

Perhaps you were
created
for such a time as this

Esther 4:14

prayer guide



“Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape.

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish.

And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do.

When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law.

And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther 4:13b-16 NIV



Fasting

Fasting typically involves refraining from all or some foods and drinks for a specified duration.

There are numerous methods to fast, including:

- Time-based fasting (e.g., fasting for half the day)
- Food-based fasting (e.g., eliminating sugar, alcohol, or consuming only liquids)
- Non-food fasting (e.g., refraining from social media or TV)

Fasting is generally safe and can be beneficial for both your body and mind. However, it's essential to be realistic and sensible about what you can physically and mentally handle. Whether you choose to focus on when, what, or non-food fasting, your motivation should be to honour God rather than please others. Importantly, your commitment should never lead to guilt, shame, or serious health issues.

IMPORTANT: If you are on any medication, have health concerns, are pregnant, or breastfeeding, consult your healthcare provider before starting any food or drink fast. If you experience symptoms like blurred vision, loss of consciousness, severe dizziness, or distressing thoughts during your fast, please seek assistance.

Tips for Food Fasting:

- **Stay hydrated.** Increased fluid intake is crucial when not consuming food. Drinking plenty of water will enhance your energy levels and mental clarity.
- **Maintain your salt levels.** To stay well-hydrated, consider adding a pinch of salt to your water.
- **Anticipate initial side effects.** Common effects such as headaches, heartburn, fatigue, constipation, and poor sleep may occur at the beginning of a food fast but should diminish quickly.
- **Prepare for withdrawal symptoms.** Especially if you are cutting out caffeine, be ready to experience withdrawal. Staying hydrated will aid your body's adjustment.
- **Enter and exit gently.** Gradually decrease your food intake and break your fast with easily digestible meals to avoid overwhelming your body.
- **Have a plan.** It can be easy to forget your commitment and its purpose. Write down your intentions where they are visible and prepare your environment by removing triggers and adding reminders to pray or read the Bible.

*Nadin Kromkamp,
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Sunday - 20 July 2025

FOLLOW ME

Reflection by Brigitte Crowe

“So... the wall was finished... this work had been done with the help of our God...(in) fifty-two days.” (Nehemiah 6:15 -17).

I attended a meeting of the East Auckland Ministers Association (EAMA) a few weeks ago. Jonathan Dove, chairperson of the Auckland Network of Churches, spoke about Nehemiah moments. I feel like we are entering a Nehemiah moment, referring to Nehemiah, one of the many inspirational leaders in the Bible. Nehemiah had heard what had happened to Jerusalem.

Chip Ingram said, “Every great movement of God and every project that has brought about relief of human need and the fulfillment of God’s will has started with one man or one woman who cared deeply enough to hear God’s voice and stepped out to do something.”

Howick Community Church has taken numerous steps over the past fifty years to accomplish great things with God. We are here at this time in history for such a time as this—ready to hear God’s voice again and step forward in faith into the next season.

As we fast and pray during this week, reading the daily devotions in our booklet or simply reading the Bible, praying, and discussing within our home groups, attending the prayer meetings every night, ask God what He wants you to do.



We are all called to follow Him. He has given each one of us gifts and talents to fulfill the assignment He has set out for us.

On Sunday, July 27, we will cast our vision once again. I am hoping and praying that each of us will recognize where God wants us to contribute to fulfilling the mission He has given us. The prophetic word for our church was that we are a beacon on a hill. It will take all of us to find our part in this vision. This is our time.

let's pray:

- Pray in gratitude to God for all He has given us
- Ask how we can serve Him best in our faith community and our wider community
- Ask prayerfully how God wants you to contribute from your time, talents and resources
- Pray that God will give us the boldness to step out in faith

notes:



Monday - 21 July 2025

TOGETHER

Reflection by Bronwyn Muggleston

“Together”. This has been a word that has resonated through Connections early this year.

It is about community, relationships, each person having value to care and be cared for. We are all united by our faith in God through the salvation offered by Christ, believing in Jesus, God's Son, who, in His human form, demonstrated the love, mercy, and grace of our Creator.

By inviting the Holy Spirit into our lives and allowing His presence to flourish within the Church community, we gain the inspiration, strength, and gifts needed to serve as God's hands on Earth.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

In these verses, Paul compares our relationships within the Church community to that of a body. For optimal health and functionality, every part must collaborate rather than operate in isolation. This analogy so clearly shows what it means to come together as a family or community.

Verse 22 emphasises that the parts often perceived as the weakest or least important are, in fact, essential. And, the most obvious body parts may not always be the most significant. For the body to thrive and function effectively, each part must fulfill its intended purpose, performing the role it was designed for.



