

## **Part 4**

moving on from here

# What's next?

## From the upper room to the market place

---

**Since the birth of the church, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples have followed the example of Jesus in their approach to ministry. Pray in the upper room then go to the market place. Repeat.**

I hope you have been blessed by reading this booklet. My prayer, while writing it, has been that the church and the individual follower of Jesus Christ will rediscover the joy and the power of fasting and prayer. I continue to pray that, as we uncover the treasure of God's Word on this subject, you will develop a habit of fasting and praying. Whether it will be on your own, as a couple or family, with a small group or the whole church, it is important you do not settle for an intellectual understanding of this subject. Put into practice everything you have learnt and make it a habit.

The disciples were commanded to wait in Jerusalem until they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. He would empower them to be witnesses of Jesus, His life and teachings, all over the world. They were to start in Jerusalem, then in Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth. The disciples were commanded to go into the whole world to make disciples of all nations. This is the Great Commission which, we all accept, applies to every disciple of Jesus, male, female and child.

But what is the next step in fulfilling this Great Commission? How do we move on from Here? Some have taken the waiting too far and they are still waiting and never going. Some have taken going to extreme and rushed into the market place without waiting on the Holy Spirit first.

The book of Acts sheds some light on this issue. The disciples waited for 10 days. They prayed and most likely fasted. On the day of Pentecost they, who gathered in the Upper Room, were filled with the Holy Spirit. They could have spent the whole day in that amazing ecstasy, praising God and having some wonderful fellowship. No, they immediately went into the market place; renewed and filled with power; sharing the Good News of Jesus. That day, 3000 souls are added to the church.

Once opposition rose, they went back to the Upper Room. They prayed, were filled again with the Holy Spirit and went back into the market place. The book of Acts is filled with the constant repeat of this simple but powerful sequence. The Upper Room, then the market place, back to the Upper Room and then back into the market place.

If we miss one step, we get out of sync and get outside the intended pattern of the church. Stick with the sequence: Upper Room, market place, and repeat!

# Annex 1

## a life of prayer and power

---

**This booklet is meant to motivate you to a continuous life of prayer. Your journey of seven days was filled with purpose but life continues and prayer must become your lifestyle as a Christian. A life of prayer means a life of power. Let me give you an example.**

My father came to Christ, during communism, from a life of sin and violence. After a dramatic and miraculous conversion, the elders of the small church he was attending, approached him and said: "we see in you the spiritual gifts of a leader and we want you to join us for some training." For most of us, this would mean some sort of theological training. But no, that was not their plan.

How would you "train" a young man, who clearly displays spiritual gifts for leadership? "Meet us on top of the hill which overlooks the town", they said to my father. "We'll meet there every morning at 6.00 am, before going to work. We are going to pray."

This was their strategy and training method: if you want to lead you must learn to pray. If you want to preach, you must learn to pray. This reminds me of the Apostles. Jesus was about to entrust the church to the Apostles and there was no church manual, no seminar for preaching and no Bible colleges.

Now, don't get me wrong. All these things are good and useful. They play a part in our formation but we must put first things first.

The apostles asked: Lord, teach us to pray! (Luke 11: 1) Somehow, the apostles connected the dots: John the Baptist prayed. His disciples prayed. Jesus prayed. He often went away early in the morning, sometimes all night. All He did was pray to the Father. Then, He came down among all the people, meeting their needs, healing their sick and delivering them out of bondage. He preached, but not like the Pharisees. He spoke with power and performed mighty miracles.

I'm pretty sure they thought that prayer had something to do with it all. The disciples must have understood a vital truth which I believe, we have lost today: Prayer means power and power changes the way we do things. *Do you see it?*

Those elders, who are now with the Lord, understood this truth so well. Because of them, my father's life and ministry has been marked by prayer. It's been all about private and public prayer.

## Fasting and Prayer @ TC 2020

My father often prayed on his own, with tears and groanings. We, his children, have witnessed this regularly. He never had much theological training, but he has known the power of God through the most difficult period of church history in Romania: communism. The prayer meetings lasted for a few hours, with everyone on their knees, crying out to God with sincere tears.

Things are not the same today. Mostly, because we have lost this connection between prayer, power and preaching. Our theology and thirst for intellectual knowledge has replaced our passion for praise and intimacy with God.

That is why we must learn again to stay close to God and guard our prayer life. Learn to pray and you will have power to preach. Seek to be in the prayer meeting and you will love the church. Pray and the Holy Spirit will reveal to you the truth of His Word. Pray and you will have wisdom and understanding.

