



Shepherd Care®

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To Care for People Where They Live and Work

COMMUNITY Care TOPIC

She Will Be Coming Around the Mountain...

Do you sometimes feel that you are going around and around the same mountain again and again, like that old song? Maybe it is a besetting sin or to an addiction? Maybe it is the same merry-go-round cycle about dysfunctional relationships and being attracted to people who are negative or abusing? This mountain can feel like captivity, a heavy yoke, or even that a person is bound to something with an iron shackle and chain. It could also be like a rubber band, a vicious circle in which a person pulls away from something, only to spring right back to entrapment and then slide or fall back into the same old familiar pattern. It could be any event that is a barrier or wall interfering with allowing a person to have a more productive, whole, positive, and fuller life. The Bible records a story in Matthew 17:19-21: "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Have you considered Prayer? There is a promise in God's Word found in John 16:13 that Jesus gave to His followers "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name (Jesus Christ), that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Now some things are not God's will, not the right time, or we are not ready for the answer. But a personal relationship with Christ is a great start. Inviting God into our situation is a positive way to help in dealing with any challenge (See Romans 10:9-10). Conforming to God's standards found in His Word may also be required. This means we repent of our sins and ask God for forgiveness for our selfish and willful acts and commit to love according to His criteria. Our prayers release our faith in the Lord, who is much higher and stronger than we are! But

maybe you have prayed and are not getting and answer? Perhaps there is a bigger issue involved?

Have you considered fasting to deal with this issue? The definition of fasting is "the abstaining from some or all kinds of food or drink, esp. as a religious observance." In other words, we should just let something go that is bad for us and we are gaining something that is good for us at the same time. Fasting deprives our natural cravings, appetites, and lusts and allows us to focus on purposes and desires that are higher, positive, and spiritual.

Some Fasting Keys

- Discover the reason. Often, we look to other things for intimacy when there is an underlying and motivating factor that is not realized or not being dealt with. What is our motivation? Sometimes the selfish gratification is at the cost and expense of others around us.
- If your trouble is substance use, as in cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, etc., considering voluntarily giving the substance up. Though fasting is a private choice (See Matthew 6:16-18), involvement with a physician, a support group and church, or other professional may also be required.
- Replace the money that you would normally spend on that purchase (the drink or pack of cigarettes) with a positive use, as in donating to feeding a hungry child or caring for an abused animal. Do this intently and as a memorial to celebrate each step of forward progress on your journey to freedom.
- What if we fall or slip back? Get back up. Dust yourself off and try again. The goal is for longer and longer periods of victory. Step by step you can navigate your passage around this mountain!

Victory is obtainable, though the choice and steps are left up to each of us.

Introducing your Community Chaplain

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An Example: If you are fasting food, plan the length of your fast (1 day, 3 days, etc.). Eat mainly raw foods and drink plenty of water for a few days before you begin a fast.

Determine what type of fast you will undertake (eating only fruits and vegetables, drinking water or juice only, etc.) **Spend large amounts of time in God's Word and in Prayer while you are fasting.** Expect some physical and mental discomfort. Consider the feelings of others. End the fast gradually (move from soft foods to hard foods slowly).

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? ...Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: ...Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." **Isaiah 58:6-9a**

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