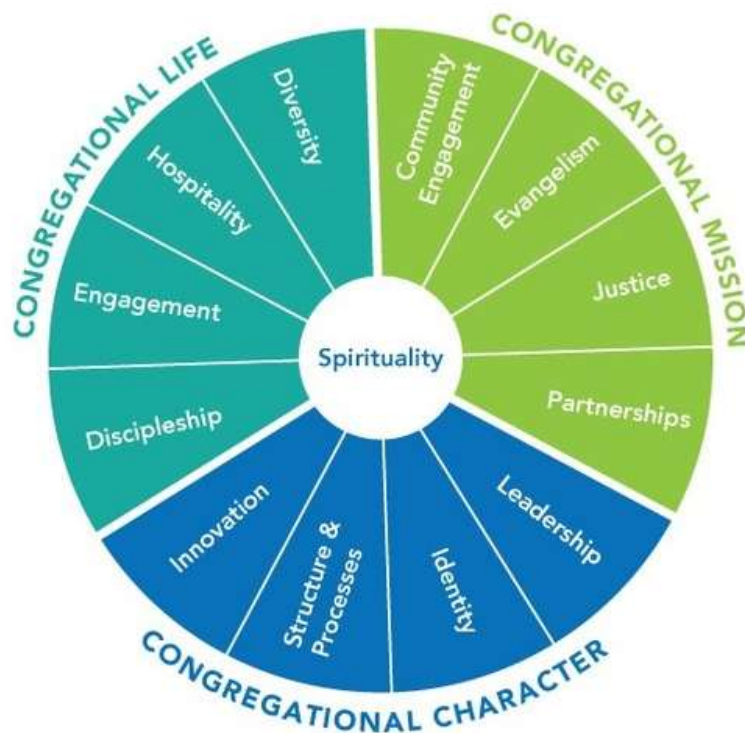


Built to Flourish



Devotional Journal

October 2026



Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Sep	28 Sep	29 Sep	30 Sep	1 Oct	2 Oct	3 Oct
P R E P A R E						
4 Oct	5 Oct	6 Oct	7 Oct	8 Oct	9 Oct	10 Oct
Week One – The Need for a Healthy Church						
11 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	14 Oct	15 Oct	16 Oct	17 Oct
Week Two – The Character of a Healthy Church						
18 Oct	19 Oct	20 Oct	21 Oct	22 Oct	23 Oct	24 Oct
Week Three – The Anatomy of a Healthy Church						
25 Oct	26 Oct	27 Oct	28 Oct	29 Oct	30 Oct	31 Oct
Week Four - The Mission of a Healthy Church						

Built to Flourish

Over the next four weeks, our church family is embarking on a season of intentional prayer, biblical reflection, and sacrificial fasting. God does not call us merely to survive or drift along; He desires for Tottenham Baptist Church to be rooted deeply and built up to bear lasting fruit.

This devotional journal is designed to guide you step-by-step as we seek God's heart together for our church's future.

Each week of our four-week journey, we will lean into a distinct pillar of church health:

- **Week 1: The Need for a Healthy Church**
- **Week 2: The Character of a Healthy Church**
- **Week 3: The Anatomy of a Healthy Church**
- **Week 4: The Mission of a Healthy Church**

To get the most out of this season, we invite you to engage across four key areas:

1. **Sunday Service:** Hear the weekly message that frames our focal point for the week.
2. **Daily Devotions:** Walk through this journal daily to anchor your individual prayer time.
3. **Weekly Group Studies:** Gather with your family, a small group, or friends to dive deeper into the weekly teaching.
4. **Post-Service Working group:** Join us after each of the Sunday morning services to discern, discuss, and help shape our church's 5-year strategic direction.

Our journey wraps up on Sunday 1 November with a special Around-the-Table Commitment Service. This is a time to gather, celebrate what God has revealed, and intentionally identify where God is calling each of us to lead and serve.

To further enrich this time, I encourage you to take part in a level of fasting that best suits you across one or all three of the following areas:

- **Food:** Abstaining from specific meals or items to cultivate spiritual hunger.
- **Financial:** Sacrificing non-essential spending to align our stewardship with God's priorities.
- **Focus:** Fasting from digital distractions, media, or habits to free up attention for prayer.

Everything we do during these weeks serves a bigger purpose. Tottenham Baptist Church exists to love God, love each other, and share the Gospel.

