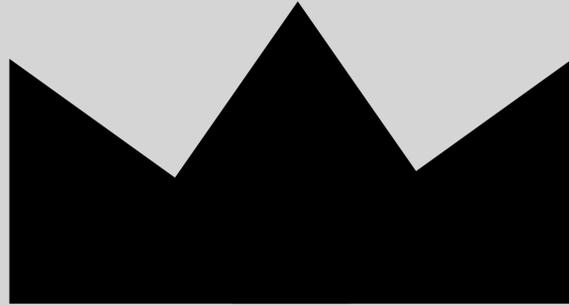


UNCOMMON

20 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING FOR AN
UNCOMMON WORK OF JESUS IN OUR CHURCH



A Note From Your Pastors

Dear Church,

We are so grateful to place this prayer guide in your hands to kick off 2018. Pastor Gentry has worked hard to give voice in these pages to the longings that God has been working in us together as your pastors/elders. These themes are a result of our prayer for you, and we are expectant for what God will do as you join us in yearning for a fresh work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the men and women who are Reston Community Church.

As we work through this series together on Sunday mornings, allow this guide to give shape to your prayers during the weeks and know that as you are praying and seeking the Lord, your voice is joining that of our whole congregation. We can't predict exactly how the Lord will respond to His church crying out to Him for an **UNCOMMON** work, but what we can be confident of is He does hear and He will respond. What grace to know that our Heavenly Father delights in the prayers of His people!

As we begin this journey of prayer together, we invite you to join us in fasting in some way during the four weeks that we address these four hopes that I will be teaching through. We know that fasting is not a regular discipline for many Christians, so as we are growing together in this grace, start small and please walk in wisdom regarding dietary and medical needs. This could be a partial day fast, fasting one meal, fasting from social media or even from particular food. We have included an appendix at the end of this guide to give some practical guidance in the how and why of fasting. Before you begin please take some time to read through that, and if you have questions, any of us would be happy to talk with you.

Finally, know that we have been and will continue to pray for you as we dive into this together. We are eager to see what Jesus will do in each one of us during this season. As we labor to respond in prayer, let's be a people that drinks deeply of His grace as we run to Him.

Thanks for joining us in this journey. We love you.

for His fame,

Pastor Matt & the elders of RCC

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UNCOMMON
Worship

UNCOMMON *Worship*

DAY 1

PSALM 86:8-13

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come
and worship before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.

For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.

Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.

I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.

For great is your steadfast love toward me;
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

WE LONG FOR UNCOMMON WORSHIP THAT IS GOD-FOCUSED. You were created for and commanded to worship God alone and so true worship must have God as the object and focus of our worship. We all worship something. Whatever you most sacrifice for, give yourselves, your time, your money, your energy, your emotions to; that is what you functionally love and worship most in life. The problem is that our worship is commonly focused on common things rather than an uncommon God. Jesus comes to put the glory and majesty of God on display and to reorder your misplaced worship so that you can turn from worshiping these common things and turn to worshiping the God who has existed for all eternity; the God who is immortal and wholly other; the God who is invisible but has made Himself known perfectly in Jesus. It is only through Jesus that you can truly focus on God, because it is only in Jesus that you see God perfectly.

As you begin this prayer guide start by confessing to God that your worship is not rightly ordered. Lay before God all the things you worship other than Him; the things you give your time, money, energy, or emotions to that are not God. Ask Jesus to begin reordering you worship so that you no longer worship common things but rather long for an uncommon worship of an uncommon God.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.

– WALTER C. SMITH

UNCOMMON *Worship*

DAY 2

REVELATION 19:11-16

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON WORSHIP THAT IS CHRIST-CENTERED. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all creation. The Perfect Mediator between God and man. He is Prophet, Priest, and King over all creation and the Head and Savior of the church. In Jesus' life God has revealed Himself, and through Jesus' death God has reconciled us to Himself. Uncommon worship must be Christ-centered because Christ is the focus of the Father's work, the cornerstone on which the gospel is built, the hope of our salvation. When your worship is not Christ-centered you will tend to move into expectations that are built around what you might want out of worship. When you begin to recenter your worship on Christ you begin to see that what you get out of it is the joy of seeing Jesus lifted up and displayed in our world through the church.

As you prepare your heart for worship reflect on the glory of Jesus described in Revelation 19. Consider whether your worship tends to find its center in Christ or in your own expectations and preferences. Does your worship look like the worship described in Revelation 19? Pray that Jesus would become more beautiful and glorious to you as you encounter Him in your life and in scripture. Pray that you would find great joy in lifting him up in uncommon worship.

