

Breathe...

breathe

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Breathe...



As you return from time away you may have experienced God's love, grace and peace in new ways. You may have been challenged to take next steps in your faith walk and want to grow in your relationship with God and others. It may be easy to go back into our everyday routine. But really is that what you want? Things can be different. Take the challenge to start new practices and patterns in your life. This week, experience **breathe**, anticipate, savor, and celebrate God in your life.

breathe is an experience that will give you a taste of a variety of spiritual practices designed to allow you time and space to hear God's voice. Consider experiencing **breathe** as you take a walk, go out for a run, sit by a body of water, reflect in a quiet space or one filled with activity. God speaks to us in a variety of ways including time set aside to read or listen to scripture, God can use others to speak truth into our lives. **breathe** may be time when it is just you and God in a quiet space. We invite on this journey—to listen for God in that still small voice.

breathe begins at the end of the book of John. In John prior to our text Jesus has died and risen, he has visited the disciples two times to prepare them for his leaving and next steps in their lives. The disciples are in this in-between space, having experienced three full years with Christ and now everything is changing. They aren't sure what to do now that Jesus is gone so they go back to what they know: fishing. Jesus meets them in their ordinary. For many of us going on retreats getting time away allows us to refresh our relationship with God but as we return we can easily go back to what we know just as the disciples. But God wants us to continue our relationship, growing in our

understanding and living a full life. This week as we reflect on John 21:1-14 listen for Gods voice. Imagine Christ is with you, hearing the desires of your heart and wanting to speak to you. Listen, anticipate, savor and celebrate. We pray that **breathe** will be filled with God size surprises.

Remember to consider a variety of setting. Take a walk, or a run, find a quiet place to reflect and anticipate that God will speak to you this week.

week one



The accompanying audio portion for this material is available for streaming or download at CovChurch.org/resources/breathe-material or by scanning the QR code included with each section.

John 21:1-14...

Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.”

“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When

Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic, jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

“Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

“Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.



day one

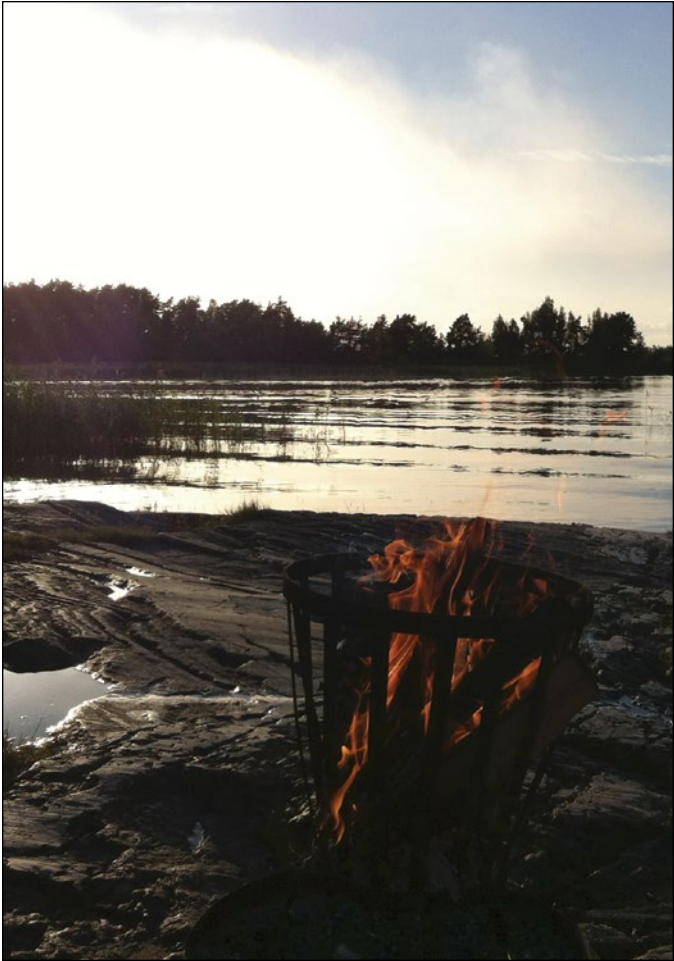
IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

Imagining what it would have been like to be there, by bringing all your senses and an "eyewitness" perspective to the Scripture passage.