As we engage this spiritual discipline, we hold tightly to our overarching vision: *To be a growing, vibrant, multicultural Christian community, with effective gospel ministries for everyone in the local neighbourhood and beyond.* We should approach these next four weeks with expectant hearts. Fasting isn't about striving to earn God's favour; it is about posturing ourselves to receive what He is already eager to give.

As you set aside time, comfort, and focus, trust that Christ will meet you, transform you, and build us together into a flourishing home for His glory.

God bless,

Pastor Adam

Fasting

What is Fasting?

Not commanded, but important: Scripture does not command Christians to fast, but it highlights its spiritual value.

- **Old Testament:** Leaders called congregational fasts during times of crisis and despair (Jeremiah 36:9, Joel 1:14, Daniel 1:8).
- **New Testament:** Jesus fasted for 40 days before starting his earthly ministry (Matthew 4).
- **Early Church:** Early believers paired prayer with fasting to seek God's direction, particularly before major decisions (Acts 13:2, 14:23).

Purpose: Fasting cultivates self-discipline by setting aside personal pleasures to focus entirely on God.

Methods: While food is common, fasting can involve abstaining from any distraction that hinders seeking God.

Choose Your Level of Fasting

We have selected 3 areas where fasting can be applied. Within each area there are levels of fasting and you can also define your own. The areas are:

- **Food:** Abstaining from specific meals or items to cultivate spiritual hunger.
- **Financial:** Sacrificing non-essential spending to align our stewardship with God's priorities.
- **Focus:** Fasting from digital distractions, media, or habits to free up attention for prayer.

How to Fast?

Prepare fully: Prepare mentally, physically, and spiritually before starting your fast.

Consult a doctor: Food fasting is not a diet, consult your primary care physician before altering your diet.

Meal prep ahead: Prepare meals in advance to conserve your time and energy.

Replace distractions with prayer: Use the time you usually spend eating, watching TV, or engaging in routine habits to pray and read God's Word instead.

Stay consistent: Aim for consistency, but if you slip up or miss a day, don't give up, simply resume your fasting goals.

Focus on transformation: Remember that the main objective is spiritual growth and transformation, not perfection.

Fasting Suggestions

Food

Option 1: No caffeine, sugar (including substitutes), or alcohol

Option 2: No dairy, red meat, or fried foods

Option 3: Daniel Fast (a strict diet of whole grains, fruits, nuts, beans and legumes, vegetables, fruit juice, and water)

Option 4: 7am–7pm liquid fast, Daniel Fast in the evenings

Please select and maintain a safe and appropriate fasting level in consultation with your doctor.

Please check with your doctor before committing to the food fast, as some health conditions may preclude participation.

Financial

Option 1: No food deliveries

Option 2: No eating out

Option 3: No shopping (online or in person) except for necessities such as food, medication, and household items

Option 4: Commit to offering, or create a plan to eliminate unnecessary debt

Focus

Option 1: Limit gaming and social media to 2 hours total per day

Option 2: No gaming or social media

Option 3: No digital entertainment; limit non-essential communication to 2 hours per day

Option 4: No distractions. An entire week of silence. No non-essential messaging or phone calls outside of work

Devote yourself to hearing God's voice in the silence.

Remember you can do a day a week, commit to one area of focus, increase your intensity over the 4 weeks, or combine any of the areas and options to create your own path.

The goal is to seek God.

More information on the Daniel Fast

What is the Daniel Fast?

The Daniel Fast is a spiritual fast based on two Biblical accounts of the Prophet Daniel:

- **The 10-Day Fast:** Daniel and his companions ate only vegetables and drank water for 10 days to honour their dietary laws, leaving them healthier than those who ate the king's rich food, (Daniel 1:15–16).
- **The 21-Day Fast:** Daniel abstained from choice foods, meat, and wine for 21 days while seeking an interpretation of a vision, which culminated in an angelic revelation, (Daniel 10:2–3).

Core Purpose: The goal is not to copy Daniel's exact diet, but to draw closer to God and remain faithful to Him.

Modern Application: Giving up modern comfort foods disrupts routine habits, shifting focus and dependence fully onto God.

