



CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE RESOURCES



# Encounters

LENTEN READING AND REFLECTION JOURNEY WITH  
THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

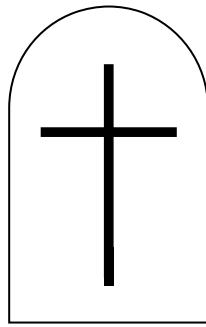
## Greetings Church Family,

We are looking forward to journeying together during this Lenten season in the rhythm of the Church year.

Lent is the forty days leading up to Easter that begin on Ash Wednesday. Sundays themselves are not counted in these forty days, as they are generally set aside as days of Sabbath renewal and celebration. Lent is a season of preparation and repentance in which we look to disrupt our normal rhythms and deny ourselves normal comforts to turn our attention toward Jesus with greater frequency and focus. During this season, we remember the days that led up to Jesus' death and resurrection and re-prioritize the practices that make us more mindful and grateful of what He did for us. As disciples of Jesus, seeking to abide daily and live intentionally, we see Lent as an opportunity to prioritize time for Scripture reading, prayer, and fasting.

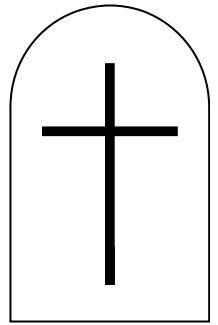
### Let us join together in this prayer for Spiritual Renewal:

Father God, I don't want this Lent to pass by as just another season. I want to be changed. Strip away anything in me that keeps me from fully surrendering to You. Fill me with Your Spirit and renew my mind so that I may grow in faith, love, and obedience. Make me more like Jesus day by day. Amen.



## Fasting

Fasting is a Christian practice in which we choose to abstain from food or something else for a specific period of time in order to concentrate on God. We live in a culture of desires/appetites, excess, and luxury. Fasting denies those desires/appetites and redirects them to God, who fills us up. Choose at least one of the fasting approaches below and commit to it through the season of Lent.



### Fast from Comforts

• Give up something you enjoy—social media, watching TV shows, chocolate or desserts, retail therapy, etc.—for the season of Lent. When you feel a craving for what you gave up, turn your attention to Jesus and thank Him for what He means to you. You might also use the time you would have spent for Scripture reading and prayer.

### Fast from Food

• Fasting is a way for us to turn from our physical appetites and recognize our greater hunger and need for God. You can skip one meal for your fast, or try a 24-hour fast (from Tuesday dinner until Wednesday dinner). Here are some other helpful suggestions while fasting:

- Drink plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated. If you need to, drink juices or other liquids. Remember that keeping a strict fast is not the goal.
- Don't give up too quickly. Press through, and let your body feel the hunger.
- Decide ahead of time when you will begin and break the fast, and commit to waiting.
- Be careful not to fill up your time with activities that keep you from praying.
- Use Scripture reading to fuel your prayer time.
- Journal what you believe God is saying to you during this time.

### Fasting Prayer Focus

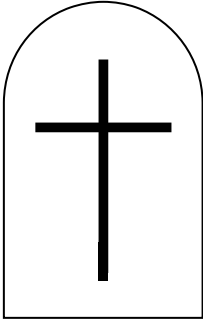
• Fasting is especially impactful when it is accompanied by a specific focus in prayer. The desires left unsatisfied by fasting prompt us to pray more often. Praying for those around us who are not yet committed to Jesus will be the focus of our fasting this season. You may also focus on other needs (i.e., growing in holiness). Begin by identifying at least 3-5 people close to you who aren't committed to Jesus. Then, choose an approach to fasting that will prompt you to pray earnestly for their salvation.

Prayerfully make a list of people close to you but far from God. Commit to praying for them daily during Lent.

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S.O.A.P.

This year, we will focus on reading through the Passion Week together for 40 days. As you read, use the “**SOAP**” method for keeping a spiritual journal.



**S-Scripture**

Read the Bible passage for the day. Copy the verse that catches your attention into your journal.

**O-Observation**

Write a brief description of what is going on in the passage you read.

- What does this reveal about Jesus?
- How does this challenge the reader to believe in Jesus or become like Him?

**A-Application**

Write about how your life will be different today because of what you have read.

- Lessons to be learned
- Examples to be followed or avoided
- Promises to be claimed and enjoyed
- The character trait of God revealed
- How should this change the way that I think?
- What does this challenge me to do?

