

# REVIVE

21 DAYS • DEVOTIONS • PRAYER & FASTING







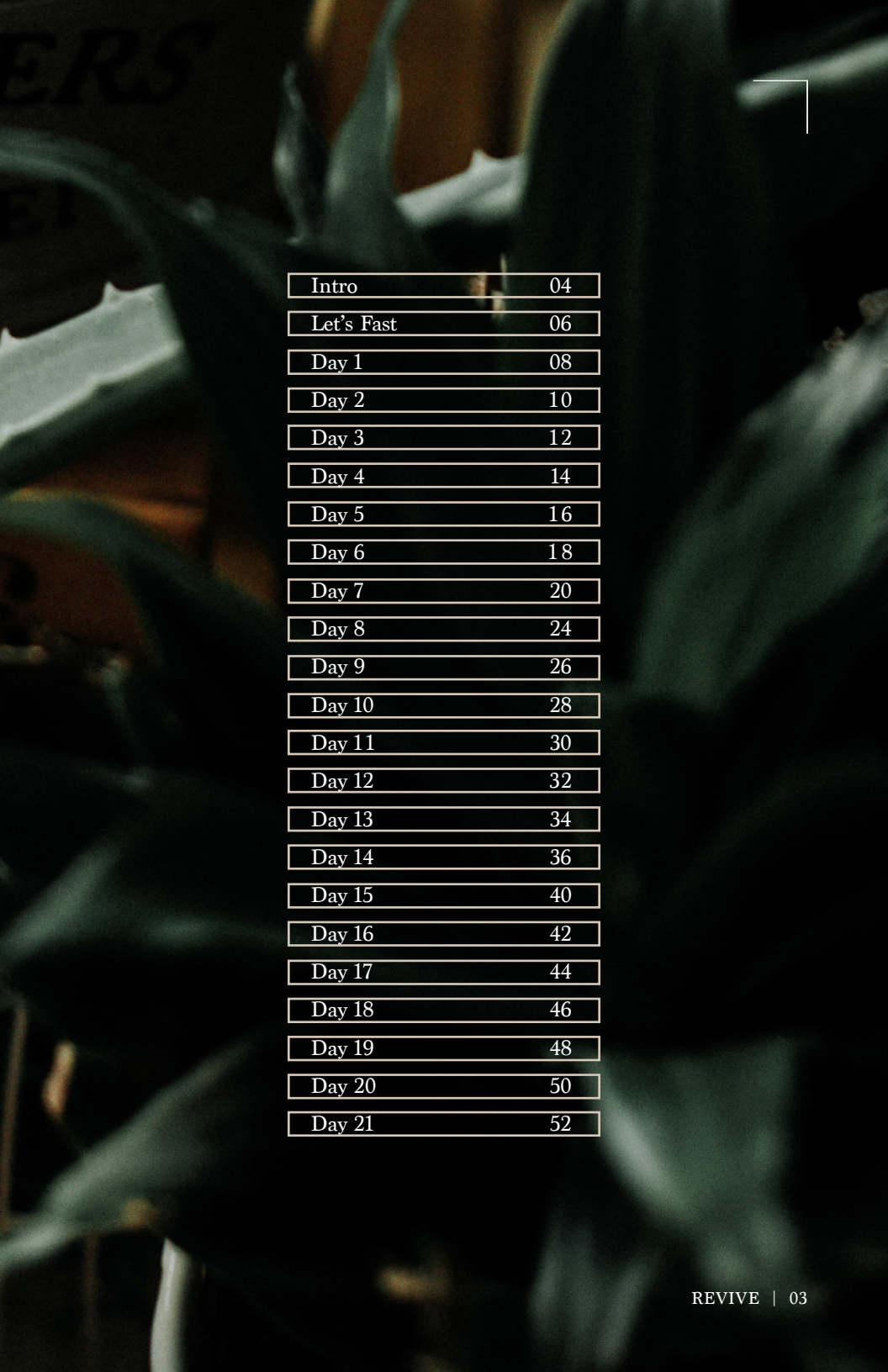
# REVIVE

PRAYER & FASTING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

EASTER DEVOTIONAL







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# INTRO

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Recently, we heard a story about an EMT who attends church here. He responded to a call about a man who was water skiing. The man didn't feel well and needed medical attention while still on his boat. The man went into cardiac arrest. His heart stopped. The blood that supplied his brain and body with life-giving oxygen ceased to move. He was dying. Fortunately, the paramedic was able to use a defibrillator to shock the man's heart into beating again, and he was revived just in time to hear the EMT say, "Welcome back."

