

7:1 Spiritual Quest: Fasting Forward

Connection

Our spiritual quest begins with the concept of taking time to approach God intentionally. Taking time to approach God includes the spiritual discipline of fasting. Fasting is the act of sacrificially replacing one thing with something else. For instance, we might choose to skip a meal and in its place we spend time in scripture study and prayer.

One of the unique perspectives of the Community of Christ is the communal nature in which we practice spiritual disciplines. While fasting, prayer, and meditation can be done alone, they can also be done in a small group of friends. Spiritual disciplines move us into a deeper relationship with God and into an expanded vision of God's purpose in the world.

Project

Your project for this unit is to organize a fast for you and a few of your friends. This may take the form of

a fast-a-thon in association with Outreach International, or it may, if circumstances dictate, a personal fast. For more information about Outreach International's program, "Hunger Challenge" to benefit the world's hungry, check out www.outreach-international.org or call (816) 833-0833.

Before you begin, there are a few simple questions to consider.

1. Why fast? Is God calling me to fast? How long and from what am I to fast?
2. What are my motives? Is there a hidden desire to impress others or demand something from God?
3. What are the goals for this fast? Spiritual renewal? Am I interceding for someone else? Are we seeking divine guidance or a special blessing?
4. Is the concern for blessing balanced with the care for others?
5. How am I focusing on God's glory?

If this is your first fast, keep it simple: one meal or something you can give up for a day. Remember that some people, such as

diabetics, may not be able to fast from food.

Portfolio

For your portfolio entry, use portfolio page 7:1 to record the details of your fast and as a journal to record your spiritual response to the fast. You may wish to design your own pages for the same purposes. Include a picture of what you gave up, a photograph, a picture cut out of a magazine, or draw it!

Scripture

Read Isaiah 58:6–7, Matthew 6:16–18, and Alma 4:6 (Book of Mormon). Fasting is an ancient custom with numerous references in sacred scripture. How do these scriptures help you prepare for fasting?

7:2 Spiritual Quest: Prayer: Talking to God

Connection

The ancient practice of prayer is a mysterious form of communication between ourselves and God. The scriptures record many different types of prayer. During Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. What Jesus gave them was not intended to be the exact words, but a model of prayer. This model includes praise and adoration, gratitude and thanksgiving, repentance and confession, intercession and outward focus (prayer for others), and intracession (prayer for self).

Prayer involves study and exploration. It is not learned from a book, but from our knees, not in a secret language, but in the language of the Holy Spirit.

Project

The project for this unit is to experience prayer in four different ways. The first is to review the Lord's Prayer. The second is to "Praying Mosiah" as adapted from materials written by Richard Howard. The third is to write a prayer based on the model outline above. The fourth is to offer a prayer in worship. Work with your mentor on this, especially to schedule an opportunity for you to offer prayer during a congregational worship. The details of this prayer should be worked out with those involved in planning and leading the worship, as well as your mentor.

Portfolio

For your portfolio entry, use portfolio page 7:2 as a guide. You can use this page or design your own page for each of the activities.

Scripture

Read Isaiah 55:6–9, Matthew 6:9–13, and Alma 16:219–222, (Book of Mormon). What guidance do these scriptures offer for prayer? Use these scriptures to formulate how to "Write Your Own Prayer."

Portfolio 7:2 Prayer: Talking to God

The Lord's Prayer

Found in Matthew 6:9–13, the Lord's Prayer offers a model that reveals the nature of God replacing self-centered or meaningless prayers. Write responses to the questions directly under each line.

Our Father in Heaven

Describe places where you find God.

Hallowed be your name.

What are some of the names of God?

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

How would you describe the kingdom of God?

What is God's will for you?

Give us today our daily bread

What things do you need to live?

Describe how God has provided these things.

And forgive us our debts

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

When have you been forgiven by God? by others?

When have you forgiven others?

And do not bring us to the time of trial,

What trials do you face?

How has God helped you in these trials?

But rescue us from evil.

When has God helped you get away from evil?