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne,
While heavens eternal anthem drowns
All music but its own.
Awake, my soul and sing,
Your Savior and your matchless King
Through all eternity

- MATTHEW BRIDGES

UNCOMMON *Worship*

DAY 3

EPHESIANS 1:11-14

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON WORSHIP THAT IS SPIRIT-EMPOWERED. All of us are born into this world as children of wrath and dead to God. Our natures are broken by sin and apart from the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit none of us could be saved. It is by grace through faith that you are made alive to God and dead to sin. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that you have been made alive and are able to truly worship God. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was raised from the dead. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that the church multiplied and spread from a ragtag bunch of disciples in Israel to every corner of the world. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that you first believed. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that you are continually being shaped into the image of Christ. It is through the same power that has accomplished all these things that your heart is stirred to worship.

Reflect on the grace God has shown you through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Spend time reflecting on how the Spirit has shaped you since you were first saved. Are there areas of your life that you have been trying to grow in apart from the work of the Spirit? Are there areas that you have been trusting more in your ability than the Spirit's power? Repent of these things today and pray that the Holy Spirit would empower you for uncommon worship in all your life.

He who in creations dawning
brooded on a lifeless deep,
still across our nature's darkness
moves to wake our soul from sleep.

– MARGARET CLARKSON

UNCOMMON *Worship*

DAY 4

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON WORSHIP THAT IS GROUNDED IN SCRIPTURE. God works by His Word. He created by His Word. He sustains creation by the Word of His power. He came into this world as The Word. He saves us by the power of His Word. He has called us into a community grounded in His Word and gifts us with the ordinary means of grace of sitting under the regular and faithful teaching of His Word. Paul encourages us to preach the Word until Christ returns and so preaching will be the primary form of the Word in our gathered worship. Since God has graciously revealed Himself through scripture, called us into His family, and given us the gift of the Holy Spirit so that you can understand the truths of the gospel revealed in scripture you should long to saturate yourself in scripture. When your heart is filled with scripture you can approach worship with your brothers and sisters ready to serve and give to others rather than seeking to receive from others in a consumeristic manner. This will produce in you an uncommon worship.

Reflect on your own engagement with God's Word in your life. If your time in the Word is lacking then pray that God would give you a heart that longs to hear from Him through scripture. Then, having faith that He will say yes to this request, find a Bible reading plan or begin reading through a book of scripture. We have several tools that can help with this so ask a small group leader or one of the pastors for direction in this area.

Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which, nothing is omitted that is both necessary and useful to know, so nothing is taught but what is expedient to know.

– JOHN CALVIN

UNCOMMON *Worship*

DAY 5

ROMANS 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON WORSHIP THAT IS LIFE-ENCOMPASSING. Uncommon worship is an everyday matter. It is more than what happens on a Sunday morning. It is more than the songs that we sing. Much like your attitude towards how you steward your money, it requires you to live each day understanding that your life doesn't belong to you. It has been purchased with the blood of Jesus. It is only right then that you should give your entire life over to God as living and holy sacrifices. This means you worship God in how you live, work, and play every single day of your life. This is what Jesus spoke of when he said that the greatest commandment is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. God has ransomed you from sin and death and in response you give all of yourself joyfully over to him. Uncommon worship is life encompassing.

Reflect on what Paul says in Romans about presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice to God and consider areas of your life that you need to give to God that you may have been withholding. Pray that God would begin invading these areas of your life so that your whole life becomes defined by an uncommon worship of Him.

Lord of all power, I give you my will
In joyful obedience Your will to fulfill
Your bondage is freedom
Your service is song
And held in your keeping,
my weakness is strong

- JACK COPLEY WINSLOW



UNCOMMON
Love

UNCOMMON

Love

DAY 1

1 JOHN 4:9-10, 16-17

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another...So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

By this is love perfected with us...

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON AWARENESS OF THE LOVE OF GOD. You know the depth of someone's love for you by what it costs them; by how little you deserve their love; by the greatness of the benefit you receive from their love; and by the freedom with which they love you. The love God displays for us in Christ cost Him the life of His Son. The love God displays for us in Christ is a love that was extended towards those who were opposed to and in rebellion against Him. The love God showers you with in Jesus delivers you from death to life, from slavery to freedom, from isolation to adoption, from sin to salvation. The love God displays for you in Jesus flows out of pure freedom as Creator of all things and is pure and unmerited grace. This is love...that God sent His only Son into the world, so that you might live through Him; not because you first loved Him but because He first loved you. This is the love that becomes the measuring stick against all other loves. This is the love that transforms your flawed attempts and understandings of love into a love that reflects the grace and glory of God. This is the uncommon love of God that we long to have an uncommon awareness of each and every day of our lives.

As you reflect on the uncommon love God has shown for you in Jesus pray that He would press this understanding into your heart so that your heart can be transformed and enabled to love in uncommon ways. Pray that His love for you would allow you to love Jesus, the Church, your neighbor, your enemy, and maybe even yourself more fully.