Foods to eat on the Daniel Fast

- **All fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- **All vegetables** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- **All whole grains** – barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- **All nuts & seeds** – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.
- **All legumes** – canned or dried; black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, and split peas.
- **All quality oils** – avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut.
- **Beverages** – distilled water, filtered water, spring water, fresh fruit or vegetable juices.
- **Other** – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, soy products, and tofu.

Foods to Avoid on the Daniel Fast

- **All meat & animal products** – bacon, beef, eggs, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.
- **All dairy products** – butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt.
- **All sweeteners** – artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, cane juice, honey, raw sugar, syrups, and sugar.
- **All leavened bread & yeast** – baked goods and bread (if it contains yeast and honey).
- **All refined & processed food products** – artificial flavourings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, and white rice.
- **All deep-fried foods** – corn chips, French fries, and potato chips.
- **All solid fats** – lard, margarine, and shortening.
- **Beverages** – alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea, and tea.

– by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

Fast options

Choose an option from each category or create your own path:

Combinations	Food	Financial	Focus
Combo 1	No caffeine, sugar, or alcohol	No food deliveries	Limit gaming and social media (2 hours total per day)
Combo 2	No dairy, red meat, or fried foods	No eating out	No gaming or social media
Combo 3	Daniel Fast	No shopping	No digital entertainment
Combo 4	7am–7pm liquid fast, Daniel Fast in the evenings	Commit to offering, or create a plan to eliminate unnecessary debt	No distractions. An entire week of silence.

Along with your fast plan add in a progressive schedule for uninterrupted daily prayer throughout the fast

Week	Date	Prayer Time Goal (uninterrupted)
Week 1	4-10 October	10 minutes
Week 2	11-17 October	15 Minutes
Week 3	18-24 October	20 Minutes
Week 4	25-31 October	30 Minutes

Setting your goal

Which version of the fast are you participating in? Write out each commitment!

Food:

Financial:

Focus

Daily Devotional

Week 1 – The Need for a Healthy Church

Read the daily passage and the devotional, answer the question and pray for 10 minutes.

Day 1 – 4 October

Read Psalm 1:1–3

Blessed is the one who chooses not to walk in the council of the ungodly, but instead delights deeply in the Word of the Lord. When we anchor our hearts in God's truth day and night, we become like vibrant trees planted firmly by streams of living water. Even in the dry and dusty seasons of life, our spiritual roots sink deep, allowing us to yield good fruit and remain resilient.

Take a moment to consider where you are drawing your daily nourishment, are you allowing the noise of culture or the stillness of God's Word to shape your decisions this week?

Day 2 – 5 October

Read Colossians 2:6–7

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, keep walking in Him, rooted and built up in the faith you were taught. When we ground our daily lives in His grace, our hearts naturally overflow with genuine thankfulness rather than anxiety. Sink your spiritual roots deep into His love today, allowing Him to establish your footsteps through every season of life.

What is one area of your life this week where you need to stop relying on your own strength and instead walk in the simple, rooted trust you had when you first gave your life to Jesus?

Day 3 – 6 October

Read 1 Peter 2:5

As living stones, God is actively crafting each of us into a spiritual house, fit to offer worship that brings Him delight through Jesus Christ. You are not a solitary brick left on the sidelines, but an essential part of a greater work where God's presence truly dwells. As we draw near to Him, He shapes our lives into holy priesthoods, using our daily lives as spiritual sacrifices that reflect His grace to the world around us.

How can you offer up your ordinary, daily routines today, whether at home, work, or in your local community, as a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God?

Day 4 – 7 October

Read 1 Timothy 4:12

Never let anyone look down on you because of your age, but instead set a clear benchmark for believers in your speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. God does not wait until you reach a certain level of maturity or life experience before using you to impact those around you. When your daily life genuinely reflects the character of Christ, your godly example speaks far louder than any position or title ever could.

Which of these five areas, speech, conduct, love, faith, or purity, is God inviting you to focus on this week as a witness to those in your workplace, school, or family?

Day 5 – 8 October

Read Hebrews 10:24–25

Let us consider how we can encourage one another on towards love and good deeds, refusing to give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing. God never designed the Christian life to be a solo effort; we need the regular support of our local church family to keep our hearts warm and focused on Jesus. As we see the day of His return drawing near, showing up faithfully to spur your brothers and sisters along becomes vital for everyone's spiritual resilience.

Who in your local church community could use a word of genuine encouragement or a quick check-in from you this week to keep running their race faithfully?