Read or listen to the story as if you were there when it happened. Reflect on what you notice:

- Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch
- Looks on people's faces, moods and emotions
- Where you are in the story, who you relate to
- What you do next
- Your Facebook post or tweet later that day





day two

LECTIO DIVINA

Praying the Scriptures or Lectio Divina is a time of reflection and listening to God's Word as an opportunity to dwell in God's presence.

After listening or reading the text ...

Listen for a word or a phrase that catches your attention.

Is God calling you to action...

What is God calling you to do today or this week?

Reflection: When you look over your word, phrase or picture what image comes to mind. I invite you today to take a picture, do a goggle search for an image that reflects what you heard. Create a visual Lectio for your word, phrase or picture. Consider posting your photo as a reminder of your word or phrase.

Anticipate how God might use your word, image or action in your life. Savor and celebrate God's word, phrase or image for you.





day three

BREATH PRAYER

To silence the mind sometime seems impossible. How hard it is to keep the mind from thinking, wandering, pondering, forever dreaming, and constantly producing thoughts in a never-ending stream. Breath Prayer helps focus your thoughts on Jesus.

Breathe: As you breathe in silently say a name for God, and as you breathe out pray a short prayer.

- Such as “Father God” as you breathe in. “I need you near.” as you breathe out.

Read: John 21: 4-12 and choose a name for God, as you breathe in, and a short prayer to God as you breathe out:

- “Jesus” as you breathe in, “I’ll come for breakfast” as you breathe out.
Or “Provider, thank you for giving me all I need.”

Try saying this prayer time and time again, maybe go for a run or walk and breathe this prayer as you go.

Live it out: If you were to choose a song that encompasses this Scripture or what God wants to say to you now what would it be? Take time to listen to that song throughout today asking God to speak to you through it.





day four

DWELL IN THE WORD

In your daily life how often do you take time to stop and dwell. This is an invitation to embrace remaining in the Word.

As you listen/read the Scripture reflect on the following questions:

- What sparks your imagination? What stands out to you?
- Where is God calling you to jump out of the boat?

Read: John 21:4-12

Reflect: take time to journal on the two questions and what you heard from the Scripture.

Read the Scripture one more time: Ask God what He has for you today in His word. Take time to embrace dwelling in the word.

Live it out: Is there a person in your life that needs to be encouraged by this Word today? Pray for that person then maybe text, write, or call them with this scripture passage or your prayer.





day five

LISTENING PRAYER

This week you have reflected on John 21:1-14. You have had opportunities to imagine what it would have been like to be there at the seashore. You have considered what post you would put on Facebook, what image represents this story? You have spent time in God's Word with different practices. Today we invite you to take time to listen to God's voice in a practice called Listening Prayer. Enter expectant

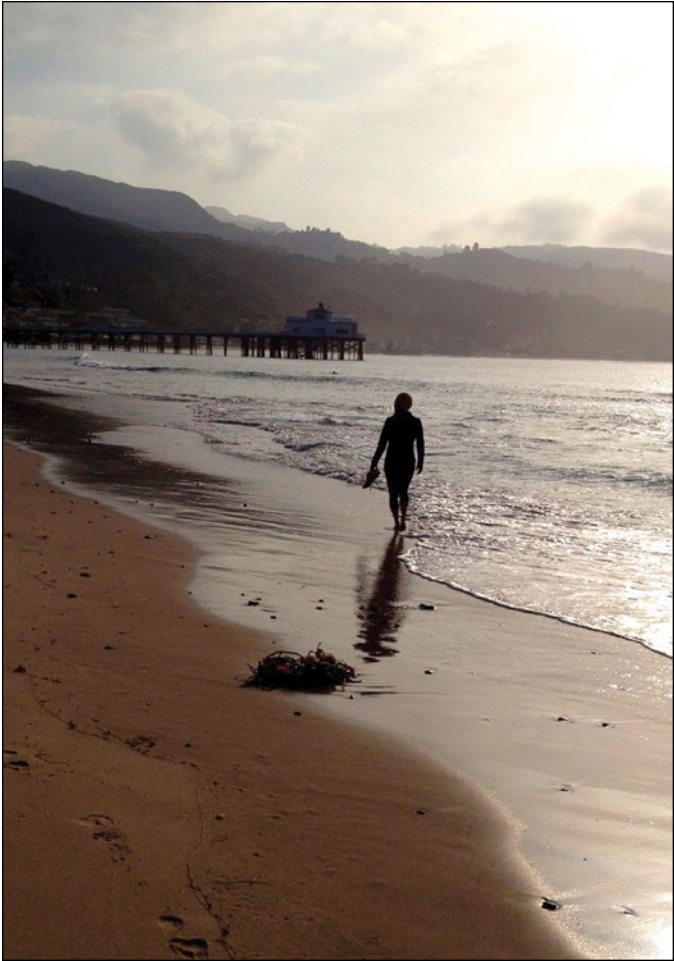
Where do you need God's insights on your life?