"God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

– AUGUSTINE

UNCOMMON

Love

DAY 2

LUKE 14:26-27

If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON LOVE FOR JESUS. The words from Jesus in the passage above are shocking. What He is calling you to is not hatred of others but a love for Him that is so uncommon that all other loves seem like hatred in comparison. Deeply and most fundamentally Christianity is a new birth — a deep, profound transformation of what you treasure, what you love. So where does this uncommon love come from? It comes from being stunned by being loved by Jesus. This love comes from being overwhelmed by the person of Jesus dying on your behalf and rising again, though you have no merit at all in yourself. When that grips you, then you will taste what it is to treasure Jesus, delight in Jesus, and be satisfied in Jesus. Everything else flows out of this uncommon love for Jesus.

A PRAYER FOR AN UNCOMMON LOVE FOR JESUS

Dear Lord Jesus, the claim you make on our affections is both shocking and inviting. Shocking, because of the stark contrast presented—inviting, because you are so jealous for our love. Grant us grace to understand.

We know you're not calling us to hate anyone; for the world will know that we are your disciples by the way we love one another, in response to your love for us. You even call us to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us.

So, Lord Jesus, make your love for us astonishing and compelling. This is the only way forward—this is the only way we can possibly love you, as you deserve to be loved.

And when we love you, as you deserve, our love for our spouses, children, parents and siblings seem like hate in comparison. When we love you as you delight to be loved, we will actually love the members of our families the way you intend—as an extension and expression of your perfect love.

Lord Jesus, only your love is better than life. It's only in relationship with you that our deepest longings and greatest needs are met. Forgive us for looking to anyone else for the intimacy you alone can give. Forgive us for putting anyone or anything above you in priority and passion.

Restore and renew our first love for you. Take our affections to new places of liberating and transforming wonder. We don't want to love you conventionally, politely, or with any reservations. We want to love you with consuming abandon and heart-recalibrating joy, for you alone are worthy. So we pray, in your tender and loving name.

- Scotty Smith

UNCOMMON

Love

DAY 3

REVELATION 19:6-7

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult

and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his Bride has made herself ready;

WE LONG TO HAVE AN UNCOMMON LOVE FOR OUR CHURCH. The passage above from Revelation uses the metaphor of a bride and groom to describe the relationship between Jesus and the Church. Jesus loves the Church by sacrificing Himself for her and the Church in response loves and remains faithful to Jesus as His bride. When Jesus saved you He brought you out of loneliness of isolation and into the body of the Bride of Christ, His Church. It is in belonging to this body that you can know Jesus more fully, experience the life He intends for you, and grow into greater spiritual health and maturity as you are cared for, trained up, and held accountable by your brothers and sisters in Christ. The problem is that many times we say we love Jesus but are reluctant to commit to being a part of the local church. This is a little like calling yourself a baseball player but not being on a baseball team. The uncommon love that Jesus has shown to us as individuals should create in us an uncommon desire to belong to the bride that He loves; it should create in us an uncommon love for the local church.

Spend some time praying through your commitment to the local church. Do you love Christ's bride, the Church? Have you committed to belonging to RCC as a member, or have you been reluctant to commit? Have you been complacent in your membership? Confess these things to Jesus and ask Him to grow your affection for and commitment to the local church.

"Give yourself to the Church. You that are members of the Church have not found it perfect and I hope that you feel almost glad that you have not. If I had never joined a Church till I had found one that was perfect, I would never have joined one at all! And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect Church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us..."

– CHARLES SPURGEON

UNCOMMON *Love*

DAY 4

JOHN 1:14 (THE MESSAGE)

“The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.”

WE LONG TO HAVE AN UNCOMMON LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOR. Nine times in the Bible, one command is said to sum up the Old Testament law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The problem is that we have turned this simple idea into a nice saying. We put it on bumper stickers and t-shirts and go on with our lives without actually putting it into practice. What if what Jesus meant by this in Matthew 22 was that you were meant to love your actual neighbors, the people you live in close proximity to? What if what Jesus meant by love was more than just an affectionate feeling towards your neighbors, or perhaps more accurately, more than the lack of animosity towards them that you may define your love for your neighbors by? What if what Jesus meant by loving your neighbors looks like the love that he shows to humanity when He moves into the neighborhood and seeks the good of those around Him at great cost to Himself. It is only when you focus your attention on how Jesus has loved you that you can come to a true understanding of what He has in mind for you when He tells you to love your neighbors.

Take time now to ask Jesus to show you how you have failed to love your neighbors as he has called you to love them. Ask Him to give you a heart for the neighborhood he has placed you in and ask Him to help you love your neighbors in spiritual and tangible ways.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

– JESUS

UNCOMMON

Love

DAY 5

MATTHEW 5:43-48

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

WE LONG TO HAVE AN UNCOMMON LOVE FOR OUR ENEMIES. When Jesus calls you to love your enemies He is inviting you live in counter-cultural ways that turn upside down the sensibilities of our world. We are not to be enemies of those who may be enemies to us. From their perspective, we are their enemies; but from our perspective, they should be our neighbors. As you engage with a world that is broken by sin you will encounter enemies of varying degrees. When Jesus gave the command to love and pray for your enemies He knew that He was calling you to love and pray for the terrorist causing mass death as well as the co-worker constantly seeking to undermine and destroy your reputation. He knew you would be called to love and pray for the politician you disagree with and the Facebook friend who supports him. He knew you would be called to love and pray for the family member who has caused enormous pain and the fellow church member who hurt you. In calling you to love you enemies Jesus is calling you to love others the way He loved you while you were still His enemy. This is the uncommon love we have found in Jesus and it is the uncommon love we long for in our church.

