



River Guide #1

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself. (1 Corinthians 9:25- 27)

As a congregation we are entering a season of spiritual training to better prepare ourselves to be used by God in whatever He has in store for us on the path ahead. As our map on this journey we are using the imagery of the river as we all seek to move deeper in our relationship with Christ from where we are now – wherever that may be. To learn more about this river analogy surf to our website (saskatoonchurchofchrist.org) click on the “Step into the River” banner and listen to the audio file available titled “Step into the River” dated February 14th, 2010.

Our journey together will challenge us to focus on four key streams: Scripture, Prayer, Surrender and Outward. You do not have to follow all four streams, but the more you commit yourself to the greater impact you will experience. Much like small tributaries flow together to create great rivers these four streams have the potential to direct us into a spiritual flow that will shape the terrain of our lives in powerful ways.

Each week you will receive a new River Guide which will lead you through the activities for each of the four streams for that week. If you miss a week the River Guides can be viewed by clicking the “Step into the River” banner on our website. Our website also contains a link to our River Blog (skchurch.wordpress.com) where Mike will reflect on his journey and invite you to comment on yours.

We hope you will join us for this six week journey and be here to celebrate with us at its conclusion on Easter Sunday, April 8th, 2012.

Log Book



We encourage you to find a designated log book to record your thoughts in as you journey. This can be anything from a standard school notebook to a fancy diary from the book store. Anything that has two covers and is filled with empty pages. As you participate in each of the streams every day jot down your thoughts and reflections in your Log Book.

THE SCRIPTURE STREAM



This stream challenges you to go deep into the Word and dive into the book of Psalms. During your daily reading time, select a Psalm from the enclosed list that seems to fit with where you are at that day. Read through the psalm and reflect on what it says. Then spend some time discussing with God how those words apply to your life and how you feel about what the psalm says. When you are done, check off the box in front of the psalm you have just read and repeat the exercise each day selecting another unchecked psalm to read. Be sure to list the psalm you read and your thoughts in your Log Book.

THE PRAYER STREAM



This stream involves several components. Create for yourself a dedicated prayer time every day. Try to meet with God at the same time every day, but if you miss your designated time it is better to make it up somewhere else in your day than skip it altogether. How long you pray is up to you, but challenge yourself to carve out more time from your schedule as the six weeks progress. During this prayer time:

✚ Spend time in silence, listening as God speaks to your heart. Strive to block out all distractions and wayward thoughts. “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (*Psalms 46:10*)

✚ Spend time praying for:

- **The Leaders of Our Congregation** – that God will give them wisdom, discernment, courage and His blessing
- **All Those Stepping into the River** – that this will be a time of blessing to them and that they will be challenged to go deeper in their faith and their relationship with Christ
- **Any special needs** mentioned in our bulletin or during worship on Sunday
- **For people who do not know the Good News**, those who have not accepted God’s grace and those who have given Jesus full control of their life
- **For our city, country and planet.** For governments, leaders and all those with great public influence. For all those suffering due to war, hardship, hunger, disease and poverty

✚ Spend time in prayer and thought over this week’s daily prayer themes.

✚ In addition to your set prayer time we are hoping to get people from our congregation to volunteer to stop to pray during the day for both our church family and our city. Our goal is to have somebody praying on the hour and half hour all day long. If you would like to sign up to fill one of these slots please look at the chart on the foyer table or contact Mike during the week to find out what time slots are still vacant.

This Week's Daily Prayer Themes

Sunday – Personal Commitment: Talk openly and honestly with God about where you are at on your spiritual journey. Tell Him what doubts and struggles you have when it comes to dedicating yourself to Him. Commit yourself to seeking to know Him better through this season of spiritual focus.

Monday – My Prayer Life: Do you believe in the power of prayer? Do you live like you believe in the power of prayer? Do you pray like you believe in the power of prayer? Discuss your answers to these questions and ask Him to help you live with confidence that He will always listen and respond.

Tuesday – Thanksgiving: Make a list in your Log Book of the things in your life that you are thankful for. Acknowledge that all good things are a gift from God and ask Him to give you a heart of gratitude.

