taking a courageous step, moving out of our comfort zones.

Spend some time in prayer, moving through these positions:

- Open hands. Sitting in a chair--with your feet on the ground--rest your arms on your legs palms opened toward the sky. This reflects you are open to God and willing to receive.
- Kneel. By kneeling before God you tell yourself and God you are his. Be present before him with your whole life.
- Laying Down. You are completely surrendering your body to God when you lay down on the floor before him. Embrace how great he is.
- Standing with your hands raised. Reach as high as you can and glorify God with all he has created for you and given you.
- Closed hands. Return to your initial position. Sit before God and acknowledge his presence in your life by placing your hands palms down, saying that you have met with him and received from him.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 25

You will participate in one or two "body prayers" at church on this Palm Sunday.

March 19-25--At Home

## Surrender

Reflect on the scripture from  
**James 5:16**

*Confess your sins to one another  
and pray for one another, that you  
may be healed*



### Instructions:

If you were talking to someone, with your back turned to them, how does that affect the conversation? When we use the positions of our body in prayer we are turning more than just our words and thoughts to God; we are turning everything. When we surrender our body to God, we are taking a courageous step, moving out of our comfort zones.

Spend some time in prayer, moving through these positions:

- Open hands. Sitting in a chair--with your feet on the ground--rest your arms on your legs palms opened toward the sky. This reflects you are open to God and willing to receive.
- Kneel. By kneeling before God you tell yourself and God you are his. Be present before him with your whole life.
- Laying Down. You are completely surrendering your body to God when you lay down on the floor before him. Embrace how great he is.
- Standing with your hands raised. Reach as high as you can and glorify God with all he has created for you and given you.
- Closed hands. Return to your initial position. Sit before God and acknowledge his presence in your life by placing your hands palms down, saying that you have met with him and received from him.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on March 25

You will participate in one or two "body prayers" at church on this Palm Sunday.

March 26-April 1--At the Church

## Worship

Reflect on the scripture from  
**Psalms 47:1**

*Sing praises to God and to his  
name! His name is the  
LORD--rejoice in his presence!*



### Instructions:

Music is one way we can worship god. This space has 3 simple songs for you to listen to and engage with. If you feel like singing along, please do. If you've ever felt short of words and don't know what to say to god then you can take on the words of others through music.

- Listen to the music provided. There is a CD with three tracks in the system provided.
- Read the lyrics
- Reflect on the words and the feelings of the music and let them be your prayers.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on April 1

Music has been and always will be an important part of the Easter worship. Come to church and bring your voice with you.



March 26-April 1--At Home

## Worship

Reflect on the scripture from  
**Psalms 47:1**

*Sing praises to God and to his  
name! His name is the  
LORD--rejoice in his presence!*



### Instructions:

Music is one way we can worship god. This practice includes the holy use of music. If you've ever felt short of words and don't know what to say to god then you can take on the words of others through music.

- Think hard about three songs that make you feel closer to God.
- Find a way to listen to all three.
- If you can find the lyrics, read them
- Reflect on the words and the feelings of the music and let them be your prayers.

### Reflections:

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### How it will connect at church on April 1

Music has been and always will be an important part of the Easter worship. Come to church and bring your voice with you.