

WHOLISTIC HOLIDAY WELLNESS

Wholistic Holiday Wellness

The Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem



Map courtesy of www.ebibleteacher.com

80 miles by foot

"Walking is mentioned 247 times in the Bible. Our bodies were made for walking. We were built to stand erect. Our organs function best when given room to work. Our joints need movement to maintain good range of motion. The benefits of walking are numerous." Walk to Jerusalem/Bethlehem, St. John Health Parish Nursing

Unlike the *Walk to Bethlehem* where the congregation works together to get from where they live to Bethlehem by Christmas, the challenge of the Wholistic Holiday Wellness Program is for the individual to get

from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea. You will be following the footsteps of Mary and Joseph prior to the birth of their son and our Savior Jesus.

For an individual to reach this goal in 8 weeks they will have to walk 10 miles/week. OR you could work with a partner and each do 5 miles/week. You choose. Remember: 20 minutes of physical activity equals 1 mile.

“In the time of Jesus, the average day’s journey was about 18 miles. The people walked just about every place they went. Sometimes they would travel by donkey or mule back as Mary did on this journey.

The roads were narrow and very rocky and rugged in places. The people wore leather sandals to protect their feet. It was a welcome refresher to find enough water at the end of the day to wash their feet.

They carried food and water with them as they traveled. Common foods for journeys were whole grain breads and cereals, dried fruits and roots, nuts, and dried fish”.

Following this page are 8 pages of spiritual ideas, quotes, reflection points and prayers. One page to add a spiritual aspect to each of the 8 weeks you will be keeping track of your physical activity/miles. There is also a reproducible Walking Log.

Churches: Turn the total miles walked by your congregation in to your District Office no later 1 week after the program is completed. See Report Form ([click here](#)). Please encourage your pastor to participate along with you. Be sure to record the pastor’s miles on the report form for clergy physical activity credit.

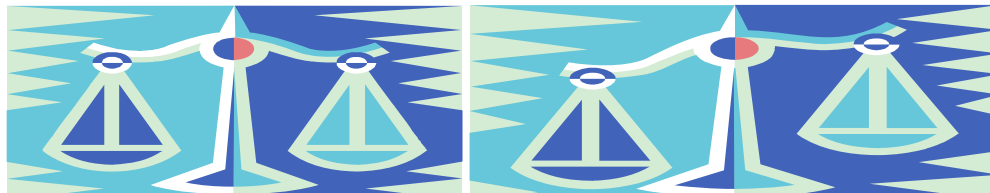
Walking Log

Day	Minutes Walked	Miles/KM Walked	Steps Walked	Time of Day	Speed	Notes
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Week of:

My Goal is:

Thoughts for the Week:



A Matter of Balance

Lectio Divina is an ancient and ever-renewing method of *being with a Scripture or Spiritual reading*, contemplating it, allowing it to speak to you as you meditate upon it, and finally journaling or actively reflecting upon your thoughts about what you have read and discerned from the reading. *'Tis the season for lectio divina . . .*

Consider This:

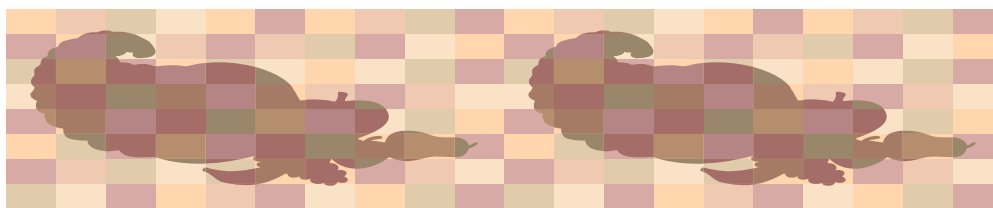
- “*Health of the body is ordained for the good of the soul.*”
St. Thomas Aquinas
- “*The winds of grace are always blowing, but it is you that must raise your sails.*”
Tagore
- “*Let God weigh me in honest scales...*” Job 31:6

Responding from Within:

1. Where in your life are excesses? Where in your life are deficiencies? What must you keep? What must you / can you let go of?
2. Is your yoke heavy? Are your burdens light? Where are you in this ‘scale’?
3. What “first step/s” would allow you to return to *balance of being*?
4. Made in the image of God (*imago Dei*) how are you like God? How do you yearn to be more like God?