Day 6 – 9 October

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing within your local fellowship. In a world that is so quick to tear people down, a simple word of grace and intentional support can breathe fresh life into a weary heart. God calls us to actively look for ways to strengthen our brothers and sisters, ensuring no one in our church family feels like they are carrying life's heavy burdens alone.

Who in your life is God prompting you to reach out to today with a phone call, text, or word of encouragement to help build up their faith?

Day 7 – 10 October

Read Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will carry it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. When you feel weary or painfully aware of your own flaws, remember that your spiritual growth rests on God's unshakeable faithfulness rather than your own performance. He never abandons a project He starts, and He is actively shaping your life with patient grace every single day.

What area of spiritual growth or unfinished business in your life are you worrying about today, and how can you surrender that process back to the God who promises to finish what He started?

Week 2 - The Character of a Healthy Church

Read the daily passage and the devotional, answer the question and pray for 15 minutes

Day 8 – 11 October

Read Galatians 5:22–23

The fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, is the natural outcome of yielding our daily lives to the Holy Spirit. God doesn't expect us to manufacture these virtues by sheer willpower, but rather to abide in Christ so His character naturally blossoms within us. Against such things there is no law, because a life marked by this heavenly fruit brings freedom and reflects the very heart of God to a watching world.

Which specific fruit of the Spirit do you feel God is highlighting in your life right now, and how can you yield to Him today to let that trait shine through in your interactions?

Day 9 – 12 October

Read Colossians 3:12

As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, we are called to clothe ourselves daily with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. These virtues are not spiritual accessories we put on when it suits us, but the everyday attire of a heart transformed by Christ. When we wake up each morning remembered and secure in God's deep love for us, extending that same grace and patience to the people around us becomes our natural response.

Which of these virtues; compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, or patience, do you need to intentionally "put on" before stepping into a challenging conversation or relationship today?

Day 10 – 13 October

Read Micah 6:8

The Lord has clearly shown us what is good: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. True faith is never just an intellectual opinion, but a daily lifestyle that actively seeks justice for others and extends unmerited grace wherever we go. When we strip away religious pretence, God calls us into a quiet, dependent walk with Him that shapes how we treat every person we meet throughout our day.

Looking at your family, friends and communities, what is one practical way you can show tangible mercy or fight for fairness for someone in need around you?

Day 11 – 14 October

Read Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart with all diligence, for everything you do flows directly from this spiritual core. What we allow to take root in our inner lives, our thoughts, desires, and secret attitudes, inevitably shapes our words, choices, and character over time. Keeping a close watch over your heart isn't about isolation, but about protecting your connection to God so His life and grace can flow freely through you to others.

What influences, media, or habits have you been allowing into your heart lately, and is there anything you need to filter out today to protect your spiritual health?

Day 12 – 15 October

Read Philippians 2:3–4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility value others above yourselves, looking not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. In a culture that constantly urges us to put ourselves first, Christ calls us to a radical counter-cultural path modelled on His own sacrificial heart. When we intentionally step down from needing to be right or noticed, we create space for the love of Jesus to shine through our genuine service to those around us.

Who in your family, church, or wider community, can you intentionally put first today by setting aside your own agenda to serve or listen to them?

Day 13 – 16 October

Read 2 Peter 1:5–7

For this reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Saving faith is God's gift to us, but growing in Christ requires our active, daily cooperation as the Holy Spirit builds these character traits into our lives step by step. As each quality compounds upon the last, our lives become increasingly fruitful and clear witnesses to the gospel of Jesus in our local communities.

Looking at this spiritual ladder of growth, which quality, whether it's self-control, steadfastness, or brotherly affection, do you need to ask the Holy Spirit to help you cultivate more intentionally this week?

Day 14 – 17 October

Read Proverbs 11:3

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. Walking with quiet moral integrity doesn't guarantee an easy path, but it provides a steady compass when the choices around us get messy or confusing. When our inner character matches our public walk, God uses that simple honesty to protect our steps and keep our faith grounded.

Is there an area in your work, family life, or personal finances this week where you are tempted to cut corners, and how can you choose the straight path of integrity instead?