It may be a question of next steps in relationships; it might be a question about serving, or making tough decisions about your time and resources. Whatever is weighing on you write your question in your journal.

- I invite you to enter in to Listening Prayer.
- Please write or draw what you see, hear or experience during this time of listening.

Reflection: As you live into the voice of Our Lord- ask God to make what you heard clear. If you are challenged to take next steps we invite you to begin. If God gave you a word, live with it, listen for how it may be played out in your life. Continue to listen throughout your week.





- What's one lesson from this week you think God doesn't want you to forget?

- What is one thing you want to celebrate with God this week?

- Thoughts as you anticipate next week with God



week two



The accompanying audio portion for this material is available for streaming or download at CovChurch.org/resources/breathe-material or by scanning the QR code included with each section.

romans 5:1-5...

By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise.

There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!



day one

PRAYER WALK & ARTISITC REFELECTIONS ON ROMANS

Spending time reflecting on God's Word as you go for an unrushed walk, allowing God to speak to you through what you encounter on your walk or hear from God

Prayer Walk: Read or listen to the Scripture passage, then go for a walk as you continue to reflect on it. Then spend some time journaling:

- What grabbed your attention in the Scripture passage?
- As you walked, did parts of the passage come more alive or fall into place for you?
- What is your initial sense of how this passage might connect with your life this week?
- What questions came up on your walk, about this passage or about life in general?

Artistic Reflection: You may want to take some time today to sketch a drawing, paint a picture, take some photographs, mold some clay, write a poem, or in some other way continue to interact with the Scripture or reflect on your time with God.





day two

LECTIO DIVINA

Praying the Scriptures or Lectio Divina is a time of reflection and listening to God's Word as an opportunity to dwell in God's presence.

Listen for a word or a phrase that catches your attention.

What is God calling you to do today or this week?

Reflection: When you look over your word, phrase or picture what image comes to mind. I invite you today to take a picture, do a goggle search for an image that reflects what you heard. Create a visual Lectio for your word, phrase or picture. Consider posting your photo as a reminder of your word or phrase.

Anticipate how God might use your word, image or action in your life. Savor and celebrate God's word, phrase or image for you.





day three

BREATH PRAYER

Breath Prayer helps focus your thoughts on Jesus.

Bearthe: As you breathe in silently say a name for God, and as you breathe out pray a short prayer.

- Such as “Father God” as you breathe in. “I need you near.” as you breathe out.

Read: Romans 5:1-5 and choose a name for God, as you breathe in, and a short prayer to God as you breathe out:

- “Jesus” as you breathe in, “Open the door.” as you breathe out. Or “Faithful One, may I have alert expectancy”

Try saying this prayer time and time again, maybe go for a run or walk and breathe this prayer as you go.

Live it out: If you were to choose a song that encompasses this Scripture or what God wants to say to you now what would it be? Take time to listen to that song throughout today asking God to speak to you through it.





day four

DWELL IN THE WORD

In your daily life how often do you take time to stop and dwell. This is an invitation to embrace remaining in the Word.

As you listen/read the Scripture reflect on the following questions:

- What sparks your imagination? What stands out to you?
- Where is God opening a door for you?