Prayer Model

1. Praise and adoration
2. Gratitude and thanksgiving
3. Repentance and confession
4. Intercession, prayer for others
5. Intra-cession, prayer for self.

Public Prayer

Write down when and where you offered a public prayer.

Write Your Own Prayer

Write your own prayer below, using the model:

Praying Mosiah

Read Mosiah 2:32–44, Book of Mormon. Read it through again, prayerfully.

Now imagine yourself in each of the following six characters in this scripture:

a beggar; a poor person struggling to make ends meet confronted by one who has even greater need; a person who is overjoyed at receiving God's forgiveness; a wealthy person who views the beggar as unworthy of his or her care; a person who extends too often the help others need; one who helps others within appropriate boundaries.

Reflect on which of these roles you have lived out and the results.

Picture in your mind the face of someone who supports or has nurtured your life in times of need.

Meditate on the nature and scope of your "substance."

Write down any insights you have gained from this particular "Mosiah" moment.

*Adapted from "Praying Mosiah" by Richard Howard, 2001
Used with permission.*

7:3 Spiritual Quest: Studying the Scriptures

Connection

Our spiritual quest would not be complete without scripture study. The study of the sacred text of Christianity, and the Community of Christ in particular, helps us understand how God interacts with us, God's creation.

The scriptures are defined as the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, the Christian scriptures or the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. They are written in several different literary styles. The Old and New Testaments have been translated and revised over centuries. The Book of Mormon contains nineteenth century language, similar to the King James

Version and the Inspired Version of the Bible. Only the most recent additions to the Doctrine and Covenants are in contemporary language. All of these elements have a bearing on how we read scriptures and the tools we use to understand them.

Project

The project for this unit is to select a specific scripture and reasearch information about it using various resources to help you develop a more complete understanding. For your selected scripture, you will need a corresponding Bible commentary and a Bible dictionary. These are probably available at church, from a member of the congregation, public libraries, or on the Internet.

Once you have completed the research, you are to share your interpretation of the selected scripture with a church school class (your age or older), your scout unit, or a group of adults.

Portfolio

For your portfolio entry, use portfolio page 7:3 or create your own pages utlizing these ideas.

Scripture

Consider using one of the following scriptures for this study, or select one with the assistance of your mentor.

Matthew 3:1–17
Matthew 28:1–20
Mark 16:1–20
Luke 8:40–56
John 3:1–21
John 13:1–20
Acts 2:1–13
Acts 22:6–16
Romans 4:1–25
Romans 12:1–21

Portfolio 7:3 Studying the Scriptures

Select a Scripture

Choose a scripture to study either from the list provided or in consultation with your mentor or pastor, and explain why you chose it.

Scripture selected _____

Reason _____

Tools for Studying

Using a Bible commentary, explain the background of your selected scripture.

What other scriptures relate to the one you selected and how are they significant?

Look up at least one word that appears in your selected scripture in a Bible dictionary.

Selected word _____

Definition _____

What It Means to Me

Considering your research, what does this scripture say to you?

Where Shared

When, where, and with whom did you share this?

8:1 Discipleship Response: Tithing of Talent in Community

Connection

Many cultures value both individualism and community. However, there is a certain degree of tension between these two concepts. Is what's right for every individual always what's right for the community? In order for a community to thrive, it is necessary for individuals to tithe of their talent.

People who value individualism and community will have certain qualities: the ability to understand and redefine reality, the ability to cope with change, empathy, the ability to deal with adversity, ability and willingness to give more than they receive, and most importantly the ability to experience and demonstrate love.

These qualities and our other God-given talents require hard work and focus. We do this through the discipline of work. As a part of this work, we must give our talents to the community.

When we give our talents to the community, we must also let go of expectations. While we want to believe what we share makes a big impact, sometimes it is not possible to know this, either for a long time, or forever. Martin Luther was instrumental in getting the Bible printed in German, the language of the people, when it had only been written in Latin, the language of the church leaders. This has had a lasting impact on scripture and scripture study. But he did not know the outcome of this event during his lifetime.

Tithing of talent is important in building community. A community requires goods and services and a method of exchange (money) to survive, but sharing talents help a community to thrive.