Prayer also equips you to do the work of an evangelist. It is only in prayer, you become more and more burdened for lost souls. If you want to see a united church, then get the church to pray.

This, I must say, challenges the way we view training for preaching and ministry. I know people who have fallen in love with the pulpit, but not in love with God.

Have a look at the book of Acts. It was in a prayer meeting of 120 disciples, that the Holy Spirit came and baptised the church with power. Then the early church went forward, on their knees. Every time the world, sin or opposition tried to destroy it, the church had victory because of prayer. Yes, there was suffering. Yes, some of them died. But the church had power. Throughout the book of Acts, churches are planted and disciples receive the Holy Spirit during prayer times.

Prayer, power and preaching are all connected. This demands our response. It's quite simple. If you desire the pulpit or to lead the church, learn to pray.

Note: This article is part of the Preacher's Hub, the preaching training group, in Transformation Centre, Lisburn. For more similar articles, go to our website: [transformation.cc](http://transformation.cc)

## Annex 2

### Fasting and Prayer with John Wesley

---

**John Wesley (28 June 1703 - 2 March 1791) the founder of Methodism encouraged the members of his societies to fast on both Wednesdays and Fridays, as a regular spiritual discipline.**

It is a known fact that John Wesley would not ordain anyone into the Methodist ministry if the person was unwilling to fast on the given days. Towards the end of his ministry, however, Wesley settled for the normal Anglican tradition of fasting just on Fridays.

In fact John Wesley advocated fasting on Fridays as early as 1739. His fast would start on Thursday night at sun down. This seems to coincide with the Jewish tradition of considering the sundown, the start of a new day. Wesley would end the fast on Friday around 3 pm.

The Methodist revival and the church planting movement began with a few men gathering together to pray, fast, read the Bible and encourage each other to holy living. This "holy club" formed at Oxford University; which included John and Charles Wesley; was the pattern for what later became Methodist societies.

As the doors of the Anglican churches began to close, John Wesley began preaching to the crowds in the open fields around Bristol. This new way of preaching spread quickly and John Wesley traveled the country, establishing societies of people willing to gather, based on the same principles of the "holy club".

Throughout his life, Wesley spent an incredible amount of time organising these societies on Biblical principles. His attention to careful methods for studying the Word of God, praying and exercising spiritual disciplines such as fasting, gave the movement the name of "methodist". The encouragement to fast, as a regular spiritual discipline, is as effective as developing the discipline of reading God's word and praying.

I have found Wesley's principles for fasting quite helpful and filled with common sense. They were taken from the methodist prayer website. For more details visit: [methodistprayer.org](http://methodistprayer.org)

What I have tried to explain in my own words, John Wesley seems to be able to put in a nice and concise list. Lists are not everyone's thing. However, they can be useful guidelines and reminders of what we can do to refocus on what is important.

Lists can be useful for those who have busy lives and just want to get a glimpse of what needs to be considered, as they fast and pray.

## The Wesley Fast

- 1. Be flexible and listen to the Holy Spirit. Don't get so caught up with the act of fasting itself that you forget why you're doing it in the first place.*
- 2. Decide whether you're going to do a complete fast (water only), a no-solid-food fast that allows milk, juice, coffee and tea, a no-meat fast, or some other kind of fast. There are no fixed rules here but it's always good to try to keep the fast you set out to do. Some fasts are more difficult than others, and there will be times you may feel led to switch things up.*
- 3. Plan on Friday as your regular fasting day, but use Wednesday and other days for additional fasting when you feel called to a time of deeper and more intense prayer. Remember, there's nothing "magic" about Friday. It's simply a historical day for fasting in many Christian traditions, largely because Jesus was crucified on a Friday. If for some reason another day of the week makes more sense for you, then fast on that day.*
- 4. Only fast for more than one consecutive day after you've consulted with your doctor and only if you're sure you're physically able to handle it.*
- 5. Make sure you drink plenty of water while fasting, no matter what kind of fast you choose.*
- 6. The default Wesley Fast is observed from sundown Thursday till 3:00 Friday afternoon. Some Christians go till sundown on Friday. Do whichever you feel led to do in any given week.*
- 7. Remember, there will be times when it makes sense to skip your Friday fast or move it to another day of the week. For example, if you have an opportunity to have lunch on a Friday with someone you've been wanting to connect with for a while, don't feel compelled to create an awkward situation by sticking to your fast. Just change your fast day that week. Guideline #1 applies here.*