Prayer:

Holy One, I come as I am to You, as You are. Weigh me in honest scales. Allow the scales of doubt and uncertainty to drop from my eyes so that I might more clearly see the grace of Your holiness -- vibrant and active within me. Lead me in paths of wholeness that invoke balance; lead me, Lord, in paths of holiness that align me with Your purposes for my life.
Amen



“Thanks”- living: An Attitude of Gratitude

A full heart is more beneficial to a human than a full stomach. In truth, full stomachs often cause distress and symptoms of discomfort that last long past a meal. With the reality of *global hunger* in mind, let us live thankfully -- generously sharing our table, our means, and our lives. The fullness that comes as a result of so living brings its own abundance and a sacred *attitude of gratitude*. *‘Tis the season for thanks-living...*

Consider This:

- *“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God concerning you.”* *I Thessalonians 5:18*
- *“Gratitude is the memory of the heart.”* *Anon*
- *“To stand on one’s legs and prove God’s existence is a very different thing from going on one’s knees and thanking ‘God’.”*
Soren Kierkegaard

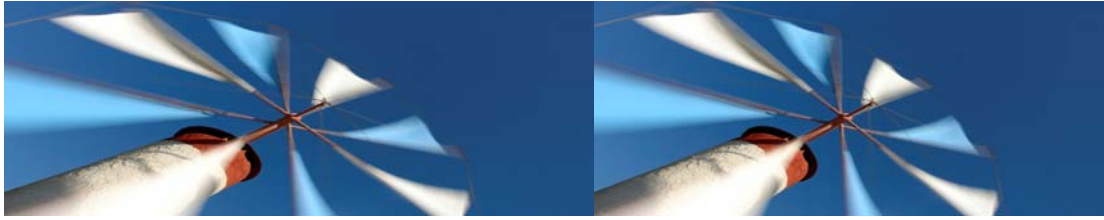
Responding from Within:

1. What blessings are yours this day?
2. Remember those for whom you are thankful. Speak their names before God.
3. What nourishes you? Be thankful. Who draws nourishment from you? Be thankful.

Prayer:

God of abundance, give me a full and compassionate heart like Your own. Infuse my life with an attitude of thanksgiving. Cause thanks-living to spill over into everything I do. Let joy be in my mouth and laughter in my belly, because of Your goodness to me. Then, Lord, use me to not only feel the need of my neighbor, but also to fill empty places with Your love, o’erflowing. Amen

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Emotion vs. In-motion

Emotions are *the warriors of the heart*. When emotions produce inactivity, inertia and indecisiveness, burdensomeness settles in weighing heavy on the soul and spirit. One sure way to unseat these three musketeers is to simply move in faith, believing **God is!** In the great Paschal mystery is a continuous cycle of motion reflected in each moment, each day, each year and each season of life. *Tis the season to be in motion...*

Consider This:

- “*In Him we live, move and have our being.*” *Acts 17: 28*
- “*Whatever you think you can do or believe you can do, begin it. Action has magic, grace and power in it.*” *Goethe*
- “*Grace is engrafted on our nature and the whole man is sanctified by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.*” *Merton*

Responding from Within:

1. What action/s can you take to build God's kingdom in your heart? Your home? Your neighborhood? Your church? Your state? Your nation? God's world?
2. By your choosing, where can you transform emotion into a motion, an action that will bring healing or restore peace?
3. What keeps you from beginning? Move that. Begin with the winds of God's grace at your back!

Prayer:

God who spins this Universe in perfect balance, spin me. Move me from complacency and inactivity to the upwardly ascending whirlwind of Your great grace. Let me begin with the full confidence of the words ~ *“In the beginning, God...”*



Finding Success in God's Economy

We are who we are, because others have gone before us and been who they've been. We are connected to all things sacred that have gone before. We also are invited to have an unflinching faith and commitment to all that will yet unfold in God's plans, while living in this present *now*. Sacred success is possible by "Loving your neighbor as yourself". This transforms the world. *'Tis the season for finding love's success...*

Consider This:

- *"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."*
Proverbs 16:3
- *"If a diver found a pearl in every oyster, then everyone would quickly become rich! And if he brought one up the moment he dove, without waves beating against him (that is, temptations), without any sharks encountering him, without having to hold his breath until he nearly expires, without being deprived of the clear air granted to everyone having to descend to the abyss - if all this were the case, pearls would come thicker and faster than lightning flashes."*
Isaac of Nineveh

Responding from Within:

1. To what and to who are you committed? Therein, reflect upon your success.
2. How does loving your neighbor as yourself speak to you in this moment?

Prayer:

Master of the waves, the sharks, and the abyss, teach us how to live in the oceanic wonder of Your love. Let us glimpse the truth of Your holiness within us and Your grace engrafted on our very nature. Lead us in paths of righteousness and rightness. Set us aside for Your purposes so Your children everywhere might find the pearl of great price. It is then we will have succeeded. Amen.



Less Stress = Less Mess!

Stress is messy. It causes irritability, mistakes, disease, breaks in relationships and profound, spirit-draining fatigue, among other things. In each daily rotation of the sun and moon, we run in circles packing more and more activities into the quota of given hours. As we stuff the clock, we often stuff ourselves, stifle our creativity and stumble into bed exhausted and feeling the frustration of not having completed our 'to do' list.

'Tis the season for stillness and silent nights ...

Consider This:

- *"Cast all your anxiety upon God for God cares for you." I Peter 5:7*
- *"When a man cannot do what he would, he must do what he can."*
Francis Asbury
- *"He who made them for Himself would not suffer them to rest until they rested in Him."*
John Wesley
- *"Be still and know that I am God."*
Psalms 46:10

Responding from Within:

1. What one positive change can you make in your schedule and "to do" list? Consider scheduling stillness? What happens when you are still?
2. How do you rest? With whom do you 'rest best'? What brings you rest? What does it mean to you to "rest in God"?
3. Reflect on *your responsibility for a restless world* troubled by poverty, homelessness, diseases, war, terrorism and geo-political strife. Where is God in this kind of stressed world?

