



FOLLOW



Living WITH Jesus

A 43-day devotional journey, exploring and growing in the values of being a follower of Jesus, who lives on mission WITH Jesus.

WELCOME TO FOLLOW

Preparing for the 43 Day Journey

Thank you for participating in this 43 day devotional journey together. We are excited to help your community experience God daily, get to know Him in new and deeper ways, and join Him in the good He is doing.

The overall purpose of this devotional journey is to help disciples of Jesus start to cultivate a lifestyle of discovering the potential God sees in people, helping develop them spiritually and personally, and deploying them into their area(s) of impact for God's Kingdom (as disciples who can do the same).

There are several things that will be important to helping prepare and follow-through as we approach the selected start date. Please review the checklist below, and bring your leaders/teams together to prayerfully discern how God would have you take these steps together. We will be providing direct links to resources for FOLLOW through the "Latest News" section of the ERC webpage.

Immediate/ASAP:

- Assemble leadership/board/team leaders and underscore the importance of taking this journey together
- Plan a dedicated time of prayer and fasting leading up to the start date
- Get a rough count of how many physical booklets are needed

4 -5 weeks out:

- Start announcing and explaining what this series/season will be about, and invite people to join in the time of prayer and fasting.
- Publish announcements in the bulleting/program for worship services, and begin sending email reminders to everyone on the church contact list.
- Prep small group leaders – the devotional guide will have 3-4 questions each week that can be used by group leaders for discussion. These are meant to facilitate conversation and get people thinking/talking about what they have encountered (or will be encountering) in the devotional that week. Depending on when a small group meets, the group may help prime the pump for discussion or get to process what God has been saying. Either way, small group leaders should be careful not to "steer" too much – as this guide with the emphasis on hearing God, and letting Holy Spirit guide us in understanding the Word and how to live as a disciple of Jesus.
- Review the Sermon Guide and start preparing messages that will follow the flow/values for each week of the series/journey.

3 weeks out:

- Send email reminders about the time of prayer and fasting, as well as the start of the devotional journey
- Plan a process to be able to gather insights weekly from those who are participating. If life group/small group leaders will be gathering these insights, plan a way to capture the feedback and discussion so that it can be shared with leadership. It is important to be listening for feedback in the areas of prayer/hearing God, developing people, and deploying people, because these are the three main areas of focus through the journey – however, God may reveal additional insights that are critical to the health of individuals or the church/congregation as a whole.

- Emphasize the importance of this journey for personal spiritual growth/health, as well as an opportunity for the whole church/congregation to discern God's leading, and to join with believers across the 140+ churches in the region as we seek to follow Jesus together.

2 weeks out:

- Send email reminders about the time of prayer and fasting, as well as the start of the devotional journey
- Share any digital media/slides that have been provided, or that you created, to go with the series, to your media team
- Emphasize the importance of this journey for personal spiritual growth/health, as well as an opportunity for the whole church/congregation to discern God's leading, and to join with believers across the 140+ churches in the region as we seek to follow Jesus together.

1 week out:

- Send email reminders about the time of prayer and fasting, as well as the start of the devotional journey
- Have a copy of the devotional journal and do a brief run through of how to use it during announcements
- Ensure physical and digital copies are on hand and ready to share.
- Emphasize the importance of this journey for personal spiritual growth/health, as well as an opportunity for the whole church/congregation to discern God's leading, and to join with believers across the 140+ churches in the region as we seek to follow Jesus together.

Launch:

- Have a copy of the devotional journal and do a brief run through of how to use it during announcements
- Ensure physical and digital copies are on hand and distribute them.
- Continue to emphasize the importance of this journey for personal spiritual growth/health, as well as an opportunity for the whole church/congregation to discern God's leading, and to join with believers across the 140+ churches in the region as we seek to follow Jesus together.

During the 43 Days:

- Check-in regularly with small group/life group leaders, to gather feedback and questions.
- Join the weekly call with ERC leaders for prayer, support, processing. (Zoom link will be shared closer to time)
- Be listening for next steps and areas of opportunity that God is revealing.
- Plan a time to celebrate after day 43, to listen more, and to share what God brought into view

Celebrate:

- Use the celebration after the 43 days to appreciate those who were on the journey, share stories and insights from those who were impacted, highlight important lessons or direction from God, and paint a picture of next steps.

Next Steps:

- Connect the next steps approaching the holidays and 2023, directly to what God revealed during the journey, to help deeply root what God did in the 43 days.
- Be transparent if major changes are prompted, and stay humble – remembering that it is in His strength that His Kingdom will grow.

- Seek out on-going coaching or learning co-horts to help with leadership, engage any changes, or grow in areas that God has prompted during the journey. The ERC has resources and people to help, and we are networked with others who can help as well. Being willing to trust God and reach out.
- Involve your leaders and people being developed in upcoming gatherings around discipleship.
- Continue to emphasize that the primary mission of the Church is to be disciples who make disciples – and that this happens in every area of life, work, and play.
- Encourage people in your community to spend time in common public areas, intentionally to have conversations with people of all types, while prayerfully living the values of discipleship.