Project

Your project for this unit is to determine your top five talents and use one of them for improving the community. Determine a plan of action for how to make this happen. Work with your mentor and/or pastor.

The point of this project is not to share your talent with just family and friends, or at your church or unit, but with the larger community.

Portfolio

For your portfolio entry, use portfolio page 8:1 and track your progress on it. You may wish to design your own page demonstrating background information about your talent.

Scripture

Read Matthew 25: 14–30. Although the word "talent" referred to money and not our modern definition of "talent," how does this scripture relate to sharing our talents, especially in community?

Portfolio 8:1 Tithing of Talent in Community

Determine Your Talent

List what you consider to be your top five talents, either developed or God-given.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

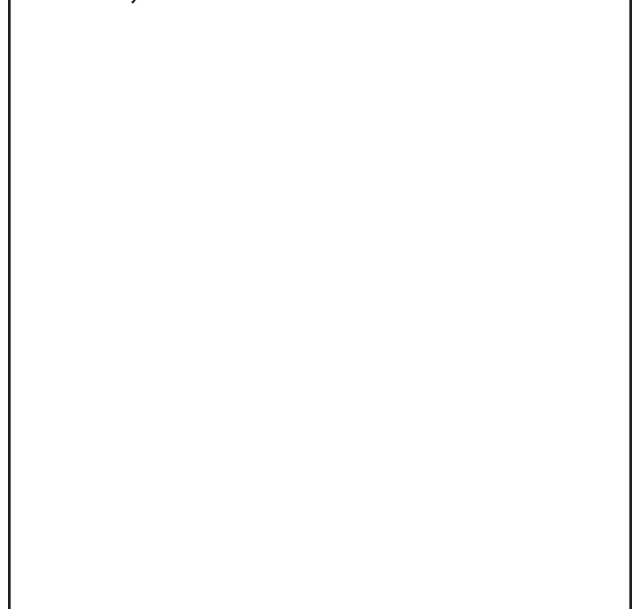
Select One to Share

Describe the community with which you would like to share your talent (school, neighborhood, city, church, other). Select one talent from the five you listed above to share with the community. Develop a plan for this activity and spell out exactly how this talent will help your community be a better place.

Share Your Talent with the Community

Document when, where, and with whom you shared your talent.

Place a photo of you sharing your talent with the community here.



8:2 Discipleship Response: Sharing the Community Story

Connection

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to share the witness of invitation, to invite others to follow Jesus. This witness of invitation is the foundation for friendship, hospitality, and nurture.

One of the ways of sharing the sacred story of the Christian community is based on a model used by members of the Community of Christ in Zambia.

In Zambia, the emphasis is on community, rather than the individual. Much of life, despite Western influence, still centers around the family and tribe. If we were to draw parallels to our world, we would say life evolves around our family and friends.

To share the gospel story in Zambia, you must first know God's story. Perhaps you have become familiar with God's story through the scriptures in church school, the World Community program, or on your own.

Next you listen to the story of the village or tribe with keen interest. You are listening for the common threads between the village or tribal story and God's story.

Then comes the difficult part: to draw relevant connections between what you know about God's sacred story and the village or tribal story. These common threads cannot be made up nor can they be superficial. Again you listen. At this point the people might seek clarification, or they might want to know more about God's story. Finally, they may ask you your story and how it connects to God's story.

Project

Your project for this unit is to write out a few key things you know about God's story. Next, you are to visit with a group of your friends or a neighborhood family and listen to their story. The next steps, perhaps the most

difficult, is to connect their story to God's story. Finally, it is to invite them to join the sacred story of God, if they are interested, in the Community of Christ.

Portfolio

For your portfolio entry, use portfolio page 8:2 or design one or more of your own. Be sure to write down "God's Story" before the visit. The other two segments may be done during or after your visit.

Scripture

Read 1 Thessalonians 2: 1–16. This scripture describes the apostle Paul's life and work in Thessalonica, particularly the way he shared the story of Christ with them. What does this reading have in common with the method of sharing the sacred story outlined in this unit?