In a sense, Jesus says the same thing. The life which He welcomes us into is the same life that God shared with the first humans before sin introduced a deadly separation from Him. Jesus invites us back to Creation's Garden where we walk with Him in the cool of the morning, fully alive. It's a place where we can now eat freely from the Tree of Life, a promise Jesus makes to us in John's Revelation.

The Resurrection of Jesus which we will celebrate at Easter is more than the revival of a single human. It's about the walking dead coming back to life. It's about God taking people who only have physical life and reviving them spiritually, making them wholly alive. It's about a whole new way of being human, about receiving once again the Spirit of life from God. Even better, it's not just about individual renewals. God is continually creating a new community that is His mechanism for spreading His abundant life.

As you journey through the next 21 days of prayer and fasting, please keep this theme central in your prayers: that God wants to revive the greater Portland area, including those cities closest to us. Pray that He uses us to reach Beaverton, Tigard, Aloha, Hillsboro, Bethany, the West Side of Portland, and beyond. Please consider how He might use you specifically to revive the dead and dying.

# LET'S FAST

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There are so many benefits to fasting. Among them are an increased spiritual sensitivity, a heightened hunger for God, a focused intensity as you contend for God's best, seeing the bonds of stubborn sin broken, and experiencing a new passion for evangelism. It's especially helpful when you have a major decision to make because it promises to make you more attuned to God's Spirit.

Jesus told His disciples to keep their fasts a private matter between themselves and God. Apparently, it was not uncommon for those who were fasting to draw attention to themselves, seeking recognition from others. Jesus instructs His disciples not to do that, but to look their best while drawing no attention to their fast. (Matthew 6:16).

There are examples of fasting throughout the Bible, but let's look at some instances in the New Testament.

Anna fasted and prayed at the temple and was able to discern the significance of Jesus when He was presented by Mary and Joseph. (Luke 2:36-38)

In a parable about two men coming to pray, Jesus shows that it's possible for ritual holiness, like prayer, fasting and tithing, to become prideful exercises, giving men a false sense of security with God. (Luke 18:12).

So, it's important that a fast be done with a proper heart toward God. Fasting is a sacrifice to God where you give up food, or something else, in order to devote your energy to prayer. You can fast food as mentioned above, or if your health doesn't allow for that, you can abstain from something else like social media. Here's a quick guide:

1. Decide what to fast, or what you're abstaining from.
2. Commit to a length of time for your fast.
3. Use the time you gain from fasting to be with God.





**DAY 1**

**IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE  
LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN.**

**PASSAGE:**

John 1:4

**REFLECTION:**

Jesus didn't just have life and light, He is life and light. Life was in him. It was deeply part of Him. He gave it only as He gave Himself. So many people seek life and light apart from Jesus. But it's just not possible to find real life and lasting light in anyone or anything except Jesus. Pray for those in our surrounding community to find the life and light of Jesus.

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**DAY 2****WHOEVER BELIEVES IN THE  
SON HAS ETERNAL LIFE.****PASSAGE:**

John 3:36

**REFLECTION:**

This verse seems to introduce tension. Do we receive God's life because we simply believe and we don't have to earn it? Or, is it a wage paid to a dutifully obedient servant? What if those questions are flawed and it's not an either-or proposition? We believe and are obedient because both are welcome responses to God's loving initiative. Pray that we see many sons and daughters come to a lively faith that manifests as joyful obedience to God's leading.





**DAY 3****BECOMING A SPRING  
OF LIVING WATER****PASSAGE:**

John 4:14

**REFLECTION:**

Do you ever think of yourself as a spring of living water? If you've become a child of God through faith in Jesus, then you are exactly that. You're also surrounded by thirsty people. That can be intimidating—as if you're responsible for slaking their thirst. But, look again where the water comes from. It may come through you but it comes from Jesus. Write a prayer offering yourself to God as a deep well of living water for all who thirst.

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**DAY 4****AS THE FATHER RAISES THE  
DEAD AND GIVES THEM LIFE,  
SO ALSO THE SON GIVES LIFE.****PASSAGE:**

John 5:21

**REFLECTION:**

During Ezekiel's vision in the valley of dry bones, God assembles the scattered bones into skeletons and clothes them with flesh but they do not yet live. They are raised but they are still dead until God's Spirit breathes life into them. "So also the Son..." connects this claim of John's Gospel to that ancient prophecy. Jesus is the Son who brings dead-raising and Spirit-breathed life to dry bones. Pray that He raises the "dead" in Portland and its surrounding communities.