Church is a living, breathing community of believers who are united in Christ, supporting one another, and actively participating in God's work.

ask yourself:

- What did Esther request from her Jewish community as she prepared for her ‘purpose’?
- Within our church community, how do you effectively serve both the church family and the broader community? Are there specific roles that require support, or gaps you feel you have the time or ability to fill?

let's pray:

God, we thank you that our church community is built on your promises. We are here to fulfil Your calling, supporting one another and shining as a light in both our local and extended communities.

You have blessed Howick Community Church with encouragement and guidance through strong, inspired leadership. We ask that You continue to uplift Brigitte and the other leaders of our church, empowering them to guide us as we each contribute to the ministry and well-being of our community. Amen.

notes:



Tuesday - 22 July 2025

HOW BIG IS YOUR YES

Reflection by George Loto-Aso

In accepting one opportunity, you inevitably decline another. When you said yes to the Lord during your life-changing moment at the altar, it marked merely the beginning of many affirmations to follow. Embracing Him each day transforms into a journey along the narrow path we are called to tread - narrow, yet deeply fulfilling.

We engage not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness, as stated in Ephesians 6:12.

However, at times, we find ourselves wrestling not with God but against His divine will. We struggle with what His Word declares or what He has whispered to us in the quiet moments.

The challenges we encounter become increasingly hard to overcome, ultimately revealing a deeper issue of Lordship - we resist surrender. In doing so, we miss the chance to die to ourselves and become more like Him, and what a beautiful transformation that is.

Obedience plays a crucial role in fulfilling God's purposes for our lives. On this side of eternity, we may not fully understand the impact our obedience has on God's heart, His Kingdom, and His cherished creation, humankind.



ask yourself:

- What is the magnitude of your "Yes"?
- How will you safeguard the commitment you made to the Lord?

let's pray:

- Plans, vision and execution: Pray for wisdom to transform HIS will into reality.
- Resources: Pray for God's provision of volunteers and workers as we work towards rebuilding.
- Revitalisation (breath of fresh air): Pray for a renewal of passion, commitment, and the courage to embrace God's calling.

notes:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Wednesday - 23 July 2025

WE ARE HERE FOR A REASON

Reflection by Emma Page

We are only children for a very short period of time. If we consider adulthood to begin at 18 and we live until 85, then we are only a child for 20% of our lives. This percentage seems small, but what we experience during our early years of life can have a major impact on how we live as adults.

At Howick Community Church, we have a small window of opportunity to teach, guide, love, pray, and walk alongside our children. In ten years time these children will be teenagers and nearing the end of their childhood.

In Esther 4:14 it says: "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?". Esther was placed on this earth for a reason, and with God's help she completed the tasks that were set before her.

At Howick Community Church we are here for a reason, and our children are here for a reason. As adults, we have the privilege of helping shape the faith of our children at HCC. Children are only young for a short period of time, so let's journey alongside them while we can in their early years. As a church family, we can build them up to become faithful followers of God who love each other, the church, and the world around them.



A prayer for our children at HCC

Thank you Lord for who you are, and what you consistently do for us.

Thank you that we can always trust in you. Proverbs 3: 5-6 says: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and learn not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Thank you for the wonderful children you have blessed us with at HCC.

Thank you for our amazing children's ministry leaders.

Thank you for providing a place where we can bring our children to learn about you

I pray that our children will come to know you.

I pray that our children want to know you.

I pray that they choose you when they become adults.

I pray that they make lifelong friends with others that know you, Lord.

I pray that you use us at Howick Community Church to help shape, guide, love, and support the children in our church family.

I pray for the parents of these children that you support them in their parenting faith journey.

Thank you Lord for giving us the privilege to speak into the lives of the children at Howick Community Church.

Amen.

notes:

Thursday - 24 July 2025

OUR WORSHIP

Reflection by Jarryd Zimri

In Esther 4:16, rather than rushing into action, Esther calls for a fast: “Go, gather all the Jews... Do not eat or drink for three days. I and my attendants will fast as you do.” It’s striking that her breakthrough began not with movement, but through consecration.

As a worship ministry, we often view our role primarily as singers. However, during seasons of fasting, our foremost calling is to seek. Fasting is a form of worship; it involves setting aside earthly distractions to concentrate on Heaven and to hear God’s voice. Esther also didn’t fast in isolation—she invited others to join her in unity. Similarly, when we fast and worship together, we can transform the spiritual atmosphere and culture of our church and our homes.

Worship during fasting is not measured by volume or talent; it’s about surrender. When our voices are freed from distractions and emotions, they fill with power, creating a space for the Holy Spirit to enter and flow through our conversations and actions.