Week 3 - The Anatomy of a Healthy Church

Read the daily passage and the devotional, answer the question and pray for 20 minutes

Day 15 – 18 October

Read John 13:34–35

A new command Jesus gives us: love one another just as He has loved us. It is not our grand theological arguments or polished programs that tell the world who we belong to, but our deep, self-giving love for each other. When we choose to lay down our pride, forgive quickly, and serve our brothers and sisters, we reflect the very heart of Christ to a watching community.

How can you practically demonstrate Christlike love to a fellow believer this week, who might be difficult to love?

Day 16 – 19 October

Read Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ. True Christian community isn't about maintaining a polished exterior, but having the humility to step alongside a brother or sister when the weight of life becomes too heavy to carry alone. When we roll up our sleeves to support, listen, and pray for each other through difficult seasons, we mirror the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us.

Who in our church or local community is currently carrying a heavy load, and what is one practical way you can help lighten their burden this week?

Day 17 – 20 October

Read 1 Peter 4:8–9

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins, and offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Genuine Christian community requires a generous, forgiving spirit that chooses to extend grace rather than keep a tally of each other's faults. Opening our hearts, and our homes, to others without complaint is a tangible way we make the welcoming love of Jesus visible to those around us.

Who can you invite over for coffee or a meal this week, offering warm hospitality and a listening ear without worrying about having a perfect home?

Day 18 – 21 October

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour; for if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. God never designed us to tackle life's trials as solitary Aussie mates, but to walk together in genuine, interdependent fellowship. When hard times hit or your footing slips, having a trusted brother or sister in Christ nearby ensures you aren't left struggling in the dust alone.

Is there someone in your life who has drifted into isolation lately, and how can you reach out today to let them know they don't have to carry their struggles by themselves?

Day 19 – 22 October

Read Acts 2:42

The early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. They didn't just attend gatherings out of habit; they intentionally rooted their lives together around God's truth and shared grace. When we prioritise these simple, foundational practices in our local churches today, the Holy Spirit builds a resilient, joyful community capable of weathering any storm.

Which of these four pillars; teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, or prayer, needs a bit more intentional focus in your own weekly routine right now?

Day 20 – 23 October

Read Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another in the ongoing journey of faith. We were never meant to walk the Christian life lone operators, but to lean into relationships that challenge us to grow in godliness. True Christian fellowship involves the kind of honest conversation and loving accountability that polishes away our rough edges and keeps our faith sharp.

Do you have a trusted Christian friend who has permission to speak honest truth into your life, and how can you invite that kind of sharpening accountability this week?

Day 21 – 24 October

Read Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone; forgive as the Lord forgiven you. Holding onto grudges only weighs down our own hearts and disrupts the unity Christ died to secure for His church. Because we have been showered with an ocean of unmerited grace at the cross, we are called to release others from the debts we feel they owe us.

Is there a lingering resentment or offense you are holding against a brother or sister, and will you choose to extend Christ's forgiveness to them today?

Week 4 - The Mission of a Healthy Church

Read the daily passage and the devotional, answer the question and pray for 30 minutes

Day 22 – 25 October

Read Colossians 4:5–6

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity as you walk through your daily routine. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone you meet with genuine warmth and truth. Every casual chat and interaction is a God-given opportunity to reflect the inviting character of Jesus to a searching world.

How can you intentionally "season" your conversations with grace and kindness today when talking with work colleagues, neighbours, or shopkeepers who don't yet know the Lord?

Day 23 – 26 October

Read Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" and Isaiah answered, "Here am I. Send me!" When we encounter the holiness and majesty of God, our natural response shouldn't be passive agreement, but a willing heart ready for service. God isn't looking for extraordinary ability or perfect qualifications, but for ordinary followers who simply make themselves available to His call wherever He leads.

What area of your life, whether in your workplace, neighbourhood, or at church, is God asking you to step up and say, "Here am I, Lord, send me" today?

Day 24 – 27 October

Read Psalm 96:3

Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all peoples, for the news of His salvation is too good to keep to ourselves. We are called to step outside the comfort of our church walls and share the beauty of who God is through both our daily witness and our words. Whether across the street to our Aussie neighbours or across the globe, telling of His wondrous works is the joy and responsibility of every believer.

What is one specific story of God's goodness or answers to prayer in your life that you can share with a friend or colleague this week to point them toward His glory?