**P-Prayer**

Write our a prayer for yourself and others based on what you read today.

- Talk to God about what you have heard from this text
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you respond to the application of this Scripture in your life.

Day 1 - John 12:1-11

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*Day 2 - Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-40*

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*Day 3 - Matthew 21:1-11, John 12:12-19*

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Day 4 - Lk 19:41-48, Mk 11:15-19, Matt 21:12-16

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## PRAYER TO WELCOME THE SABBATH

Lord of Creation,  
create in us a new rhythm of life  
composed of hours that sustain rather than stress,  
of days that deliver rather than destroy,  
of time that tickles rather than tackles.

Lord of Liberation,  
by the rhythm of your truth,  
set us free from the bondage and baggage that breaks us,  
From the Pharaohs and fellows who fail us,  
from the plans and pursuits that prey upon us.

Lord of Resurrection,  
may we be raised into rhythms of your new life,  
dead to deceitful calendars,  
dead to fleeting friend requests,  
dead to the empty peace of our accomplishments.

To our packed-full planners, we bid, "Peace!"  
To our over-caffeinated consciences, we say, "Cease!"  
To our suffocating selves, Lord, grant us release.

Drowning in a sea of deadlines and death chimes,  
we rest in you, our lifeline.

By your ever-restful grace,  
allow us to enter your Sabbath rest  
as your Sabbath rest enters into us.

In the name of our Creator, our Liberator,  
our Resurrection and Life, we pray.

Amen.



*Day 5 - Mk 11:12-14, 20-25, Matt 21:18-27*

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*Day 6 - Matthew 21:23-46*

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*Day 7 - Matthew 22:1-22*

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*Day 8 - Matthew 22:1-22*

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*Day 9 - Matthew 23:1-36*

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*Day 10 - Matthew 23:37 - 24:14*

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## Day 11 - Matthew 24:15-51

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*Day 12 - Matthew 25:1-30*

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*Day 13 - Matthew 25:31-46*

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*Day 14 - Mark 13:1-37*

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*Day 15 - Luke 21:1-38*

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## Day 16 - Matthew 26:1-16, Mark 14:1-11

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*Day 17 - Mark 14:12-31*

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*Day 18 - Matthew 26:17-35*

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*Day 19 - Luke 22:7-34*

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*Day 20 - John 13:1-20*

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*Day 21 - John 13:21-38*

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*Day 22 - John 14:1-31*

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*Day 23 - John 15:1-27*

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*Day 24 - John 16:1-33*

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*Day 25 - John 17:1-26*

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*Day 26 - Matthew 26:36-56*

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*Day 27 - Luke 22:39-71*

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## Day 28 - John 18:1-27

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*Day 29 - Matthew 26:57-75*

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*Day 30 - Mark 14:53-72*

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*Day 31 - John 18:28-40*

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*Day 32 - Luke 23: 6-16, Mark 15:1-20*

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*Day 33 - Mark 15:21-32, Luke 23:26-43*

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*Day 34 - Luke 23:44-49, John 19:28-41*

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*Day 35 - Matt 27:57-66, Lk 23:50 - 24:12*

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*Day 36 - John 20:1-31*

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*Day 37 - John 21:1-25*

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*Day 38 - Matt 28:11-20, Mark 16:19-20*

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*Day 39 - Luke 24:13-35*

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## Day 40 - Luke 24:36-53, Acts 1:6-11

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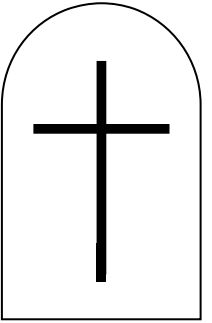
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## A Final Benediction



We hope this journey has been transformative in your life. Continue in your deeper devotion and discipleship, to the Lord Jesus Christ, through time saturating in His word, through a life of continual prayer, and the practice of fasting.

Remember that the tomb is empty and that means our lives no longer have to be. He finished the purpose His Father had for Him and now is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven making intercession for us. Rejoice!

We are grateful that you chose to go on this Lenten reading and reflection journey with us. Please let us know in what ways we can serve you and help you connect deeper with us here at Church of the Nazarene.

Now I ask that you open your hands and heart and receive this final benediction from the word of God.

### Hebrews 13:20-21

*Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

***Sunday is coming!***