This season of fasting may present challenges, but it is sacred. Like Esther, we are paving the way for breakthroughs - not just for ourselves, but for our church and the people we serve both within and beyond Sunday morning services.



ask yourself:

- Is my worship coming from a place of deep hunger and passion for God?
- What is God refining in me during this fast?

let's pray:

- That our worship be purified and powerful.
- For unity and humility within our worship.
- For breakthrough in our church and community.

notes:

Friday - 25 July 2025

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Reflection by Tony Gallagher

The Jewess Esther was chosen to become the wife of King Ahasuerus of Persia at a time when Haman was plotting the genocide of the whole Jewish race throughout the empire. Jews everywhere mourned and fasted. Esther's uncle Mordecai exhorted her to intercede before the king. But Esther could not enter the king's presence unless invited. To do so could lead to her own death. She hesitated.

Then Mordecai warned her: "If you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." (Esther 4:14).

Christians everywhere face persecution for the name of Jesus. In some countries that might entail imprisonment, physical harm or even martyrdom. In the West, it is more likely to be social rejection whether it be from family, work colleagues or non-believing friends.

It is at this time in history, and in our specific situations that God has called us to be Jesus' witnesses. We are in a precarious situation. What should we do? Well, we can just keep silent and fly below the radar. On the other hand, we can recognise that God has raised us up for such a time as this; that someone's salvation might come about through our words.



It can be a daunting prospect to share Jesus with another person or group. It takes faith; it takes courage; it also takes wisdom, love and concern. Maybe we don't feel like we're capable or ready. Neither did Queen Esther. So, she called the Jews of Susa to fast. "I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." (Verse 16). First you prepare and then you act. After that, the outcome is in God's hands.

Fasting is not an end in itself. Nor is it a way to earn brownie points with God. It is, however, a way to approach God and seek his help. When we do it as a group great things can happen. (It saved the city of Nineveh from utter destruction!).

A time of fasting and prayer as a congregation can prepare us spiritually to accomplish great things for God; things that could not occur otherwise.

As the great missionary to China, James Hudson Taylor said: "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply."

let's pray:

- To be strong in the Lord, putting on the whole armour of God (Eph.6:10-17)
- To be discerning about our situation and hear the Spirit's prompting about who and how.
- For our brothers and sisters in the congregation who have also been called for such a time as this.

Saturday - 26 July 2025

NEXT TO THEM

Reflection by Brigitte Crowe

Read Nehemiah 3

At first glance, Nehemiah 3 might read like a construction log - a long list of names and assignments. But when we pause and look closer, something beautiful and deeply spiritual comes into focus.

Repeated over and over are simple but powerful phrases:

“Next to him...”

“After them...”

“Beside him...”

This repetition is not accidental. It's divine. It paints a picture of unity in motion - God's people, shoulder to shoulder, each doing their part to rebuild what had been broken.

Every individual, every family, every group took responsibility for a section of the wall. Some repaired gates. Others restored towers. A few rebuilt what was right in front of their own homes. The task was massive, but progress was made - **because they built together.**

Nehemiah 3 reminds us that **Kingdom work is never meant to be a solo mission.** God's plan for restoration unfolds in the context of community. Whether you're preaching a sermon or welcoming someone at the door, leading worship or interceding in secret - **your part matters.**



This is what the Church is meant to look like:
A diverse people united by a common purpose.
Each one holding a brick.
Each one building beside someone else.
No one excluded. No role too small.

As we conclude this week of prayer and fasting, we're not just asking God to rebuild what's been broken in our lives. **We're believing for something bigger - that He's calling us to rebuild together.**

When we stand next to one another in prayer, in vision, in service, and in faith, the walls of brokenness begin to rise into places of strength. The rubble becomes revival. And in the unity of His people, **God is glorified.**

"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."
(Ephesians 4:16)

ask yourself:

- What part of God's "wall" or mission has He placed in your hands to build?
- Who are you working "next to"? How can you encourage or support them?
- Is there someone you've been watching from a distance instead of walking beside in unity?

let's pray:

1. Unity in the Church

“Lord, bind us together in love and purpose. May we be united in heart and mission, working side by side for Your Kingdom.”

2. Willingness to Serve

“Father, help us to say ‘yes’ to the role You have given us. Teach us to be faithful, even in tasks that seem small or unnoticed.”

3. Strength to Rebuild

“God, give strength to those who are rebuilding broken areas in their lives, families, or communities. May they find support in the people working beside them.”

4. Encouragement for Others

“Lord, show me who I can come alongside today - to encourage, serve with, or pray for - as we build together.”

5. God's Glory in Our Work

“May everything we build reflect Your heart, bring You glory, and make room for others to encounter You.”

notes:

prayer & fasting

Sunday 20 - Saturday 26 July 2025

Prayer Meetings:

Sunday, 20 July - 5:30-6:30pm

Monday, 21 - Thursday, 24 July - 7:00-8:30pm

Saturday 26 July - Worship Night 5:30-6:30pm

Prayer Room Open:

9am - 1pm - Monday, 21 - Friday 25 July

Our vision is to be a community
where Jesus is encountered
and through Him,
minds are renewed and
lives transformed.