As you reflect on the enemies you encounter in your life engage with Jesus’ command to love and pray for them by praying through the following things:

- 1. WHETHER THEY ARE CHRISTIANS OR NOT PRAY THAT THEY WOULD REPENT AND TURN TO JESUS.**
- 2. PRAY FOR AN END TO THE EVIL AND SIN THEY ARE CAUSING.**
- 3. PRAY FOR YOUR HEART THAT YOU WOULD LOVE THEM EVEN AS GOD HAS LOVED YOU WHILE YOU WERE AN ENEMY TO HIM.**



UNCOMMON
Faithfulness

UNCOMMON *Faithfulness*

DAY 1

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

WE LONG FOR UNCOMMON FAITHFULNESS BECAUSE JESUS HAS BEEN UNCOMMONLY FAITHFUL TOWARDS US.

Throughout the book of Psalms you can read accounts of God's faithfulness towards His people. They regularly retraced the history of their people using examples of God's faithfulness as markers in the journey. God made covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh, He led and fed them in the wilderness, He gave them the Law, judges, prophets, priests, and kings. And through it all His people stumbled their way through history from one unfaithful moment to another. God remains faithful even when His people are not. It is in Christ that you see the fullness of this truth. It is in examining your own lack of faithfulness that you begin to appreciate the magnitude of the uncommon faithfulness that God has shown towards you in Jesus. You are proud, but Jesus humbled Himself for you. You are selfish, but Jesus serves you perfectly. You are broken, and Jesus becomes broken so that you can be made whole. You were dead, so Jesus dies to give us life. You are unfaithful to God, and Jesus is faithful even unto death so that your unfaithfulness can be forgiven. It is because of the uncommon faithfulness of Jesus that we long to have an uncommon faithfulness in our own lives.

As you consider the faithfulness of Jesus pray that He would reveal areas of your life that you are walking in unfaithfulness. As those areas are made clear to you, repent of sin in those areas and pray that God would help you to walk in uncommon faithfulness to Him because of the uncommon faithfulness Jesus has shown towards you.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

– THOMAS CHISOLM

UNCOMMON *Faithfulness*

DAY 2

JEREMIAH 15:16

*Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart,
for I am called by your name,
O Lord, God of hosts.*

JEREMIAH 33:3

*Thus says the Lord who made the
earth, the Lord who formed it to
establish it—the Lord is his name: Call
to me and I will answer you, and will
tell you great and hidden things that
you have not known.*

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON FAITHFULNESS IN DEVOTION TO SCRIPTURE. When you eat you are taking into your body something that satisfies hunger, gives nourishment, and energizes you for life. If you fast for a few days you may experience the initial pain of hunger but relatively quickly your body becomes accustomed to not eating, or at least not eating the same amount that you had been previously. Your stomach shrinks, your appetite changes, and you feel that you no longer need the same nourishment that you did before. If it has been a long time since you have had a steady diet of the Word, your spiritual stomach may have shrunk and become indifferent to spiritual nourishment. This isn't healthy, and it can't go on indefinitely. So resolve to nurse yourself back to health even if you have to start small. And just like your eating habits, this might be on your own or with others but it is essential for your health that it is happening.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON FAITHFULNESS IN DEVOTION TO PRAYER. Tim Keller says “prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through His Word and His grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him.” This is why of all the spiritual disciplines, prayer is second only to the intake of God’s Word. Prayer is second in importance because it relies on our knowledge of God, which comes from reading His Word. Without engagement with Scripture, our prayers are lacking. It’s like having a phone conversation in which the other person can hear us, but we can’t hear them.

God has been uncommonly faithful towards you by revealing Himself to you through scripture. He is also uncommonly faithful to you in the way He listens and responds to your prayers. However, the most uncommon way He has been faithful to you has been in revealing Himself through the person and work of Jesus, who is now our intercessor before the God of creation. Because we have received the blessing of uncommon faithfulness, we long to have an uncommon faithfulness in our devotion to scripture and prayer.

Begin your journey towards uncommon faithfulness in this area by confessing to God all the things you allow to get in the way of your devotion to scripture and prayer. Reflect on your devotion to scripture and prayer and ask God to give you a deep longing to speak with Him and hear from Him through His Word. Commit to cultivating that devotion to scripture and prayer by designating regular times in your schedule when you will be uncommonly faithful to these disciplines.