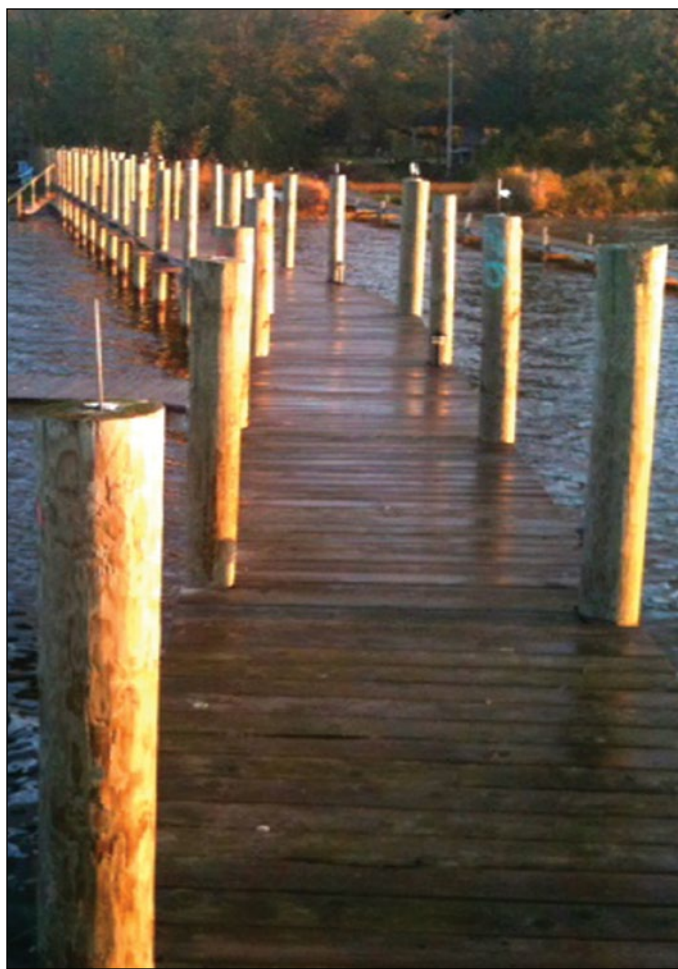
Read: Romans 5:1-5

Reflect: Take time to journal on the two questions and what you heard from the Scripture.

Read the Scripture one more time: Ask God what He has for you today in His word. Take time to embrace dwelling in the word.

Live it out: Is there a person in your life that needs to be encouraged by this Word today? Pray for that person then maybe text, write, or call them with this scripture passage or your prayer.





day five

LISTENING PRAYER

This week you have reflected on Romans 5:1-5. You have had opportunities to imagine, reflect and take a walk or create You have considered what post you would put on Facebook, what image represents this story? You have spent time in God's Word with different practices. Today we invite you to take time to listen to God's voice in a practice called Listening Prayer. Enter expectant

What do you want insights from God about?

It may be a question of next steps in relationships; it might be a question about serving, or making tough decisions about your time and resources. Whatever is weighing on you write your question in your journal.

- I invite you to enter in to Listening Prayer.
- Please write or draw what you see, hear or experience during this time of listening.

Reflection: As you live into the voice of Our Lord, ask God to make what you heard clear. If you are challenged to take next steps we invite you to begin. If God gave you a word, live with it, listen for how it may be played out in your life. Continue to listen throughout your week.





- What's one lesson from this week you think God doesn't want you to forget?

- What is one thing you want to celebrate with God this week?

- Thoughts as you anticipate next week with God



week three



what's next?

We invite you to **dwell** in God's **word** this next week and weeks ahead. We encourage you to continue this next week to continue the practices you have experienced this last week, Imaginative Prayer, Lectio Divina, Breathe Prayer, Dwell in the Word, Listening Prayer, Looking Back to look Forward, and Sabbath Rest. The next few pages have the outline of the practices.

- Select a text from the Appendix or select one of your choosing
- Use the text for the week- we recommend 4-7 verses
- Each day use a different practice

- You can find audio readings of the Bible on YouVersion

Or,

- Consider using a resource that already exists listed in the appendix

It is our prayer that the things you experienced while you were away and in this last week would continue to live on in your lives.

May you continue to sense God's presence in your life!

IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

Imaginative prayer is a way to remind ourselves that what we read in the Bible isn't just a bunch of stories. These are real things that happened to real people.

As you read a story about Jesus, or other story in the Bible, imagine what it would have been like to be there as this scene unfolded and nobody knew how it would turn out. As you imagine yourself there, what do you notice around you? What catches your attention or surprises you? What expressions do you see on people's faces? Open up all your senses as you use your imagination to become a "first person witness" to these events. What sounds do you hear? What can you smell? Is there anything you're tasting or touching? What's the mood like?