Portfolio 8:2 Sharing the Community Story

God's Story

Write down some things you know about God's story, based on what you remember from the scriptures or your family.

To whom have you decided to listen?

Their Story

Listen as your friends and family tell you their story and write down things you believe it has in common with God's story.

Place a picture of your friends or the family you shared with here.

Make Connections

In the spirit of invitation, share with your family or friends how their story and God's story intersect. Then, either ask them to be baptized and join with the Community of Christ, or share with them your personal story.

8:3 Discipleship Response: Sharing, Saving, Spending

Connection

God is generous. God provides "enough and to spare," sharing in abundance with all creation. How this abundance gets distributed depends in part on how we share, save, and spend the financial resources God has entrusted to us. This includes giving to the church and to the community.

Mission tithes are contributions to assist with the work of the church: local congregations, World Church ministries, oblation (ministry to the poor), World Hunger Fund, and other projects.

Community tithes are a disciple's response to church-affiliated organizations and other charitable nonprofit groups that are in the forefront of those organizations recognizing the worth of people and are committed to bringing the ministry of Jesus Christ to their lives.

The principle of tithing is a response of thanksgiving and is contributed first. Individuals and families are encouraged to reach the goal of generously giving ten percent or more of their income.

Other financial considerations include saving and responsible spending. The principle of saving is

an expression of hope for the future. Disciples save to create a better tomorrow for themselves, their heirs, the church, and the world. Many have found that saving up to ten percent or more of their income is an effective way to prepare for the future. Inheritance for family and estate gifts to the church continue a disciple's ministry beyond this life and allow them to keep giving.

The principle of responsible spending is a commitment by disciples to use the remainder of their income to live in health and harmony as they support family and personal needs and develop their talents and interests. Wise and prayerful management of these remaining resources brings financial wholeness in life.

Project

The project for this unit is to complete a simple financial plan indicating what you would spend as a generous disciple. This requires researching opportunities for tithing in your congregation, mission center, and community and determine your level of giving to each, as well as an estimate of saving and responsible spending.

Portfolio

Using portfolio page 8:3 or pages you have created, enter the information, estimating how you would allocate money as a generous disciple. To determine your income, research what the annual salary is for a profession you are interest in pursuing. Use this as a guide to determine how much you could tithe, save, and spend. In principle, the higher level of income reflects a higher proportional response in sharing. Figure the percentages for the total of tithes (sharing), saving, and spending, and place those percentages in the brackets on the portfolio page.

Scripture

Read the following scriptures and determine how they relate to using your income.

Exodus 35:5

Haggai 1:5-6

1 Chronicles 29:14

1 Timothy 6:6-10

To find out more about Mission Tithes, contact your local congregational financial officer or the Mission Center financial officer. For Community Tithes go organizations in your community, check out a community-based Web site or do a Web search.

Portfolio 8:3 Sharing, Saving, Spending

Mission Tithes—to Church

Research and determine to what extent you would support each of the following:

Local congregational ministries	\$ _____
Camping Ministries	\$ _____
World Church ministries	\$ _____
Oblation/ministry to the poor	\$ _____
World Hunger Fund	\$ _____
Other projects	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

[]%

Community Tithes—to Service Organizations

Research and determine to what extent you would support each of the following:

Graceland University	\$ _____
Outreach International	\$ _____
Restoration Trail Foundation	\$ _____
Saints Care (Australia)	\$ _____
The Groves	\$ _____
World Accord (Canada)	\$ _____
Others in your local community	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Mission and Community tithes make up to or more than 10 percent of your income.

Other Financial Considerations

In developing a plan for tithing, there are at least two other considerations: saving and responsible spending. Saving is a disciple's response to create a better tomorrow for themselves, their heirs, the mission of the church, and the world. For each of the examples, list what percentage of income you think is appropriate:

Reserves for unexpected needs	\$ _____
Retirement	\$ _____
College funds	\$ _____
Estates for family and church	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

[]%

Savings make up to 10 percent or more of your income.