Day 25 – 28 October

Read Romans 10:14–15

How can people call on the Lord to save them unless they believe in Him, and how can they believe unless they hear about Him? God has chosen to use ordinary believers to carry the good news of Jesus, using our voices and feet to bring hope to a world in need. Standing up to share the gospel can feel daunting, but there is incredible beauty in stepping out so that our neighbours and friends have the chance to hear and respond to God's love.

Who in your daily life needs to hear the hope of the Gospel, and how can you pray for an opportunity to share a word about Jesus with them this week?

Day 26 – 29 October

Read Acts 1:8

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Jesus doesn't call us to rely on our own self, but equips us with the supernatural presence of the Spirit to step out with confidence. From our own backyards and our communities right out to the furthest corners of the globe, we are empowered to make the life-changing truth of the Gospel known.

In what area of your life are you relying on your own strength rather than asking the Holy Spirit for the courage to be a witness for Jesus today?

Day 27 – 30 October

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us as we go about our daily lives. As believers, we hold an official commission to represent the King of Kings, carrying His message of grace, hope, and reconciliation to those around us. Every interaction with our workmates, neighbours, and family is an opportunity to show what the Kingdom of God is truly like through our words and actions.

If someone judged the character and love of Jesus based solely on how you represent Him this week, what kind of impression would they receive, and is there any area where your representation needs aligning with Christ?

Day 28 – 31 October

Read Matthew 28:19–20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded. This Great Commission isn't just a calling for foreign missionaries, but an everyday mandate for every believer right here in our own Aussie backyards and communities. As we go about our daily routines, we are sent to walk alongside others, sharing the gospel and helping them grow into faithful followers of Christ with the comforting promise that He is with us always.

Who is one person in your sphere of influence, a friend, work colleague, or neighbour, that you can begin intentionally investing in to help them take their next step toward Jesus?

Bible Study Guide

Week 1 – The Need for a Healthy Church

READ IT: Ephesians 4:11–16

INTRODUCTION: Everyone wants our church to flourish, but true spiritual vitality involves far more than attendance figures, polished Sunday programs, or financial expansion. A flourishing church begins with holistic health.

Ephesians 4:11–16 presents the apostle Paul's architecture for a mature, healthy congregation. He shows that spiritual growth is not something we artificially manufacture; it is the natural fruit of a healthy body aligned under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. When a church focuses solely on external metrics without building internal health, it becomes vulnerable to cultural pressures and spiritual instability.

To help local churches thrive, the Baptist Union of Victoria developed the Flourishing Church Framework. Grounded in Scripture, this framework highlights four essential pillars of church health: Spirituality, Church Character, Church Life, and Church Mission. Just as a gardener nurtures the soil and prunes the branches to produce a bountiful harvest, a healthy church stewards its governance, relationships, and spiritual practices so that kingdom growth becomes inevitable.

OPEN IT: Think of a community group, sporting club, or organisation you've been part of that was exceptionally healthy. What made it feel vibrant and effective, and how did that impact the people involved?

DIG INTO IT:

- According to Ephesians 4:14–15 and John 15:1–8, why is holistic church health the essential prerequisite for true, lasting growth rather than mere numerical expansion?
- Look at Ephesians 4:11–13. What is the primary role God assigned to church leaders, and how does this contrast with the idea that leaders are hired to "do all the ministry" themselves?
- Read Ephesians 4:16 alongside 1 Corinthians 12:12–20. How does Paul describe the relationship between individual church members and the health of the entire body? What happens when parts of the body stop functioning?
- How do Colossians 2:6–7 and 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40 support the need for both deep spiritual roots (Spirituality) and clear, orderly structures (Church Character) in the local church?
- Based on Acts 2:42–47 and Ephesians 4:12–16, how do the four pillars of the Flourishing Church Framework; Spirituality, Church Character, Church Life, and Church Mission, work together to guard a congregation against cultural confusion and spiritual burnout?

REFLECT ON IT:

- Are you currently approaching church life more as a passive spectator or as an active, equipped member taking responsibility for the health of the body?
- Which of the four pillars (Spirituality, Church Character, Church Life, or Church Mission) do you feel is currently strongest in your own life and in your church family? Which pillar needs more intentional care?
- In what ways are you tempted to judge the success of a church by external cultural metrics rather than internal spiritual vitality and Christlike character?
- How can you practice "whole-of-life discipleship" and radical hospitality in your local suburb or workplace this coming week?
- What is one practical step you can take to support your church leaders and contribute to the unity and health of your congregation?