Where do you imagine yourself to be in the story? With whom do you most relate in the story?

The last thing to imagine is...what happens next? If you were there that day, what would you go and do? What would you tell someone? Let's say you somehow had access to Facebook or Twitter. What would you post or tweet to describe what you experienced this day? Write that down in your devotional or journal.



PRAYER WALK

Spending time reflecting on God's Word as you go for an unrushed walk, allowing God to speak to you through what you encounter on your walk or hear from God

Read or listen to a Scripture passage, then go for a walk as you continue to reflect on it. Then spend some time journaling:

- What grabbed your attention in the Scripture passage?
- As you walked, did parts of the passage come more alive or fall into place for you?
- What is your initial sense of how this passage might connect with your life right now?
- What questions came up on your walk, about this passage or about life in general?

You may want to take some time to sketch a drawing, paint a picture, take some photographs, mold some clay, write a poem, or in some other way continue to interact with the Scripture or reflect on your time with God.



LECTIO DIVINA

I invite you into the practice of Lectio Divina.

Find a place where you can be away from distractions. It may be a quiet spot, a path you walk, a trail you run or your room. It is a place where you can take a deep breath, relax, acknowledge and release distractions. Invite God's presence. Invite God to speak to you through the Word.

Select a text you would like to read or listen to. The scripture should be read or listened to two times.

As the scripture is read the first time...

Listen for a word or a phrase that catches your attention.

The second time listen to discover the invitation.

What is God calling you to do today or this week?

Enter with anticipation.

Reflection: When you look over your word, phrase or picture what image comes to mind. I invite you today to take a picture, do a goggle search for an image that reflects what you heard. Create a visual Lectio for your word, phrase or picture. Consider posting your photo as a reminder of your word or phrase.

Anticipate how God might use your word, image or action in your life. Savor and celebrate God's word, phrase or image for you.



BREATH PRAYER

To silence the mind sometime seems impossible. How hard it is to keep the mind from thinking, wandering, pondering, forever dreaming, and constantly producing thoughts in a never-ending stream.

Breathe: In the next moments I invite you to focus on your breath...only that. It is God who gives us breath and breathes into us life.

As you breathe in silently say a name for God, and as you breathe out pray a short prayer. Such as "Father God" as you breathe in. "I need you near:" as you breathe out.

As you read the Scripture: pick out a name for God and think of a short prayer you'd like to pray for your breath prayer.

Scripture: From the Scripture weave together God's name and your prayer as you breathe in and out.

Such as: "Jesus" as you breathe in, "I'll come for breakfast" as you breathe out. Or "Faithful One, may I have alert expectancy."

Say your prayer, time & time again as you breathe in and out with the Life breathe of God.

Song: Just as the Rhythm of Breath prayer becomes instilled in us, if you were to choose a song that encompasses this Scripture or what God wants to say to you now what would it be? Take time to listen to that song throughout today asking God to speak to you through it.



DWELL IN THE WORD

In your daily life how often do you take time to stop and dwell. This is an invitation to embrace remaining in the Word.

Read the Word or listen one time through.

As you listen to the Scripture or read the Word a second time think about the following questions:

- What sparks your imagination? What stands out to you?
- Where is God calling you to action through His Word?

Reflection: Now that you have heard the Scripture twice, take time to journal on the two questions, to embrace dwelling in the word.



LISTENING PRAYER

Listening Prayer focuses on a question you have. Think about what is happening in your life right now. What do you want insights from God about? It may be a question of next steps in relationships; it might be a question about serving, or making tough decisions about your time and resources. Whatever is weighing on you write your question in your journal. I invite you to enter in to Listening Prayer.

We begin by acknowledging God's presence with us, and inviting God's presence to be known by us.

In silence, contemplate the question you wrote in your journal. Ask God to speak to you through it. Listen for God's voice, come expectant. God wants to communicate with us.

Please write or draw what you see, hear or experience during this time of listening.