Responsible spending is a disciple's use of their remaining income for supporting family, personal needs, and developing talents and interests. For each of the examples, list what percentage of income you think is appropriate:

Housing	\$ _____
Health care	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Food	\$ _____
Clothing	\$ _____
Recreation and entertainment	\$ _____
Personal development	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

[]%

This leaves 80 percent or approximates for responsible spending.

Grand Total \$ _____

9:1 Developmental Leadership: Developing Gifts Together

Connection

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, each of us possesses unique gifts that we develop and use. Some of these gifts are referred to as spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, we understand that there are three types of spiritual gifts: primary, secondary, and circumstantial.

Primary spiritual gifts have a basic influence on our spiritual growth and maturity. They have an enduring and eternal quality about them, and they serve as guides over the other gifts. These include faith, knowledge, discernment, and wisdom.

Secondary gifts are, as the label implies, subordinate to the primary gifts. Great care should be used with secondary gifts as they can lead to confusion of the body if exercised outside of primary gifts. These include the gift of prophecy or prophetic leadership, and tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

Circumstantial spiritual gifts are gifts that are needed as determined by circumstances of life. These include healing and miracles.

The ultimate spiritual gift is love. All other gifts have their root and purpose in God's love. God's love is the

undeserved grace of God to all humanity and is patient, kind, and rejoices in right. Through this lens of God's love should spiritual gifts be given and received.

Project

The project for this unit is to develop your primary spiritual gifts within the context of the Community of Christ through interviewing four different people either in the church, family, or community. Work with your mentor or pastor in determining who you should talk to about each of the gifts.

Faith is the essence of the relationship between God and humans. At its most complete, faith is unfaltering and a wholehearted trust and belief in God. Faith sustains us even in our time of greatest problems. Faith also keeps us open to God's will.

Knowledge is the God-given understanding of the truths behind life's experiences. It is at least two-dimensional including understanding information, but also the knowing that comes from witnessing God through experience with the Holy Spirit.

Discernment is the gift of clarity of understanding, detangling thoughts from

emotions and prejudice. It is the gift of accuracy of judgment in appraising meaning, character, and motives. Discernment is that power to see into a situation by yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom is the exercise of sound judgment. Those who have wisdom have deeper insight and capacity to organize facts, motives, and means for making a right decision. Wisdom comes from our continuing experience with God.

Portfolio

For each of the four primary spiritual gifts, interview and write a brief summary explaining insights you gained about the specific spiritual gift. If possible, take a picture of the person you talked to and place it next to your notes. Write their name below their picture. If their picture is not possible, create a symbol that represents this gift.

Scripture

In preparing for this unit, read 1 Corinthians 12. What does this scripture say about spiritual gifts? Who is to receive the gifts? Why are they given to people? What impact can they make on our lives?

Portfolio 9:1 Developing Gifts Together

Faith

Talk to someone in your congregation, family, or community who has demonstrated faith while facing a major life problem. Write a brief explanation of this gift.

Knowledge

Talk to someone in your congregation, family, or community who demonstrates knowledge, both understanding information and from witnessing God. Write a brief explanation of this gift.

Discernment

Talk to someone in your congregation, family, or community who demonstrates the spiritual gift of discernment. Write a brief explanation of this gift.

Wisdom

Talk to someone in your congregation, family, or community who demonstrates the spiritual gift of wisdom. Write a brief explanation of this gift.

9:2 Developmental Leadership: Life Skills for the Community

Connection

There are many life skills needed for living and working in community, whether it is the fellowship of the Community of Christ or the area you live in. Here are twelve to consider:

1. Problem analysis—the ability to creatively problem solve; identify the real problem, its components, and come up with viable solutions.

2. Planning and organization—the ability to set goals and to organize resources needed to accomplish those goals.

3. Delegating—the ability to identify and develop a well-defined job to share responsibility, authority, resources, and information to allow others to accomplish tasks.

4. Stress tolerance—the ability to cope with stressful situations and still stay on task to accomplish the goal.

5. Decision making—the ability to take existing information and problem analysis and make a choice about what should be done.