Week 2 - The Character of a Healthy Church

READ IT: Exodus 18:13–24

INTRODUCTION: A church flourishes not through the heroic effort of a few leaders, but when its corporate character—marked by empowered leadership, a clear identity, healthy structures, and Spirit-led innovation—is aligned with the mission of God.

In Exodus 18:13–24, Moses is running himself and the people of Israel into the ground trying to single-handedly judge every dispute. Jethro, his father-in-law, observes this exhaustion and delivers a masterclass in godly governance, leadership multiplication, organizational clarity, and missional adaptation. Rather than letting one leader become a bottleneck, Jethro encourages Moses to establish a decentralized system of governance that empowers qualified leaders at every level.

This passage underpins the Church Character pillar of the Flourishing Church Framework. While the Gospel message remains eternal and unchangeable, the administrative structures, leadership pathways, and operational processes we use must be stewarded intentionally. When a local church cultivates a character grounded in shared leadership, clear identity, empowering structures, and humble adaptation, it moves from exhaustion to endurance, building a healthy foundation that honours Christ and serves its community.

OPEN IT: Think of a time when you experienced a significant bottleneck in a workplace, community project, or volunteer group. What caused the delay, and how did it affect the morale and productivity of the team?

DIG INTO IT:

- Read Exodus 18:13–18. What was the core problem with Moses' approach to leading Israel, and why did Jethro tell him, "What you are doing is not good"?
- Look at Exodus 18:19–22 alongside Ephesians 4:11–13. What primary duties did Jethro instruct Moses to retain, and what character qualifications were required for the newly appointed leaders?
- Compare Exodus 18:15–16, 20 with 1 Peter 2:9–10. How did Jethro re-anchor Moses and the people of Israel in their core identity and purpose, and how does this apply to a church's sense of mission today?
- Read Exodus 18:21–22 and 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40. How did the tiered structure (leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens) promote efficient care and empower leaders, rather than restricting the community?
- Read Exodus 18:23–24 alongside Acts 6:2–4 and 2 Timothy 2:2. What personal qualities did Moses demonstrate by listening to Jethro's advice, and why is humble adaptation necessary for long-term church health?

REFLECT ON IT:

- Where might you be serving as a "bottleneck" in your home, workplace, or church by trying to handle tasks that could be delegated or shared with others?
- How well do you understand your church's distinct Baptist heritage, core values, and local mission, and how do these shape your personal contribution to the congregation?
- Do the administrative systems and decision-making processes in your ministry context serve to empower volunteers or create friction and control?
- How comfortable are you with trying new initiatives or methods in ministry that involve a degree of risk or potential failure?
- What is one practical step you can take this week to encourage, equip, or support an emerging leader within your church family?

Week 3 - The Anatomy of a Healthy Church

READ IT: Romans 12:3–16

INTRODUCTION: A flourishing church is built when transformed believers live out the gospel together through sober self-assessment, active exercise of spiritual gifts, radical hospitality, and humble unity across diverse backgrounds.

In Romans 12:3–16, the apostle Paul transitions from deep gospel theology into the practical anatomy of a healthy Christian community. Writing to a church marked by varied cultural backgrounds and potential divisions, Paul shows that true spiritual transformation impacts how we view ourselves, how we serve alongside one another, how we open our homes, and how we honour those who are different from us.

This passage sits at the heart of the Church Life pillar within the Flourishing Church Framework. A healthy church is far more than a Sunday service or an event calendar; it is an organic, interdependent body. When believers actively engage their spiritual gifts, practice radical hospitality, and cultivate gospel-shaped unity, the invisible grace of God becomes visible to a watching world.

OPEN IT: What is one place or community outside of church where you have felt genuinely welcomed and included? What specific actions or attitudes made you feel that way?