UNCOMMON

Faithfulness

DAY 3

JOHN 13:12-15

Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON FAITHFULNESS IN DEVOTION TO SERVICE. Servanthood is uncomfortable. It requires putting your own needs aside for someone else. It's humbling, thankless, and hard. Not only is it hard, but the act of serving can also inconvenience and interrupt our own purposes and plans. Service makes us uncomfortable and empties us of pride and self-exaltation. And yet, Jesus says to you, "...do just as I have done..."

It is important to understand that when your heart refuses to serve the church, you are in some way mocking the service of Christ himself. When you avoid unpleasant or undesirable service opportunities, you are saying that you are better than your master. And when you limit your service to only what makes you comfortable, you are saying that Christ and His Church just isn't worth the effort. Thankfully, as we see so clearly in the rest of the story from John 13, Jesus serves you even when you aren't willing to serve. But even as He does this, He calls you to an uncommon faithfulness in devotion to service.

As you reflect on your devotion to service in the church consider whether there are needs that you have been reluctant to meet for some reason? Are there excuses you have been making? Confess these things to God and ask Him to give you a heart for service in the church, Ask Him to equip you for service in those areas through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

– PETER

UNCOMMON

Faithfulness

DAY 4

MATTHEW 6:19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON FAITHFULNESS IN DEVOTION TO GIVING. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". The things you spend your money on often reveal the true desires of your heart. When you allow the Gospel to alter the priorities of your spending, the door to your heart is opened and you begin treasuring things beyond your stuff. Changing the flow of your money changes the attention and loves of your heart. As Christians, we freely declare that all that we have is by the grace of God. It all belongs to Him. As a member of the church, you give faithfully not because it is something God wants FROM you (it's all His after all) but because it is something God wants FOR you. It is God's great desire to bless you with everything you need, but it is also His desire that you grow in Christlike generosity. A generosity that gives cheerfully and willingly, knowing that it all belongs to God. A generosity that is marked by an uncommon faithfulness in devotion to giving.

If tithing faithfully has not been part of your growth as a disciple spend time praying about this. Ask God to give you more faith in your Father than in your finances. Begin your journey towards uncommon faithfulness in this area by making it a priority, picking a percentage that you can give, and progressing towards a full tithe (10% of your gross income). Experience uncommon freedom by living open handedly with all that God has given you through uncommon faithfulness in giving.

"Money operates as both a window and a door into our hearts. It is a window in that it reveals the deepest desires of our hearts. It is a door in that when opened it releases our hearts to find freedom, contentment, and joy in our finances."

– RON BLUE

UNCOMMON *Faithfulness*

DAY 5

HEBREWS 10:24-25

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON FAITHFULNESS IN DEVOTION TO ATTENDANCE IN GATHERED WORSHIP. We live in a highly consumeristic and individualistic society. We are conditioned to filter our decisions and commitments through questions like: “What am I getting out of this?”, “How does this benefit me/my family?”, “What do I want?”, “Is there something better out there I could have instead?”. This attitude can creep its way into the church and twist the way we think about church into just another service provider in my life rather than a family that I belong to and care for. When we live under the influence of a consumer-driven heart, church attendance becomes about getting fed, getting filled, getting encouraged, getting what I want out of this time. The Hebrew writer encourages you to consider that maybe church attendance isn’t about getting what you want out of this time, but rather it is about stirring up one another to love and good works and encouraging one another.

You are an important part of this church. God has placed you in this place, for this time, and has called you to this church. This wasn’t by accident or convenience but by His sovereign decree He has made you a part of this church. He has given each of us to be a blessing to a local congregation. He has equipped you with your identity as a son or daughter and with spiritual gifts to be a blessing to those we are in community with. He has called you to an uncommon faithfulness in gathering with your brothers and sisters in Christ to worship God, glorify Jesus, and encourage one another as we do those things.

As you reflect on your own faithfulness in this area pray that Jesus would help you see yourself as he does in relationship to the church. Repent of areas of idolatry that have lessened your view of being present in the gathered worship of the church. Pray that Jesus would help you to love the church the way He does. Pray that He would grow in you a desire to be uncommonly faithful in attendance so that He might use you in uncommonly powerful ways each week at RCC.

“We desperately need the church for love, for maturity and preparedness, for spiritual care. To reject what God designs for His glory and our good is spiritual suicide. To reject the church is to take your own spiritual life.”

– THABITI ANYABWILE



UNCOMMON
Fruitfulness

UNCOMMON *Fruitfulness*

DAY 1

JOHN 15:1-2

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

WE LONG TO SEE AN UNCOMMON FRUITFULNESS IN OUR WALK WITH JESUS. As you have engaged with the reflections of uncommon worship, uncommon love, and uncommon faithfulness in this guide you have hopefully encountered a few moments of personal conviction in your walk with Jesus. I say hopefully not because it has been our desire to burden you with shame but rather because it is through self-examination that our areas of weakness are brought into the light so that we can participate with the work of the Holy Spirit in producing in us more and more fruitfulness in our walk with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is actively shaping and molding you into the image of Christ so that your life can begin to produce the fruit that you were created to produce. You are becoming what you were always intended to be, an image bearer of our Father God, and as you image God more and more you put on display the beauty and majesty of God for the world around you to see. Even in the pain of conviction you can see the grace of God towards you as you become a fruitful branch that has been pruned so that you can produce more fruit. This is our prayer for you, that you would see an uncommon fruitfulness in your walk with Jesus.

