

Week two: Our church

- ◆ Media fast
- ◆ Fast from non-essential shopping
- ◆ Have regular meals and sleep times (especially students)
- ◆ Spend as much time as possible listening in quietness to God
- ◆ Calculate your giving – not just financial, but your time & talents for God
- ◆ Go to supper with church friends or invite them
- ◆ Make a list of areas of church life that need helpers and ask 'Am I willing to serve in anything?'
- ◆ Draw a plan (family tree style) of your natural and church families.
- ◆ Point to them in turn and ask the Lord to speak to you about them.

Week Three: Our nation

- ◆ You might fast certain foods e.g. eat only vegetables, bread and fruit.
- ◆ Abstain from one of God's gifts that you have begun to abuse name it (e.g. Misuse of time)
- ◆ Read a good news article every day and ask: 'Lord, what are you saying to the nation of Switzerland/to my home nation?'
- ◆ Pray for the church in Switzerland
- ◆ Pray AGAINST suicide, depression & perfectionism and FOR a fear of the Lord in the nation and joy in His church.

Week Four: Our world

- ◆ Eat normally, except Monday, but with no second helpings and no 'junk' between meals (or at meals)
- ◆ Go to bed a little earlier than normal
- ◆ Choose one of our mission partners and write them a letter about 'Hungry for God'
- ◆ Have a meal with someone from overseas
- ◆ Go for a walk in the countryside. See God's creation,, do something about the abuse of it - collect litter etc.
- ◆ Ask who God wants you to "show mercy" to.

"What if I fail?"

Tell the Lord and try again. This is not a test of endurance, nor proof of will power. His mercies are new every morning. Lamentations 3:22-23.



Hungry for God

"Happy are those who Hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled" (Mt.5.6)

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock, If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Rev 3:20)

Why Be Hungry For God?¹

Hunger: that gnawing ache on the inside of you; that sense of need that is not content until it is filled. **Hunger is an active state, for it results in you seeking out the object of desire that will satisfy your need.**

Hunger for God is the longing to encounter Him, to be with Him, and to be filled with His Spirit.

We need to hunger and thirst after God.

When we are hungry for God and His Presence, we will do whatever it takes to get close to Him. The place of intimacy is where we will catch, not only the revelation He wants to give us, but we will also catch His heart.

Many of us want to be filled with the Spirit, we long to be close to God and see miracles happen in people's lives.

When we hunger and thirst for God, we will seek Him, and when we seek Him, we will be filled and empowered.

It all starts with hunger.

6 Ways You Can Stir Up Hunger For God

1. MISS IT

A person who is fasting eventually loses their appetite as their body adjusts to the absence of food. Helen Calder writes: **'I have come to realise that the real tragedy in the church is not spiritual famine: it is famine without hunger, dryness without thirst.'**

Amos 8.11 talks of a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

2. PRAY FOR IT

Even the desire to seek God is a gift from Him (John 6:44).

When we pray for spiritual hunger, we are praying in accordance with God's will. He wants us to be hungry for Him. (Matt 5:6). It is a prayer God loves to answer.

¹ Thanks to Helen Calder for some of this

3. RECALL IT

Jesus told the Ephesian church, 'You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen' (Rev 2:4-5)

You can stir up a desire for God by remembering a time when you were pursuing God and experiencing intimacy in your life with Him.

Do you have books that you read at that time, worship you listened to, or letters or journals that you wrote in? These can be aids to help you recall what it felt like during that season.

4. CATCH IT

Spiritual hunger is contagious. Get around hungry people, or people who are further on in the journey than you. Study their books, listen to their messages, read their blogs.

When a friend speaks of having an ache in his heart for God it stirred the same sense of hunger in me.

5. HEAR IT

A new sound of worship or Word online can help impart hunger to you. When was the last time you heard fresh worship music that stirred your soul to worship and spend time with God?

These days, it is easy to purchase worship music through iTunes for a very small cost. Or look at Ransomed Heart.org; download John Piper "Desiring God" or "Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire" by Jim Cymbala.

6. ACT ON IT

'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' Ps. 34:8

With the little sense of need that you have, pursue God. You will learn that the more you encounter His presence, the more you will hunger for more.

And most amazing of all, **you will discover that no matter how much you long for God, and how much you hunger for Him, His desire for you is greater.**

What's it all about?"

Joel 1:14 says"..... Declare a holy fast: call a sacred assembly.

Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."

This four week period is an opportunity for us to clear some space for God individually and as a church community.

There are no rules

This is an invitation to the whole church to pray and find a way to uncover the Hunger for God in our hearts.

Some have found this book helpful: 'A Hunger for God*' by John Piper (IVP £7.99)

"Why?"

Because we believe that "man shall not live by bread alone... but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." Deuteronomy 8:3. Sometimes, even the 'good things' in life can be used to fill a deeper craving in us ...a craving that can only be satisfied by Christ himself.

"How can I be involved?" Anyway you like!

We are using fasting in its mildest context - fasting in the areas of food and drink, TV, social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) and possessions. Fasting tests where the heart is so there will be strong and sometimes unexpected reactions from the world, flesh or the devil. Our aim is to give our hearts a work-out to ensure that we would rather feast at God's table in the kingdom of heaven that feed on the finest delicacies of the world. "Above all else, guard your heart for it is the well spring of life". Proverbs 4:23.

Some suggestions...

The suggestions in this pamphlet may help as a guide.

Remember, there are NO RULES. Why not try some of these:-

Each day begin by praising the Lord and reading your Bible (try aloud).

- ◆ For the four week period, identify one area that the Lord has pointed out to you personally and act on it.
- ◆ Fast each Monday (or choose a day that is best for you). Eat nothing until supper. Drink as appropriate. For those with food problems just 'miss lunch'.
- ◆ Abstain from alcohol, caffeine and chocolate.
- ◆ Come to church and a prayer meeting if at all possible.
- ◆ Ensure one day of the week is free.
- ◆ Share your commitment to this and what you intend to do with one other person.

Week One: my life

- ◆ Read only essentials other than the Bible
- ◆ Watch your words (Ephesians 4:29-32)
- ◆ Rely on spoken praise from your heart versus just listening to a CD or online music.
- ◆ Write out a testimony or a 'spiritual autobiography'.
- ◆ List God's good gifts to you and ask which you take for granted and which you abuse.
- ◆ Fast from eating between meals