

## more information on fasting

What does fasting do? Fasting tells God and our own spirits that we really are desperate for God to meet some need or hope that we have. If you participate in this year's Leap of Faith, you're hoping for God to move in profound ways for yourself, your friends, and our church. Though fasting is, by definition, hard, it's actually meant to be a joyous opportunity. Suddenly we're really serious about something with God; we're really expecting him to come through. God seems to honor prayers during this time of Lent.

**how to approach fasting.** Fasting usually involves abstention from food in some way. In shorter fasts, that can be a total abstention from food. These are usually called "water fasts," because water is the only thing going into us. For the most part, we don't recommend these at any length beyond a week's time, because after that, health problems can ensue.<sup>1</sup>

Other food-abstention fasts involve imposing some sort of conditions on our eating over a period of time. This can involve anything from giving up some beloved food item for a time (desserts or sugar or caffeine or alcohol being popular favorites) to something more challenging, like the so-called "Daniel fast," which involves abstaining from everything but vegetables. People often pursue "juice fasts." It's just like a water fast, except you're allowed to drink juice, which will keep your blood sugar up and actually allow you to function at near-normal capacity.

**are there any non-food-related options?** You bet! Fasting from television is a popular choice for folks who aren't fasting from food. Or computer games, catalogs, social media, etc. These can really involve, under God's direction, doing without anything that feels costly to give up for a season. Try fasting from criticism! That sounds fantastic. The point of fasting is that, under God's direction, we're feeling desperate for something and we direct that desperation towards God.

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1. If you feel called to water fast for more than a week, please be in good touch with a doctor.

BRV does not recommend water fasts if you've ever suffered from an eating disorder. Those in our midst who've suffered from eating disorders historically have a difficult time separating this sort of fasting from the very motivation that drove them to the disorder, and thereby risk serious health problems. There are other great fasts that will do you a lot of good, if you've been in this situation, can we ask that you'd pursue those?

# LEAP OF FAITH

STRANGER  
LIVES

2019

Over the years, followers of Jesus have set aside the weeks leading up to Easter (known as Lent) to hear from God, align with the cross and learn to grow in faith. At Blue Route Vineyard, we call this season Leap of Faith.

### THIS YEAR'S THEME: STRANGER LIVES

We'll take a look at the incredible assortment of women and men named in Hebrews 11 who lived big, God pleasing lives. Their lives stood out from the norm. They made an impact on all of human history. They pleased God by working with him faithfully.

*"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth... they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." Hebrews 11:13, 16*

### HOW WILL THIS WORK?

If we want to follow their example, we'll have to arrange our time and practices purposefully. Here's how:

#### 1. Read the Bible daily.

We suggest reading Hebrews 11 (on the inside page) several times a week, as well as each week's suggested passages, which you'll find updated on our website and in our bulletin.

Read slowly, asking the Lord to speak to you as you consider what that scripture meant to early Christians and how God might want you to respond to it.

## 2. Pray big prayers of faith for yourself and our church.

As we immerse ourselves in the stories in Hebrews 11. Start asking God to shape your imagination to pray big things for yourself and the church. Ask him to give you ways to trust and obey him. Ask him for the deep desires of your heart. Ask him to show you any changes he wants you to make. Ask him to make our church all that he wants it to be.

Think big. Ask God to do things that would be hard or impossible for you to do on your own. What are you praying for?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Pray for your five.

One of the most Christlike things we can do is pray for the people God has put in your life. It's our tradition during Lent to create a list of five people in your life who would benefit from knowing Jesus better and pray for them daily. Who will you pray for?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Fast.

Consider fasting in some way. During Lent, millions of Christians are fasting from something. Why not join in at some level? Fasting doesn't make you more holy and acceptable before God. That was completely accomplished by Jesus on the cross. But when we fast, we set aside certain activities, meals or foods and use the time saved and appetites that become more apparent to focus on and seek God. (see more on back)

List what you're fasting from here.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## THIS WORKS BEST IF WE DO IT TOGETHER

An effort like this works best if we do it together. Join a group. (listed in brochures at church and at [www.blueroutevineyard.com](http://www.blueroutevineyard.com)) Tell someone what you're trying to do and encourage them in their efforts. And come to worship together each weekend. The whole service will be shaped to help you get the most out of this project.

## Hebrews 11 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. <sup>4</sup> By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. <sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. <sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. <sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>11</sup> And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup> And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. <sup>13</sup> All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. <sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, <sup>18</sup> even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." <sup>19</sup> Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. <sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones. <sup>23</sup> By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. <sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup> By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. <sup>29</sup> By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. <sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— <sup>38</sup> the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. <sup>39</sup> These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.