As we enter the last week of this reflective guide, pray that as you grow in the areas of uncommon worship, uncommon love, and uncommon faithfulness your walk with Jesus would grow in uncommon fruitfulness so that Jesus would be imaged through your life and in our church as we are formed more and more into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray that as you are grown in these areas that He would use you to glorify His name as an agent of His great gospel mission in 2018.

There is only one way to be revived and healed from our backslidings so that we may become fruitful even in old age. We must take a steady look at the glory of Christ in His special character, in His grace and work, as shown to us in the Scripture.

- JOHN OWEN

UNCOMMON *Fruitfulness*

DAY 2

MATTHEW 28:18-20

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.

WE LONG TO SEE AN UNCOMMON FRUITFULNESS IN SEEING OTHERS MEET JESUS. As you abide with Jesus through an uncommon worship, uncommon love, and uncommon faithfulness, your walk with Jesus becomes more fruitful and you develop a greater love and appreciation for what He has done and is continuing to do in your life. As one who has been saved by the lavish grace of Jesus, your heart will be captivated by a deep, abiding, love for Jesus. As one who has been changed from a sinner, a slave, a spiritual corpse, and an enemy of God into a forgiven saint, one who is freed from slavery, raised to new life, and reconciled as a child of God, you are keenly aware of the effectiveness of Jesus in changing your life. Because we talk most about what we love and what has worked in our lives, you will long for others to know who it is that you love and who it is that has been most effective in changing your life. You will long for others to meet Jesus, and as you display and declare the good news of what Jesus has done in your own life you can expectantly assume that he will use your testimony to draw others around you into a life-changing relationship with Him as well. And so you can engage confidently in His mission expecting to see the conversions and baptisms of those closest to you who don't yet know Jesus. You can expectantly long for an uncommon fruitfulness in seeing others meet Jesus.

As you reflect on your participation in the mission of Christ pray that He would give you confidence to display and declare the gospel to those closest to you. Pray expectantly for uncommon fruitfulness in your mission and the mission of our church and our small groups. Pray that we would see an uncommon number of conversions and baptisms in 2018!

"I've seen far too many Christians who are more than willing to travel halfway around the world to volunteer for a week in an orphanage, but who cannot bring themselves to take the personal risk of sharing Jesus with the co-worker who sits day after day in the cubicle right next to them."

– LEE STROBEL

UNCOMMON *Fruitfulness*

DAY 3

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

WE LONG TO SEE AN UNCOMMON FRUITFULNESS IN MULTIPLICATION OF LEADERS. As we lean into uncommon worship, uncommon love, and uncommon faithfulness through prayer and fasting, we expectantly pray that God would produce an uncommon fruitfulness in the multiplication of leaders at RCC. As you prayerfully engage in these hopes and allow the Holy Spirit to grow you in these areas, it is our hope and prayer that you will be matured spiritually and eagerly step into greater areas of leadership in your life and in our church. We long to see men and women leading in uncommon ways in their homes and workplaces out of gospel-inspired confidence and servant-hearted love. We long to see godly men and women marked by uncommon worship, uncommon love, and uncommon faithfulness being equipped to serve the church through their unique gifts and talents. We long to see men and women hungry to lead in the varied aspects of service in our church. We long to see small group members stepping into apprenticeships that lead to the multiplication of small group leaders and the creation of new small groups. We long to see godly men being trained up as elders to shepherd and serve RCC. It is our hope that you would join us in praying for an uncommon fruitfulness in your own individual leadership and an uncommon fruitfulness in the multiplication of leaders at RCC.

As you reflect on your own leadership, whether that be at work, at home, or in the church, pray that God would produce in your life an uncommon fruitfulness in this area. Repent of areas in your life where you have been leading passively and pray that God would grow in you a heart to lead so that they might be equipped to serve and lead as well. Pray that He would raise up new leaders and that we would see an uncommon fruitfulness born out of the multiplication of leaders at RCC in 2018.

“It takes more than a busy church, a friendly church, or even an evangelical church to impact a community for Christ. It must be a church ablaze, led by leaders who are ablaze for God.”