DIG INTO IT:

- Read Romans 12:3, 9, 11–12 alongside Matthew 28:18–20 and Colossians 2:6–7. What does Paul mean by "sober judgment", and how does daily, whole-of-life discipleship guard a believer against both spiritual pride and spiritual burnout?
- Look at Romans 12:4–8 and 1 Peter 4:10–11. How does Paul's analogy of the physical body challenge the idea of passive church attendance, and what happens to the church family when spiritual gifts sit unused?
- Read Romans 12:13–15 and Hebrews 13:2. The Greek phrase for "seek to show hospitality" literally means to "pursue love for strangers." How does this go beyond simple entertaining, and how is it expressed in shared emotions (weeping and rejoicing)?
- Compare Romans 12:3b, 10, 16 with Galatians 3:26–28. How does the cross level the ground between different social, economic, cultural, and generational groups, and what does it mean to "outdo one another in showing honour"?
- Based on Romans 12:3–16 and 1 Corinthians 12:12–20, how do personal discipleship, active service, open hospitality, and demographic diversity work together to build a healthy, resilient congregation?

REFLECT ON IT:

- In your daily routine (Monday through Saturday), are you living more like a "thermometer" that simply reflects surrounding cultural trends, or a "thermostat" bringing Christ's climate into your home, workplace, and suburb?
- What specific spiritual gifts, talents, or practical skills has God entrusted to you, and how are you currently using them to build up your church family?
- How open is your home and schedule to pursuing hospitality with newcomers, strangers, or those outside your immediate circle of friends?
- Are there structural, social, or personal barriers that make it difficult for you to build genuine relationships with people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, or life stages in your church?
- What is one practical way you can "outdo" a fellow church member in showing honour or offering encouragement this coming week?

Week 4 - The Mission of a Healthy Church

READ IT: Luke 10:1-9,25-37

INTRODUCTION: A flourishing church does not exist for itself, but is sent by Christ into its neighbourhood and world to embody His presence through active community engagement, bold evangelism, costly justice, and kingdom partnerships.

In Luke 10:1–9 and 25–37, Jesus commissions seventy-two followers to enter the surrounding towns as agents of peace, healing, and proclamation, before providing the Parable of the Good Samaritan as a vivid picture of costly mercy. Rather than building isolated holy enclaves, Jesus sends His disciples directly into local homes and streets to serve, share the Gospel, and care for the victimized.

This passage sits at the heart of the Church Mission pillar within the Flourishing Church Framework. A healthy church moves beyond an inward focus or survival mindset, recognizing that its primary assignment is outward. When a local church balances relational presence, verbal proclamation, social justice, and collaborative partnership, it becomes a vibrant outpost of God's Kingdom that brings lasting transformation to its suburb and beyond.

OPEN IT: Think of a local community group, business, or organization in your suburb that is widely respected by its neighbours. What specific actions or qualities have earned them such a positive reputation?

DIG INTO IT:

- Read Luke 10:5–7 alongside Jeremiah 29:7 and John 17:15–18. How does Jesus' instruction to "remain in the same house, eating and drinking" challenge the temptation for Christians to isolate themselves from non-believers? What does it mean to seek the shalom (peace and flourishing) of our local suburb?
- Look at Luke 10:8–9 and Romans 10:14–17. Why is there an inseparable link between good deeds ("heal the sick") and clear proclamation ("say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near'")? Why is social care without explicit gospel proclamation incomplete?
- Read Luke 10:30–37 alongside Micah 6:8 and James 1:27. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, how do the priest and Levite justify walking past the beaten man, and what does the Samaritan's response reveal about the true cost of biblical mercy and justice?
- Read Luke 10:1 alongside Philippians 1:3–5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12–13. Why did Jesus send the disciples out "two by two" rather than as solo workers, and how does inter-church and union-wide partnership strengthen our witness in a city?
- Based on Luke 10:1–9, 25–37 and Matthew 28:18–20, how do community presence, clear evangelism, active justice, and strategic partnerships fit together to form a holistic mission?

REFLECT ON IT:

- If your local church disappeared from your suburb tomorrow, who outside your congregation would notice or miss its presence, and why?
- How intentional are you personally about building genuine relationships with non-Christian neighbours, workmates, or local community groups (e.g., sports clubs, school committees)?
- What fears or hesitations make it difficult for you to share the Good News of Jesus verbally, and what simple steps could help you grow in confidence?
- Who are the "beaten and marginalized" individuals or groups in your local area (e.g., refugees, victims of domestic abuse, First Nations peoples, those experiencing homelessness), and how can you or your small group demonstrate practical mercy to them?
- In what ways can your group or congregation step away from a "lone ranger" mindset and actively partner with other local churches or mission agencies for greater kingdom impact?

Your responses – Week 1

Your responses – Week 2

Your responses – Week 3

Your responses – Week 4

Acknowledgments

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