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**DAY 5****THE SON ALSO HAS LIFE  
IN HIMSELF.****PASSAGE:**

John 5:26

**REFLECTION:**

Jesus is the perfect representation of God. He said, “If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.” This is more than mere resemblance. Jesus is worthy of the same trust and affection that rightly belongs to Yahweh, the great deliverer of the Exodus. The one who rescued the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt is the same One who will rescue all from slavery to death. Pray that many people see Jesus as God and surrender their lives to Him.

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**DAY 6****COME TO ME THAT YOU  
MAY HAVE LIFE.****PASSAGE:**

John 5:39-40

**REFLECTION:**

It's clearly possible to know the Scriptures, even have them memorized like the Teachers of the Law in Jesus' day, and yet completely miss God when He stands right in front of us. Knowledge of the Bible is a good thing but it's more important to recognize the Person that lay behind the pages. Pray for those whose intellect might present a barrier to knowing Jesus and record your prayer here.



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**DAY 7****THE BREAD OF GOD WHO  
COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN  
GIVES LIFE TO THE WORLD.****PASSAGE:**

John 6:27+33

**REFLECTION:**

Thousands of years ago, God sent bread from heaven to nourish His people. The Israelites called it Manna and it sustained them but they always hungered again after it passed its nutrition to them. Jesus is the second bread sent to sustain us forever. Pray that people who don't know Jesus would hunger for him as they do for fresh bread.



## NOTES + PRAYER

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BREATHE



**DAY 8****FOR THIS IS THE WILL  
OF MY FATHER.****PASSAGE:**

John 6:40

**REFLECTION:**

Do you ever doubt that God loves you and wants you with Him? Do you know someone else who feels that way? Read that phrase “...everyone who looks on the Son...” If you come to Jesus, believing in Him, it is God’s express will that you be with Him forever. Pray for anyone you know, even those you don’t know but are out there, who feel too unworthy to say “yes” to God. Record your prayer here.



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**DAY 9****DO YOU HAVE HIS LIFE  
IN YOU?****PASSAGE:**

John 6:53

**REFLECTION:**

Let's be real. This passage sounds weird but it is effective in communicating just how intimately we must connect with Jesus. The best metaphor is us consuming Him. When we take Jesus to ourselves that way, He, in turn, consumes us, capturing our hearts. Again, it sounds a little weird. Pray for those who are on the outside. Ask God to turn the "weirdness" of Jesus' claims into a mysterious and beautiful magnetism. Write down what you prayed here.

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**DAY 10****THE WORDS I HAVE SPOKEN  
ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE.****PASSAGE:**

John 6:63

**REFLECTION:**

The words that Jesus spoke imparted life to all who heard and embraced them. That is still true today. Apologetics has a place, and they can be very helpful. But believing in Jesus and receiving the life that comes through Him is still a Spirit-Word dance in the heart of the hearer. Pray that the people in our surrounding communities would have the ears to hear His words afresh. Pray also that they would have tender hearts that receive Him joyfully.

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**DAY 11****LORD, TO WHOM SHALL  
WE GO?****PASSAGE:**

John 6:68

**REFLECTION:**

We like options. Our culture is one of the wealthiest and most powerful in all of human history. We've grown to love a dizzying array of choices (think about the olive bar at Market of Choice) that would paralyze people who come from other cultures where choice isn't worshipped. That is why one of the greatest offenses of the Gospel to our culture is that it offers only one choice. Jesus unashamedly claims the exclusive right to gift God's life to those who wish it. Please pray that people would desire that one choice with all of their hearts.



## NOTES + PRAYER

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**DAY 12****I AM THE LIGHT OF  
THE WORLD.****PASSAGE:**

John 8:12

**REFLECTION:**

Jesus makes a series of remarkable “I am” statements in John’s gospel. The context for this one is the Festival of Lights at the Temple when 75-foot tall lamps ringing the courtyard were lit at dusk. The light from the Temple Mount would have been visible for miles. In the midst of this, Jesus made this declaration of Himself. Imagine the impact as these huge lamps push back the gathering darkness and Jesus claims to be the only light that gives life. Pray for those who need the light of His life in them.





## NOTES + PRAYER

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**DAY 13****I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.****PASSAGE:**

John 10:10-11

**REFLECTION:**

The people of Jesus' time would hear this claim and immediately be reminded of David's psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd..." A working shepherd of Jesus' day might lose his life while protecting his flock but he could not give life. Those shepherds were not able to impart the abundant life Jesus spoke about. He is the only shepherd who does so. Pray that people who are stubborn in their autonomy might yield their lives to the Good Shepherd who gives life.