– WESLEY DUEWEL

UNCOMMON *Fruitfulness*

DAY 4

2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-11

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

WE LONG TO SEE AN UNCOMMON FRUITFULNESS THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING. As you lean into an uncommon devotion to worship, love, and faithfulness, you can prayerfully expect that God will produce uncommon fruitfulness in your walk with Jesus, uncommon fruitfulness in growing our church through the salvation of those who don't yet know Jesus, and uncommon fruitfulness in the multiplication of leaders at RCC. As this happens, we can also prayerfully expect to see uncommon fruitfulness through church planting at RCC. Throughout the book of Acts you have the story of the church exploding across the first century world and it has grown and multiplied ever since. RCC is a part of that story and we long to see that story continue through us. We would ask you to eagerly pray with us to see an uncommon fruitfulness in church growth and multiplication through church planting. Join us in praying that we might see RCC plant more churches in the DC Metro area. Join us in praying that we might see the gospel have an irreplaceable impact in spiritual and tangible ways through churches birthed out of RCC. Join us in praying for uncommon fruitfulness through church planting so that more souls are saved and Jesus is lifted up for all in our community to see.

As you pray though this we would ask that you be praying specifically that God would raise up a godly man to plant a Spanish-speaking church through RCC in the Southgate Community. Pray specifically that God would raise up a godly man to plant a church in the Leesburg area. God has burdened our hearts for these areas and we believe He will say yes to this request. So join us in praying for uncommon fruitfulness through church planting.

"The continual planting of new congregations is the most crucial strategy for the growth of the body of Christ"

– TIM KELLER

UNCOMMON *Fruitfulness*

DAY 5

PSALM 78:4

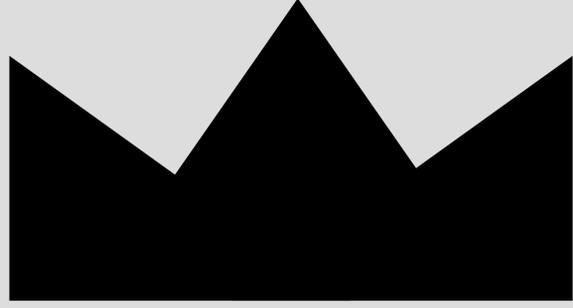
We will not hide them from their children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done.

WE LONG FOR AN UNCOMMON FRUITFULNESS BEYOND OUR GENERATION. The uncommon fruitfulness we are longing to see produced in our church does not find its ultimate rest in our lives alone. We long to leave a heritage of faith for future generations of Christians who will call RCC home. We long to see parents growing in the gospel and telling the glorious deeds of the Lord and His might and the wonders that He has done to their children. We long to see those children meet Jesus, be equipped for ministry and leadership, and perpetuate that gospel pattern for their children and grandchildren for generations to come. We long to be led in prayer and worship by our children and to someday hand off the leadership of RCC to the godly men and women who used to populate the children's ministry classes of today. So join us in praying for an uncommon fruitfulness in the future generations who will come to meet Jesus at RCC.

As you pray through this today, if you are a parent, pray that God would use you to shepherd your children in the gospel. Pray that God would give you wisdom as you bring the gospel to bear in your home and in the lives of your children. Pray for your children's salvation and for the salvation of the other children at RCC. Pray that God would use RCC as a place where they can be brought up in the gospel and find spiritual health and maturity. If you are not a parent, then we would ask you to labor in prayer for those children as well. Pray also for their parents and pray that God would show you how you can love and serve one another more fully.

"You may speak but a word to a child, and in that child there may be slumbering a noble heart which shall stir the Christian Church in years to come."

– CHARLES SPURGEON



APPENDIX

A FEW WORDS ON FASTING



CHANCES ARE YOU ARE AMONG THE MASSIVE MAJORITY OF CHRISTIANS WHO RARELY OR NEVER FAST. It's not because we haven't read our Bibles or sat under faithful preaching or heard about the power of fasting, or even that we don't genuinely want to do it. We just never actually get around to doing it.

Part of it may be that we live in a society in which food is so ubiquitous that we eat not only when we don't need to, but sometimes even when we don't want to. We eat to share a meal with others, to build or grow relationships (good reasons), or just as a distraction from responsibility.

And of course, there are our own cravings and aches for comfort that keep us from the discomfort of fasting.

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.

If we are to learn the lost art of fasting and enjoy its fruit, it will not come with our ear to the ground of society, but with Bibles open. Then, the concern will not be whether we fast, but when. Jesus assumes his followers will fast, and even promises it will happen. He doesn't say "if," but "when you fast" (Matthew 6:16). And he doesn't say his followers might fast, but "they will" (Matthew 9:15).

We fast in this life because we believe in the life to come. We don't have to get it all here and now, because we have a promise that we will have it all in the coming age. We fast from what we can see and taste, because we have tasted and seen the goodness of the invisible and infinite God — and are desperately hungry for more of him.

Fasting is for this world, for stretching our hearts to get fresh air beyond the pain and trouble around us. And it is for the battle against the sin and weakness inside us. We express our discontent with our sinful selves and our longing for more of Christ.

When Jesus returns, fasting will be done. It's a temporary measure, for this life and age, to enrich our joy in Jesus and prepare our hearts for the next — for seeing him face to face. When he returns, he will not call a fast, but throw a feast; then all holy abstinence will have served its glorious purpose and be seen by all for the stunning gift it was. Until then, we will fast.