As you listened for God's voice what did you experience? What were you drawn to, images, words, scripture, a story, a person's name? What did you notice? Record your response in your journal

Do you struggle with what you heard? Are you encouraged or challenged? Was it difficult to determine if it was God's voice or your own conscious? Write down your reaction. Be encouraged listening takes practice. It is okay if you experienced silence or more questions than answers. Consider doing the practice again.

Reflection: As you live into the voice of Our Lord- ask God to make what you heard clear. If you are challenged to take next steps we invite you to begin. If God gave you a word, live with it, listen for how it may be played out in your life. Continue to listen throughout your week.



LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

*Reviewing the past few days to see where and how God was at work.
Looking ahead with anticipation.*

It's so easy to dive into a new day or look ahead to a new week without taking some time to think about the days you've just lived.

Take some time to silence the thoughts of the day at hand or the things ahead, and ask God to point out what he wants you to notice about the past few days.

Then, take a few moments to respond to these questions in your devotional or journal:

- What jumps to mind as a real high point of the past day or few days? What made you feel most alive?
- What was an obvious struggle, downer, setback or challenge?
- When were you especially aware of God's presence and activity in your life and the lives of those around you?
- What was the biggest surprise of the past day or days?
- What's one lesson you think God doesn't want you to forget?
- What is one thing you want to celebrate with God ?

As you think about the days ahead, know that God is already anticipating his time with you!



REST, BREATHE AND SAVOR

When was the last time you had a day wide open ahead of you with no checklist and no agenda? Sometimes, even in our relationship with God, we can fall into a trap of thinking that we need to “get something done” in order for our time to be worthwhile. Today, you are invited simply to rest, breathe and savor - a day to simply and gratefully embrace God's gift of this day to you.

Take time to breathe slowly and ask God to allow his rest and peace to cut through the crowded thoughts of your mind. Maybe you want to play some music. Maybe you want to be active—some people rest best when they play. Savor the gifts of this day and this week. Savor the gift of the people God has brought into your life. Savor the gift of the way that God has made you.

- Where and how will you find rest today?
- How can you catch your breath and simply be with God?
- People, places, things, lessons and emotions that come to mind as you savor the gifts of the past week
- Words of thanks to God



appendix

Now that you have experienced **breathe**, we want you to continue the journey. Choose a scripture passage from the list below and apply the week-three format. You can do this for weeks four, five, six, etc. or begin again at any time with week one. We also included a list of other resources that can help you to connect with God.

RESOURCES

If you enjoyed this three-week experience and would like to continue the journey, the following resources may be useful:

Websites

- www.pray-as-you-go.org
- www.sacredspace.ie

Apps

- 3-Minute Retreat App (available on iTunes)
- The Bible App from YouVersion (available for most mobile devices at YouVersion.com/mobile)

Books

- *Solo* by Eugene Peterson
- *Daily Office* by Peter Scazzero

When and Where?

- When can I do this? Choose a time you can be most attentive; early morning, when you first wake, before bed.
- Where can I do this? Find a quiet space inside, go out for a run or walk, or find a place in creation.

PRAYER

Father, help me to be still and listen, to feel your embrace, to rest in your love, and then speak to others from that place.

SCRIPTURES

Miracles in John (seven-week series)

- John 2:1-12
- John 4:43-54
- John 5:1-15
- John 6:1-15
- John 6:16-21
- John 9:1-11
- John 11:17-44

Jonah (four-week series)

- Jonah 1
- Jonah 2
- Jonah 3
- Jonah 4

Jesus Narratives

- *Baptism of Jesus*, Matt. 3:13-17
- *The Beatitudes*, Matt. 5:1-12
- *Faith of a centurion*, Matt. 8:5-13

- *Martha & Mary*, Luke 10:38-42
- *Triumphal entry*, Matt. 21:1-11
- *Jesus washes the disciples' feet*, Jn. 13:1-15
- *The prayer in Gethsemane*, Matt. 26:36-46
- *Resurrection*, Matt. 28:1-10

Thematic

- *Anxiety*, Luke 12:22-34
- *Armor of God*, Eph. 6:10-18
- *Assurance in faith*, Heb. 10:19-25
- *God's gifts*, Col. 3:12-17
- *Grace*, Eph. 2:1-10
- *Humility*, Phil. 2:1-11
- *Loving one another*, 1 John 4:7-12
- *Peace*, Rom. 5:1-5