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**DAY 14**

**I LAY DOWN MY LIFE THAT  
I MAY TAKE IT UP AGAIN.**

**PASSAGE:**

John 10:17

**REFLECTION:**

Jesus' Resurrection was no simple miracle. Nor was it just a display of divine power. It was the first fruits of a new humanity and Jesus says that his Father loved that He would do this. Why? Because the Father loves that the Son is making all things new. He loves that Jesus is recreating everything, setting it right. The righteousness of God in Christ is a sure cure for sin but it so much more. It is the impulse for a new heaven and earth. Pray that God's promised recreation would begin anew in the greater Portland area, starting this Easter.

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PRAY







**DAY 15****NO ONE WILL SNATCH THEM  
OUT OF MY HAND.****PASSAGE:**

John 10:28

**REFLECTION:**

Food insecurity is a global concern, now and perhaps more so in the future. We cannot live without food. So, we want to feel secure, knowing we have all that we require. More broadly, security is simply a basic human need. It is also a spiritual need. We cannot live free in the love of God without a profound confidence in His desire and ability to sustain us. Pray for all who need that confidence, those who need it renewed in them and those who must find it for the first time.



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**DAY 16****I AM THE RESURRECTION  
AND THE LIFE.****PASSAGE:**

John 11:25

**REFLECTION:**

His friend had died. His friend's sister was confronting Him and He does what? Does He offer only a theological truth that's a long way off, at the limits of her sight? No. Jesus offers her a present reality. The life he gives begins at belief. It starts there with a unique quality that's not possible without Him and continues eternally in a quantity that remains ever delightful. Lazarus would die physically a second time but the life Jesus had already given his friend would never be extinguished by mere physical death. Pray for many people to receive the undying life of Jesus.



**DAY 17****WHOEVER LOVES HIS LIFE  
LOSES IT.****PASSAGE:**

John 12:25

**REFLECTION:**

There is much this life can offer to those who have the means to enjoy it. We might as well go for it. YOLO! Or maybe not. What if the life Jesus promises is unfettered access to the source of all other good things? Why not go there, to God? Why not love Him the most? Surely, having given us His Son, God will also give us all other good things? (Romans 8:32) That's precisely Jesus' point. Half measures won't do and an all-to-close attachment to this world's goodness can crowd out the reality of God's love. Pray that people are free to love God as He loves them.

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## DAY 18

NO ONE COMES...  
EXCEPT THROUGH ME.

## PASSAGE:

John 14:6

## REFLECTION:

Do you find it interesting that Jesus doesn't say, "...except **with** Me"? He says, "...**through** Me." We must go into Jesus and come out changed on the other side as He makes us fully alive and Father-worthy. Jesus changes everything but He does so only through the most intimate of relationships with Himself. One of Paul's most well-used phrases is "in Christ." It speaks of an intimacy that is best modeled by marriage (Ephesians 5:32). Pray that more people in our community would be drawn into this kind of a relationship with Jesus, beginning at Easter.

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**DAY 19****A GREATER LOVE****PASSAGE:**

John 15:13

**REFLECTION:**

What is the greatest love of your life? It's a very human thing that we are propelled through life by our most passionate loves. You can see that every Fall in Oregon along the I-5 Corridor on Saturday game days. Go Ducks! Go Beavers!. Jesus' greatest love was His friends. In the Upper Room, He tells His disciples to love one another as He loved them. He calls them His friends and tells them that He will die for them. That is true love. Please pray for people who feel estranged from God, that they will come to know His love and that He wants to share friendship with them.





**DAY 20****THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE,  
THAT THEY KNOW YOU.****PASSAGE:**

John 17:3

**REFLECTION:**

Knowing God is the title of a popular devotional book by J.I. Packer. It's considered a Christian classic in the vein of C.S. Lewis for its clarity, brevity, and devotion. Even so, it would be possible to read it and know much about God and His people without actually knowing God. Knowing Him as He longs to be known can only happen with the Promised Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-12). Books are helpful but the Spirit Jesus promised is essential. Pray that the Spirit would make God's love known to people in desperate need of it, so that they might have life.

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**DAY 21****THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT  
YOU MAY HAVE LIFE.****PASSAGE:**

John 20:31

**REFLECTION:**

We would not know Jesus apart from the written record of His earliest followers, and those servants of God who preceded them. We revere the Scriptures not because they give us life but because they reveal Jesus, who alone is the life-giver. The Bible is often disparaged for the misogyny, genocide, and general ungodliness it records. But, what its critics often miss is its intent. It argues for our need of a savior and God's work in history to provide one, namely Jesus. Please pray that God's Word will be alive and active this Easter as Jesus' Resurrection is proclaimed.

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