Prayer:

Lord of the Sabbath; bring rest to our shared world and to my world. Grant silent days, holy days; silent nights, holy nights. Lead us on the path of stillness and peace. Amen.



Basic Strategies: A Guide to Spiritual Health

Are there certain things one can do to live more abundantly? Is there a list of basic strategies for spiritual success? Yes there is! One can live the Ten Commandments. One can show mercy, love justice and walk humbly with God. One can pray without ceasing and rejoice evermore. One can acknowledge God in all his/her ways. One can seek first the kingdom of heaven – and on and on this list could go. *Tis the season to walk the straight path of the just...*

Consider This:

- *“You have trusted God in a few things, and God has not failed you. Trust God now for everything...”* *Hannah Whitall Smith*
- *“Humility...rests upon the disclosure of the consummate wonder of God, upon finding that only God counts, that all our own self-originated intentions are works of straw...”* *Thomas Kelly*
- *“In all your ways acknowledge God, and God will make your paths straight.”* *Proverbs 3:6*

Responding from Within:

1. Is your trust in God, intact? What would it mean for you to “trust God for everything”? Is this a reasonable strategy in a post-modern world? Are the Ten Commandments relevant in your life?
2. Identify a single directive from God's Word that you know you presently fail to respond to. What would happen if you did just that one thing?
3. Is it easier to walk a straight path or a crooked one? How does this speak to you in this moment?

Prayer:

Creator, You have provided the map, and the way is straight. Help me not to get lost in the switchbacks. Amen

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Take Eat and Party Hearty

Can we imagine for one moment that we've been invited to a place at The Table with God, to *celebrate*? It's a party, and we've only to bring our wide open hearts to experience profound joy unspeakable and FULL of glory! Bread and wine will be served! For it was Bethlehem's feeding trough that held The Bread of Life. The Bread broken, the Wine spilled out, the party of hearts ensues and enraptures... *'Tis the season to take, eat and give thanks in our hearts...*

Consider This:

- *"Take eat; this is my body...This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."* Mark 14: 22-24
- *"The spiritual virtual of a sacrament is like light, -- although it passes among the impure, it is not polluted."* St. Augustine
- *"...God will never disclose God's-self in the shape of that exalted image to which you so vainly cling."* Jean-Pierre de Caussade

Responding from Within:

1. Are you hungry for God? Do you thirst after righteousness? Are you eating at The Table? Are you drinking from the deep wells of salvation?
2. Are you feeding the hungry? What opportunities exist in your world and the world to do so?
3. When and where have you shared your table? A basket of bread? Your means?

Prayer:

God is great; God is good. Let us thank God for this food. By God's hands we all are fed. Give us, Lord, our daily bread. Amen



New Beginnings!

“Behold I am making everything new!” These words, found in the last book of Scripture (Rev. 21:5-6), hold a Divine promise of renewal, refreshment and new beginnings! The words continue – “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.” Imagine the precious innocence and the promise of hope in every new beginning! These gifts are yours. Among the gifts are each day’s dawn, every next moment, each season, every new page, each seedling, and every newborn child. *‘Tis the season to begin again ...*

Consider This:

- *“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I Hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”*

Thomas Merton

Responding from Within:

1. Where will you meet God to begin again?
2. Whom do you need to forgive? From whom do you need to seek forgiveness?
3. Find a friend. Share a burden. The weight will be halved and the joy doubled.

Prayer:

Let's start over again, Lord. It's time, and I'm here in Your Holy Presence. Wipe the slate, and help me keep each date with You until forever. Amen

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The Daily Path of Righteousness & Rightness

An old and beloved song says, "...Yesterday's gone, Sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never come... Lord for my sake, help me to take one day at a time." As we walk on our path, God is a great Sojourner! God takes each step by our side, trusting us to choose the **high** way in every circumstance, and weeping with us when we choose an alternative route that brings us pain. There is nothing that happens to us that is not part of the faith journey! Dependency on God's right direction is a matter of complete trust. *'Tis the season to walk daily, trusting God in all things...*

Consider This:

- *"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.""* *Psalms 91: 1-2*
- *"Abide in me, and I will abide in you."* *John 15:4*
- *"He who has encountered the mystery of life has reached the source of wisdom...He experiences the limits of his being, his finitude in the face of the Infinite."* *Paul Tillich*

Responding from Within:

1. What is the step you avoid taking that you know you must eventually take?
2. Do you sincerely trust God to be with you, when all others seem to fail you?
3. What does it mean to you when you consider that God "constantly abides" with you?

Prayer:

God, come walk with me in the garden of my daily life. Talk with me and remind me that I am Yours. Lead me on the path of righteousness. Teach me continuously, so that my actions will be right actions toward my fellow sojourners and all of Your children who share this world with me. Abiding in you, I know I shall find rest and strength enough for the whole, holy journey. Amen

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