6. Financial management—the ability to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate a budget.

7. Persuasion—the ability to communicate and change someone else's perspective or behavior to your point of view.

8. Relationship building—the process of creating or developing connections between or among individuals or groups.

9. Adaptability—the ability to cope with a variety of situations and people.

10. Initiative—the ability to take responsibility for beginning or originating.

11. Risk-taking—the ability to make a decision and take action without assurance of success.

12. Communication—the ability to say what you mean and to listen to others to understand what they mean.

Project

The project for this unit involves learning about these skills through applying them to a specific assignment in your congregation. Working

with your mentor and pastor, select a project that you are interested in and capable of doing. This might include building a bookcase, cleaning the church for a week, teaching a class under the supervision of an adult, or creating a banner for the church sanctuary.

Portfolio

Using portfolio page 9:2 as a guide, document through writing and/or photography your project and how you utilized the twelve life skills. Not every project may involve all the life skills. You may need to design your own portfolio pages to use photography.

Scripture

Read the following scriptures and determine what each says about using life skills (working) in the community:

Colossians 1:9–14

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12

2 Thessalonians 3:6–13

Galatians 6:1–10

Portfolio 9:2 Life Skills for the Community

Your Project

Title for your project _____

Description _____

Applying the Life Skills *Demonstrate how each of the life skills applied to your project.*

Problem Analysis—What problem did you solve through your project?

Planning and Organization—How did you organize resources to meet your goals?

Delegating—Who assisted you and what specifically did they do?

Stress Tolerance—What was stressful for you about the project? Did you stay on task?

Decision Making—What decision making was involved in the project?

Financial management—What was the budget for the project? Final costs?

Persuasion—How was persuasion used in the project?

Relationship building—What relationships were created or developed during the project?

Adaptability—What situations and/or people did you have to work with?

Initiative—How did you demonstrate initiative during the project?

Risk Taking—What were the risks involved with the project?

Communication—How did you demonstrate effective communications?

9:3 Developmental Leadership: Networking in Community

Connection

Jesus trained and mentored the disciples and others who followed or came in contact with him. While there is no scriptural reference to "networking," Jesus was preparing the disciples to create a network of believers who would go out and share the story with the world.

Networking in today's world requires creating and maintaining relationships to help one another. Determine what you want and then make the connections. For example, if you want to be able to help homeless people find shelter, get to know the people who can provide housing.

Another important step is to keep track of the people you meet. You may be able to help them, or they may help you. Record their name, how to contact them, and other important information about them that can help build your relationship.

It is important to build a network before you need it. There is a big difference between building a relationship with someone and acting in desperation. People are more likely to help you in your ministry if they already have a relationship with you before you ask for help.

In building relationships, do what Jesus did. Never eat alone. Demonstrating the gift of hospitality, especially around a meal, will go a long way in deepening relationships. When you need help either personally, or in ministry to others, ask. Don't hesitate. The worst thing someone can do is tell you no.

Networking is more than a two-way street. Be sure to help others know how you can help them. It is also important to help people in your network connect with one another and with others. Provide opportunities for people in your network to connect in person, or provide information so they can make contact indirectly. This might be an e-mail to two people introducing them to each other. We each have special gifts to offer, but don't keep score. Do what you can for people and let go of the expectation that they owe you something.

Finally, stay in touch. Perhaps the most important element of networking is to keep the contacts open between you and others. Call, e-mail, or drop them a card in the mail to let them know you think that they are important to God's work in our world.

Project

The project for this unit is to document your network and develop a plan for using and expanding it. Next, make a contact and follow up with either a request for or offer to help.

Portfolio

Using portfolio page 9:3 either as printed or as guide for creating your own portfolio pages, do the following:

In the center circle, write down what you want. How do you want to help build a better world? Next, starting in any circle, write down who can use this help, or who can help you attain this help. Below their name write down how to contact them. Are there people in your network who could benefit by being introduced? Draw a line connecting the two circles to indicate this. Also research how you can add someone new to your network. Then follow up and demonstrate how your network works.

Scripture

Read the following scriptures and determine how each applies to networking.

Job 2:11–13

Sirach 6:14–17

(Apocrypha)

Portfolio 9:3 Networking in Community

