



## Prayer and Bible Study - Lifestyle challenges -

### Getting out and about, journey and pilgrimage

- Walk around your neighbourhood and pray for the families living near you.
- If feasible, drive or walk to a different church in your neighbourhood each day and pray outside it or in, for renewal and the unity of God's people.
- Arrange with a friend, to visit a local place of historic Christian worship. Go there to worship as appropriate.

### Other Spiritual disciplines

- Each day, confess that which is wrong in your life, and resolve to change.
- Fast for the week by omitting one meal each day, where appropriate, and spending that time in prayer.
- Find a mid-week service in your locality, perhaps at a church other than you are used to attending, and go to worship.

### General Targets

These require you to do something practical for someone else, which is also for God. They are mostly the 'common things of life' through which we can express the service of others.

### Engaging with other people in the community

- Greet a neighbour or work colleague you normally pass by.
- Send flowers (or other thoughtful gift) to a friend or relative who is ill.
- Invite a friend to accompany you on a walk at a local beauty spot, where you can give them time in conversation.
- Plan an afternoon when you might invite your neighbours to your home for appropriate refreshment.

### Engaging with family

- Make arrangements to visit relatives you have not recently contacted.
- Spend more time with your spouse or closest relative at home.
- Take time to consider how often you should be telephoning, emailing or texting close members of your family. Change as appropriate

### Sort out your own life – for yourself and those closest to you

- Put into practice a substantial cut in the amount of television you watch.
- Check your weight and work out an exercise regime to assist your fitness.
- Analyse the amount of money you spend on luxuries. Is this appropriate?

### Engaging with your local Church

- Note a contentious issue on the news. Write/email your MP or the media.
- Make a list of seven people with whom you have not been in contact for some time, and phone them – one per evening for a week.
- Visit a leader in your church, to support them. Pray for them.
- Consider the practical skills you might offer to some event at church.

### Community and Political responsibility

- Read the local paper and pick up local matters of concern.
- Report to the TV channels programmes that you find offensive.
- Make time each day to read one of the charitable appeal leaflets that come through your door. Consider your response.

My lifestyle challenge for this week is:

DATE

Further notes and reminders about when and how these are to be done:

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A prayer for those who seek to work with God:

**Lord God, grant me;**

**Wisdom in my choices,**

**Courage in my endeavour,**

**Kindness in my manner,**

**Tenacity in my intent,**

**Self-control in my temperament,**

**Godliness in my heart,**

**And Love within my attitude to those with whom I work.**

**So may I reflect the glory of the Christ whose service is my example and delight. AMEN**

Select Lifestyle Challenges appropriate to your own circumstances, using [www.prayerandbiblestudy.com](http://www.prayerandbiblestudy.com) or this leaflet if you need ideas.

Use the space below to record your reflections and ideas.

### Day 1 (Sunday)

**PRAY;** and then select challenges for the next week.

### Day 2 (Monday)

**THINK;** what practical or spiritual obstacles need to be overcome?

### Day 3 (Tuesday)

**REFLECT;** should you approach this task differently?

### Day 4 (Wednesday)

**CONSIDER;** are you managing to achieve the original aims?

### Day 5 (Thursday)

**CHECK OUT;** does this task make you think of others you could try?

### Day 6 (Friday)

**ASSESS;** weigh up; who is being changed most, you or others?

### Day 7 (Saturday)

**MEDITATE;** how do you feel about this target and how it has worked out?

## Lifestyle Challenges

Every seven days (a week, or longer if you wish), take on a challenge.

The personal challenge is private and focuses on your relationship with God, for example fasting or intercessory prayer.

The general challenge is social, and focuses on the responsibilities you have to those around you; family, friends, church.

Select one for each week, alternately personal and general, or one of each for each week. Below, there are suggestions for you to choose from. The lists are not exhaustive; you decide what is appropriate and adapt or add to them as you wish.

The idea behind this is that we hold together the two great challenges of the Christian faith, our relationship with others and our relationship with God. Engaging with all this may well be difficult, but those who have taken the challenges testify to their life-changing effects.

## Personal Targets

These require you to do something for God, which may also be for someone else or for yourself. They have their origins in the Bible or in Christian heritage and tradition through the ages: Petition, fasting, intercession, giving money or goods, attendance at worship, reading, meditation, devotion, pilgrimage or journey.

### Suggestions for intercessory prayer

- Make time to pray each day for the leadership at your church.
- Make a vow to pray daily for whatever is on the News.
- Make time to pray for a friend or close member of your family, every day.
- Pray for someone in your own family who needs to know more of God.
- Spend 5 minutes, adjacent to meals, praying for the hungry of the world.

### Suggestions for personal prayer

- Spend a few minutes each day asking the Lord for health.
- Make a list of what you believe to be your failures in life. Pray about them daily and ask the Lord to bring good out of them.
- Consider difficult aspects of your daily work. Pray for strength.

### Using the arts

- Select some music that inspires you. Play it and think of God's creation.
- Write down slowly, using your best handwriting (calligraphy), the psalm for the day. Place the result on display, for the day, where you can see it.
- For the artistic, take a digital photograph of something that connects with the psalm. Creatively combine the picture and words on your computer.

### Reading and using the Bible

- Read through a whole book of the Bible. Reflect upon this for a few days.
- Spend half an hour each day reading a Christian Book about God.
- During a week, read through the story of the death of our Lord (in one of the gospels) slowly, reflecting and meditating upon what happened.
- Find a part of the Bible you do not know and read carefully over a week.