

**MONDAY**

*Philippians 4:12, 13 (CEV) I have learned to be satisfied with whatever I have. I know what it is to be poor or to have plenty, and I have lived under all kinds of conditions. I know what it means to be full or to be hungry, to have too much or too little. Christ gives me the strength to face anything.*

As you take stock of your life, would you be able to say with Paul that you are satisfied with whatever you have (the NIV translates it, "I have learned to be content")? Have you received the strength to face everything? If you are not content, or satisfied, what needs to change?

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Lord Jesus, there are circumstances and issues that are difficult for me. I struggle to feel satisfied or content. Help me to learn how to receive your strength. May I learn to be content in all circumstances.

**TUESDAY**

*1 Kings 19 (For the full story read the first 18 verses) Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. He went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.*

*And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

*He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

*Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.*

As you take stock, have you just had enough? Do you feel like lying down and just nodding off? As you take stock have you concluded that God isn't really watching out for you? Have you heard the gentle whisper, "What are you doing here?"

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Lord Jesus, my soul is desperate for your sustenance and to hear your gentle whisper. Sometimes it feels as though things are falling apart and you're not there. But I know you are. Thank you that you know just how I am; you have my measure. I choose to listen.

**WEDNESDAY**

*Romans 12:3 (NLT) As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you.*

As you take stock of how much faith God has given you what do you conclude? The NIV translates this with the phrase, "think of yourselves with sober judgement". As you take stock of yourself are you judging fairly? Do you have too much or too little faith? What amount of faith would you like to have?

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Lord Jesus, I believe, help me overcome my unbelief (Mark 9:24). Thank you for the faith you have given me. I ask for more. And help me to live out the faith you have given me.

**THURSDAY**

*James 5:13-16 Is anyone of you in trouble? He/she should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him/her sing songs of praise. Is anyone of you sick? He/she should call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

As we take stock of our life together as a church community, would you say that this reflects the way we behave? Confession, prayer and praise bring continuous healing to the body of Christ as well as each other. How do you confess your sin or ask for prayer? How can we do this better?

Lord Jesus I really want our church community be a place where we can confess, pray and praise together. Help me to take my part in this – both giving and receiving. Show me where I need to confess and for whom I can pray. Help me to bring my own thanksgiving into our times of praise.

I hope this helps you in your week of prayer and fasting.

Each day there is a scripture and some questions and a prayer. On day one it starts more personally, taking stock of where we find ourselves at the beginning of the year. Then over the week it shifts towards thinking about the church family and our future together.

If you would like ideas about what fasting means and how to reflect on the scriptures please go the website look in "Resources" for "Fasting" and "Lectio Divina". There are lots of ideas there.

As ever, if the Lord speaks to you for the church - please do let me know!

Our theme this time is *taking stock*. This is not a reference to last year's bank robber film. I'm not encouraging anyone to take something that belongs to someone else! Not at all. Taking stock means to make an estimate or an appraisal of the situation. It means I am asking you to stop and think about your spiritual health, the state of your soul - and the spiritual state of the church. To think prayerfully about what is good and what is not so good.

As we fast and pray together let's ponder upon what the Lord is doing in the coming year. Ask Him to speak to you about how we can take part in His designs.

From time to time we allocate a week to pray and to fast as a community of faith. It helps us listen to God although we are not in the same room we can pray together - for each other and for the church.

## TAKING STOCK



### FRIDAY

*Numbers 13:26-33 (The scouts) came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large". Then Caleb said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."*

As we take stock of what lies before us, what do we see? The signs of fruit promised by God? Or are we imagining the worst? What challenges face our church community? What does God promise us? Shall we go into the promised land or shall we stay in the desert?

Lord Jesus give me the eyes to see and ears to hear your marvelous promises. Help us all to have Caleb's courage to trust you for the future fruit you have promised. May we leap forward, without hesitation, into what you have for us.

### SATURDAY

*Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

As we take stock of the what Jesus commands us to do and of the authority He releases in us, what are our expectations of what being obedient looks like? How will it affect each of us individually and as a community? What might be the results?

Lord Jesus I hear your command but I don't always feel full of authority or confidence. As we do our best to obey fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we can reach out in words, actions and prayer to the lost and broken world around us - with your power and authority.