Fasting is hard. It sounds much easier in concept than it proves to be in practice. It can be surprising how on-edge we feel when we miss a meal. Many an idealistic new fast-er has decided to miss a meal and only found our belly drove us to make up for it long before the next mealtime came.

Fasting sounds so simple, and yet the world, our flesh, and the devil conspire to introduce all sorts of complications that keep it from happening. In view of helping you start down the slow path to good fasting, here are six simple pieces of advice. These suggestions might seem pedantic, but the hope is that such basic counsel can serve those who are new at fasting or have never seriously tried it.

1. START SMALL.

Don't go from never fasting to attempting a weeklong fast. Start with one meal; maybe fast one meal a week for several weeks. Then try two meals, and work your way up to a day-long fast. Perhaps eventually try a two-day juice fast.

A juice fast means abstaining from all food and beverage, except for juice and water. Allowing yourself juice provides nutrients and sugar for the body to keep you operating, while also still feeling the effects from going without solid food. It's not recommended that you abstain from water during a fast of any length.

2. PLAN WHAT YOU'LL DO INSTEAD OF EATING.

Fasting isn't merely an act of self-deprivation, but a spiritual discipline for seeking more of God's fullness. This means we should have a plan for what positive pursuit to undertake in the time it normally takes to eat. We spend a good portion of our day with food in front of us. One significant part of fasting is the time it creates for prayer and meditation on God's word or some act of love for others.

A FEW WORDS ON FASTING



Before diving headlong into a fast, craft a simple plan. Connect it to your purpose for the fast. Each fast should have a specific spiritual purpose. Identify what that is and design a focus to replace the time you would have spent eating. Without a purpose and plan, it's not Christian fasting; it's just going hungry.

3. CONSIDER HOW IT WILL AFFECT OTHERS.

Fasting is no license to be unloving. It would be sad to lack concern and care for others around us because of this expression of heightened focus on God. Love for God and for neighbor go together. Good fasting mingles horizontal concern with the vertical. If anything, others should even feel more loved and cared for when we're fasting.

So as you plan your fast, consider how it will affect others. If you have regular lunches with colleagues or dinners with family or roommates, assess how your abstaining will affect them, and let them know ahead of time, instead of just being a no-show, or springing it on them in the moment that you will not be eating.

Also, consider this backdoor inspiration for fasting: If you make a daily or weekly practice of eating with a particular group of friends or family, and those plans are interrupted by someone's travel or vacation or atypical circumstances, consider that as an opportunity to fast, rather than eating alone.

4. TRY DIFFERENT KINDS OF FASTING.

The typical form of fasting is personal, private, and partial, but we find a variety of forms in the Bible: personal and communal, private and public, congregational and national, regular and occasional, absolute and partial.

In particular, consider fasting together with your family, small group, or church. Do you share together in some special need for God's wisdom and guidance? Is there an unusual difficulty in the church, or society, for which you need God's intervention? Do you want to keep the second coming of Christ in view? Plead with special earnestness for God's help by linking arms with other believers to fast together.

5. FAST FROM SOMETHING OTHER THAN FOOD.

Fasting from food is not necessarily for everyone. Some health conditions keep even the most devout from the traditional course. However, fasting is not limited to abstaining from food. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, "Fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose."

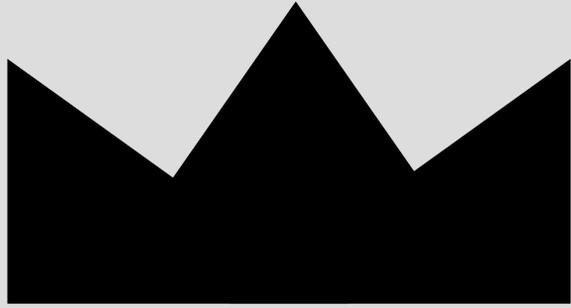
If the better part of wisdom for you, in your health condition, is not to go without food, consider fasting from television, computer, social media, or some other regular enjoyment that would bend your heart toward greater enjoyment of Jesus. Paul even talks about married couples fasting from sex "for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer" (1 Corinthians 7:5).

6. DON'T THINK OF WHITE ELEPHANTS.

When your empty stomach starts to growl and begins sending your brain every "feed me" signal it can, don't be content to let your mind dwell on the fact that you haven't eaten. If you make it through with an iron will that says no to your stomach, but doesn't turn your mind's eye elsewhere, it says more about your love for food than your love for God.

Christian fasting turns its attention to Jesus or some great cause of His in the world. Christian fasting seeks to take the pains of hunger and transpose them into the key of some eternal anthem, whether it's fighting against some sin, or pleading for someone's salvation, or for the cause of the unborn, or longing for a greater taste of Jesus.

*Taken from the Desiring God article at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/fasting-for-beginners>



The logo for Reston Community Church features the word "reston" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. A white cross is positioned above the letter "o", which is partially enclosed by a white teardrop shape. Below "reston", the words "COMMUNITY CHURCH" are written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font.

reston
COMMUNITY CHURCH