Wednesday – Praise & Adoration: Often when we try to express praise or adoration we end up back at thanksgiving. Consider why it is that we are more inclined to talk about what God has done over who He is or our feelings toward Him. Attempt to voice your praise (honoring God for who He is) and adoration (how you feel about God) during your prayer time today.

Thursday – Confession: Sin is like a beaver dam in the river. Nothing else can so quickly diverts us from God. Ask yourself if there is ongoing, unconfessed sin in your life that may be distancing you from God. Admit your mistakes and ask God for His forgiveness, grace and healing. Also ask God to reveal to you the things in your life that, unbeknownst to you, are inhibiting your relationship with Him

Friday – Petition: Make a list in your Log Book of everything you would like to ask from God. When your list is complete, ask God for each item. Don't be shy, He wants you to ask. Conclude by asking God to help you to want the things He wants for you.

Saturday – Intercession: Attempt to bring the needs of others before God with the same zeal with which you presented your own list yesterday. Be sure to not only ask God to address these needs but ask Him to make you aware of any way you can minister to these people as well.



THE SURRENDER STREAM

Fasting is a practice that is foreign to many twenty-first century Christians, but for Jesus fasting was not a question of if, but when. (Matthew 6:16). In that spirit, each week you will be challenged to abstain from a certain item or activity. Some weeks the things you give up may actually be impeding your walk with God. Other weeks simply the act of surrendering something may prove to be of great value.

In addition to the above we also invite you to consider setting aside one day to participate in a traditional fast as well. Select one day as your fasting day, preferably the same day each week, to conduct your fast. Begin by skipping supper one evening and consume nothing but water and unsweetened fruit juice until supper the next evening.

**PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE
CONDUCTING A FAST**

- + **Do not** fast if you are diabetic, hypoglycemic, are required to take medications with food, receiving treatment for an eating disorder, or are attempting to impress others.
- + If you have **any** medical concerns please consult your physician before fasting.
- + When fasting avoid vigorous exercise and expect some lightheadedness, bad breath and irritability.

This Week's Fast



This week fast from sweets & treats. Avoid any snacks, desserts or anything else you would normally indulge in to 'treat yourself' whatever that may be. Consider what it is about these things that entice you so much. Use the time you would have spent to focus on God, the cravings you experience to remind you of God and the cash you save to honor God. Be sure to record how you feel about letting go of these things in your Log Book.

THE OUTWARD STREAM

This stream adds an outward dimension to our season of training. You will begin by identifying three people for who you will pray and with whom you will interact in specific ways over the six weeks we journey together. The three people you will focus on are as follows:

- + A friend/co-worker/classmate/neighbour/acquaintance who is not an active member of a church. Write their name here: _____
- + A person/family of your choosing who is part of our church family. Write their name here: _____
- + A person/family who is part of our church family, chosen at random. Select a number between 1 and 87. Look in your church directory and count from the start. When you've counted your selected number, that person/family is your third name. Write their name here: _____ *(if you end up with your name or the name of your previously chosen person, pick another number and count again).*

This Week's Interaction

This week select your three people/families on Sunday and include each of them in your daily prayer time. Specifically ask God's blessing upon them and for opportunities to connect with their lives in meaningful ways. Ask God to reveal to you any ways that you can be an emissary of His love and grace to these people this week.

Ezekiel

47 : 2b - 9

The water was
gushing from
under the south
front of the Temple.

³He walked to the east
with a measuring tape
and measured off fifteen
hundred feet, leading me
through water that was
ankle-deep. ⁴He measured
off another fifteen hundred
feet, leading me through water
that was knee-deep. He measured
off another fifteen hundred feet,
leading me through water waist-deep.

⁵He measured off another fifteen hundred
feet. By now it was a river over my head,
water to swim in, water no one could
possibly walk through. ⁶He asked
me, "Son of man, do you see this?"
Then he led me back to the bank of
the river. ⁷When I arrived there, I
saw a great number of trees on each
side of the river. ⁸He said to me, "This
water flows toward the eastern region and
goes down into the Arabah, where it enters
the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the
water there becomes fresh. ⁹Swarms of living
creatures will live wherever the river flows. There
will be large numbers of fish, because this water
flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so
WHERE THE RIVER FLOWS EVERYTHING WILL LIVE.