



Introduction

What is the GO Center Project? And why are we praying and fasting for 21 days?

The GO Center is our denomination's church vitality organization. We are engaging with the GO Center for two years beginning January 2020. The first step in that engagement is preparing our hearts by discerning God's voice.

The Go Project addresses church lifecycles. If not actively resisted, entropy sets in and a church will decline, This decline can be almost imperceptible. To fight against this decline requires us to be intentionally engaged in the Great Commission, reaching out to the community, and actively making disciples.

One mark of a church in decline is a preoccupation with running programs instead of focusing on making disciples. Other signs include an increased concern for comfort, directing funds primarily or only toward building improvements, as well as a lack of new converts.

Dr. Ken Priddy of the GO Center cautions that the voice we should be listening to is the voice of the community, not the voice of the congregation.

To be effectively engaged in the Great Commissions requires understanding God's vision as it applies to our church in our community at this time. We need to answer the question, "How does God want to express himself through our church here and now?"

God's vision is encapsulated in the Great Commission:

"And Jesus came and said to them [the eleven], 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20, ESV).

The GO Center project will help our church assess the ways we are intentionally fulfilling the Great Commission and help us address gaps. The goal is to be more effective in finding who's missing and bringing them home.

Methods and solutions will directly mesh with who we are as a church and the make-up of the community in which we are planted and called to serve. This tried and tested process will span a two-year period. It will require the commitment and time of everyone.

The first step is to turn our hearts toward God. To seek to hear his voice and discern his specific calling and purpose for us as a congregation. Discerning the voice and calling of God is the primary outcome for the *Questing After God's Heart: 21-Days of Prayer & Fasting for Revitalization* campaign.

During this 21-day period, we are asking everyone to commit to at least one day of focused prayer and fasting, seeking God's heart for the mission he has called Huntingdon Valley Presbyterian Church (HVPC) to in this community.

For three consecutive Sundays, beginning on November 10th, we will view brief videos that will challenge us to open our lives -- and yes, our wallets -- in obedience to God's will and vision:

- *Week 1 "Our Posture"* - We will learn how to hear the Lord's voice in our own lives and how to respond. We will dive into how obedience to the Lord's voice is key!
- *Week 2 "Our Enemies"* - We will learn about the things that ensnare and occupy us, separating us from what the Lord has for our lives. We will take a look at debt, dishonest gain, and distraction.
- *Week 3 "Abundance"* - The Lord wants to bless us abundantly as a result of our obedience to His voice. We will learn about five different types of abundance: Abundant Finance, Abundant Relationships, Abundant Righteousness, Abundant Ministry, and Abundant Worship.

NOTE: You can view the videos any time online at www.HVPC.org/21days.

At the end of this 21-day period, we will take an offering and receive pledges, to cover the \$12,500 cost of the GO Center facilitation. But raising funds is not the true point of the 21-day focus. **The point is to align with God's vision, to discern how God is calling us to minister within and to our community, and to unite us as a local expression of the body of Christ around a clearer vision for finding who's missing and bringing them home.**

Going forward, over the coming weeks and months, you will hear more about the specifics involved in the GO Center project at HVPC. Right now, we all need to commit to spending a focused time in prayer and fasting as we all seek after God's heart for HVPC.

Will you join us? Please take the time to add your name to the sign-up board. If you have questions, see anyone listed below. Sue Belinsky and her team will be facilitating sign-ups.

- Dan Morrison, Pastor
- Stephen Clark, Project Director

Prayer Team:

- Sue Belinsky, Prayer Team Leader
- Rebekah Bramer
- BethAnn Clark

Media Team:

- Stephen Clark, Media Team Leader
- Rosie Bruce
- Mindy Kellogg
- Sam Wood
- Becca Jo Yourko

Session:

- Sue Belinsky (Clerk of Session)
- Christine Buoni (Worship)
- Dan Bramer (Christian Education)
- Stephen Clark (Communications & Outreach, Deacons, Nominating Committee)
- Tom Daniels (Stewardship)
- Ruth Ebert (Missions)
- Rich Good (Administration, Treasurer)
- George Hindley (VCS Liaison, Nominating Committee)
- Karen Nyirjesy (Discipleship)
- Dan Morrison (Teaching Elder, Moderator)

Brief Thoughts on Fasting

In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster writes, "There are simply no biblical laws that command regular fasting."

However, in Matthew 16:16-18, Jesus offers instruction on fasting. And he fasted at the beginning of his earthy ministry, when "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry" (Matthew 4:1-2, ESV).

Fasting is considered a spiritual discipline within the Christian faith. While there is no command to fast, examples of fasting can be found throughout scripture. But what is fasting and why should we do it?

David Mathis explains, "Fasting is voluntarily going without food — or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God — for the sake of some spiritual purpose. It is markedly counter-cultural in our consumerist society, like abstaining from sex until marriage" (DesiringGod.org).

Dallas Willard adds, "Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in him a source of sustenance beyond food" (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*).

The general point of fasting is to focus our attention on seeking God and hearing from him by removing a major distraction. Usually, when fasting, the distraction removed is food. But there are other things from which we can fast.

For instance, perhaps you are obsessed with sports. If so, you could fast from all things sports for a period of time. Other examples could include fasting from watching any TV (on any device), avoiding consuming news, staying off social media, setting aside a favorite activity or hobby, avoiding a specific favorite food, not spending any money for a time, seeking solitude instead of socializing, and so forth.

The goal is to give something up, to sacrifice something important to you, something that consumes your time and energy, something that brings you enjoyment, and then redirecting that time and energy into time with God and finding enjoyment in him.

For more detailed guidance on fasting, pick up the **Fasting Tips** hand-out which contains an article by David Mathis titled *Fasting for Beginners*.