

# 28 Day Church Challenge<sup>©</sup>

John Wesley wanted the members of his movement to work on personal holiness and acts of service to others. We all want our Church to be vibrant and alive. Sometimes, we let other things distract us from the focus of Jesus Christ. This 28 Day Church Challenge is designed to help the church as a whole and the individual members of the congregation to make The Main Thing (Jesus Christ) be the main thing.

In order to help jump start our renewed focus on Jesus Christ, the following Five (5) Challenge Areas are proposed:

**Fasting** – For this purpose, fasting will be defined as the giving up of a pleasurable thing in your life. It can include food, television, makeup, or some other activity or thing that you really enjoy. The point is to take that time to reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus made for you on the cross. Make it a point to think about all He has done for you and how grateful you are for that and all His other gifts. Most people think of fasting as something that is only done during Lent, but John Wesley advocated weekly fasting as a spiritual discipline.

**Prayer** – This is your time for conversation with God. It should include as much listening as talking. If we just run to God with our list of desires, then we are treating Him like a vending Machine. Of course, He wants to hear from you and He wants to hear your needs and desires, but, He also wants you to give Him your time and attention. We should always take the time to hear what God has to say to us.

**Study** – Part of the Greatest Commandment is to Love God with our entire mind. When we take time to learn about Him, it honors Him and says that we feel that He is worthy the mental energy we have to expend to learn and study about Him. When we study or read something that causes us to have to read more slowly or repeatedly, that extra time and effort says to God that He is worthy of effort as well as praise.

**Outreach** – Being involved in our communities and neighborhoods lets people know that we care about and love them. Stepping outside the doors of the church and helping those around us is a vital function of the church.

**The Great Commission** – Go and tell. We can become so timid that we forget that we are called to the simple task of telling others. If Jesus has made a difference in your life, why would you not want to share that with others? Our job is to tell. God is responsible for the results. We do our part and He will do His. Tell a friend, tell a neighbor, tell a co-worker, tell a stranger, just tell! Invite someone to church and then make sure that it's a place that they would want to come back and visit.

# The Challenge!

Have members of your church commit to the following for a 28 day period. Sign-Ups are each Sunday for the following week. Even if you feel like you can't participate in the Challenge, you can at least agree to be a Prayer Warrior for The Challenge or The Participants. Sign up and agree to pray each day for The Challenge and The Participants.

**Fasting** – At least 5 people agree each week to fast a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 28 days from something (remember, it does not have to be food based). The point is for it to be sacrificial for you (if you don't drink coffee, then giving up coffee for 28 days doesn't count). Be mindful of any medical conditions or limitations before you undertake any food based fasts. Make sure that all days of the week during the Challenge are covered by fasting.

**Prayer** – During an 8 hour span each day, one person picks one hour per day to pray for the church, revival and God's people (other church members, persecuted Christians in the world, our leaders). At least 3 members (Church Prayer Team) also agree to meet once per week at the church and spend one hour in prayer for the church and its' members.

**Study** – At least 2 people per week agree to study a Bible based topic or person in depth and come back to the church members and share what they learned.

**Outreach** – At least 2 people per week agree to reach out to a local school, business, civic group or organization in the community and ask them what they might need help doing. Then the church agrees to go help. "Many hands make light work."

**The Great Commission** – Each member of the church agrees to invite one person to church per week and to witness to at least one person within the 30 days. Remember to lift up the name of the Invitee and the Witness Target.

# Resources

Now, don't worry, here are a list of helpful resources if you are unsure of a direction, need some additional information and some forms that may be of help in organizing your Challenge. **HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE!!!** Also remember to lift each other up, encourage one another and love one another during this Challenge. This is for your individual Spiritual Health as well as the Spiritual Health of your church. Even if you didn't sign up for a spot, be a Prayer Warrior for those people. Lift them up in prayer for their protection, endurance and well-being.

Here are some general resources for you:

- **Bible Gateway** ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)) - Website that offers search tools and Bible resources
- **E-sword** ([www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)) – “e-Sword is a feature rich and user friendly free Bible study app with everything needed to study the Bible in an enjoyable and enriching manner!”
- **Christian Book Distributors** ([www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com)) – Distributor of Bibles, Christian books, movies, CDs, jewelry and supplies.
- **Bible Hub** ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)) – Searchable site containing Bibles of various translations, commentaries, and other resources.
- **The United Methodist Church** ([www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)) – This is the site for the United Methodist Church. You will find all types of resources for learning, study, and improving your Christian walk.

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are tons of materials, resources and websites that are available for low or no costs as well as ones that cost a bit more. Take the time to explore. If you do not have access to a computer, remember that your local library is an excellent place to go for information.

## Fasting

<http://www.methodistprayer.org/wesleyfast/>

# Prayer

**John Wesley On Prayer** (From [www.umcmission.org](http://www.umcmission.org))

God's command to "pray without ceasing" is founded on the necessity we have of his grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air.

Whether we think of; or speak to, God, whether we act or suffer for him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him.

All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God, without either adding to or diminishing from it by his own choice. Prayer continues in the desire of the heart, though the understanding be employed on outward things.

In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is a continual prayer.

As the furious hate which the devil bears us is termed the roaring of a lion, so our vehement love may be termed crying after God.

God only requires of his adult children, that their hearts be truly purified, and that they offer him continually the wishes and vows that naturally spring from perfect love. For these desires, being the genuine fruits of love, are the most perfect prayers that can spring from it.

## Publications

- *John Wesley – A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*
- *E.M. Bounds on Prayer*
- *How To Pray: The Best of John Wesley on Prayer*

## Study

- *John Wesley's Commentary*
- *Matthew Henry's Commentary*
- *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe
- *A Cultural Handbook to the Bible* by John J. Pilch (Author)

## Outreach

- <http://www.umcom.org/learn/5-great-outreach-ideas-for-families>
- <http://www.umcom.org/learn/small-churches-can-make-big-impacts>
- <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/the-abcs-of-back-to-school-outreach>
- *Vanishing Grace: What Ever Happened to the Good News?*  
By Philip Yancey (Zondervan 2014)
- *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church*  
By Scot McKnight (Brazos Press 2014)

## The Great Commission

- <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/called-to-be-neighbors-and-witnesses-guidelines-for-interreligious-relation>
- “The Essentials for Leading a Person to Christ” <http://www.umcna.org/mtdetail/1088752>

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Prayer Sign-Up Week \_\_\_\_\_

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6am							
7am							
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							

**Study Sign-Up Week \_\_\_\_\_**

Name	Topic

**Outreach Sign-Up Week \_\_\_\_\_**

Name	Outreach Partner Target

**The Great Commission Week \_\_\_\_\_**

Name	Invitee Name	Witness Target

## Prayer Warriors Week \_\_\_\_\_


## Church Prayer Team Week \_\_\_\_\_
