

For complete information concerning Anglican Essentials Canada, its history, objectives and current news, visit [www.anglicanessentials.org](http://www.anglicanessentials.org)

For more information on fasting, visit Campus Crusade's website - Your Personal Guide to Fasting and Prayer at [www.ccci.org/howtofast](http://www.ccci.org/howtofast)

For some additional prayer suggestions in a booklet entitled: "Now Is The Time To Pray" visit The American Anglican Council website at [www.americananglican.org](http://www.americananglican.org)

## Essentials

### What is the Essentials Council?

The Essentials Council is the working committee of The Essentials Coalition: Anglican Renewal Ministries; Barnabas Anglican Ministries and the Prayer Book Society of Canada.

### The Essentials Vision:

To be a theological and spiritual rallying point for historic, Christian orthodoxy in the Anglican Church of Canada.

### The Mission of Essentials:

To call the Anglican Church of Canada to embrace and live by its orthodox Christian heritage under the renewing guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Please visit our Website [www.anglicanessentials.org](http://www.anglicanessentials.org) and let us know that you and your church are praying. Please pray for the work of Essentials and contact us:

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## A PRAYER SERVICE MODEL

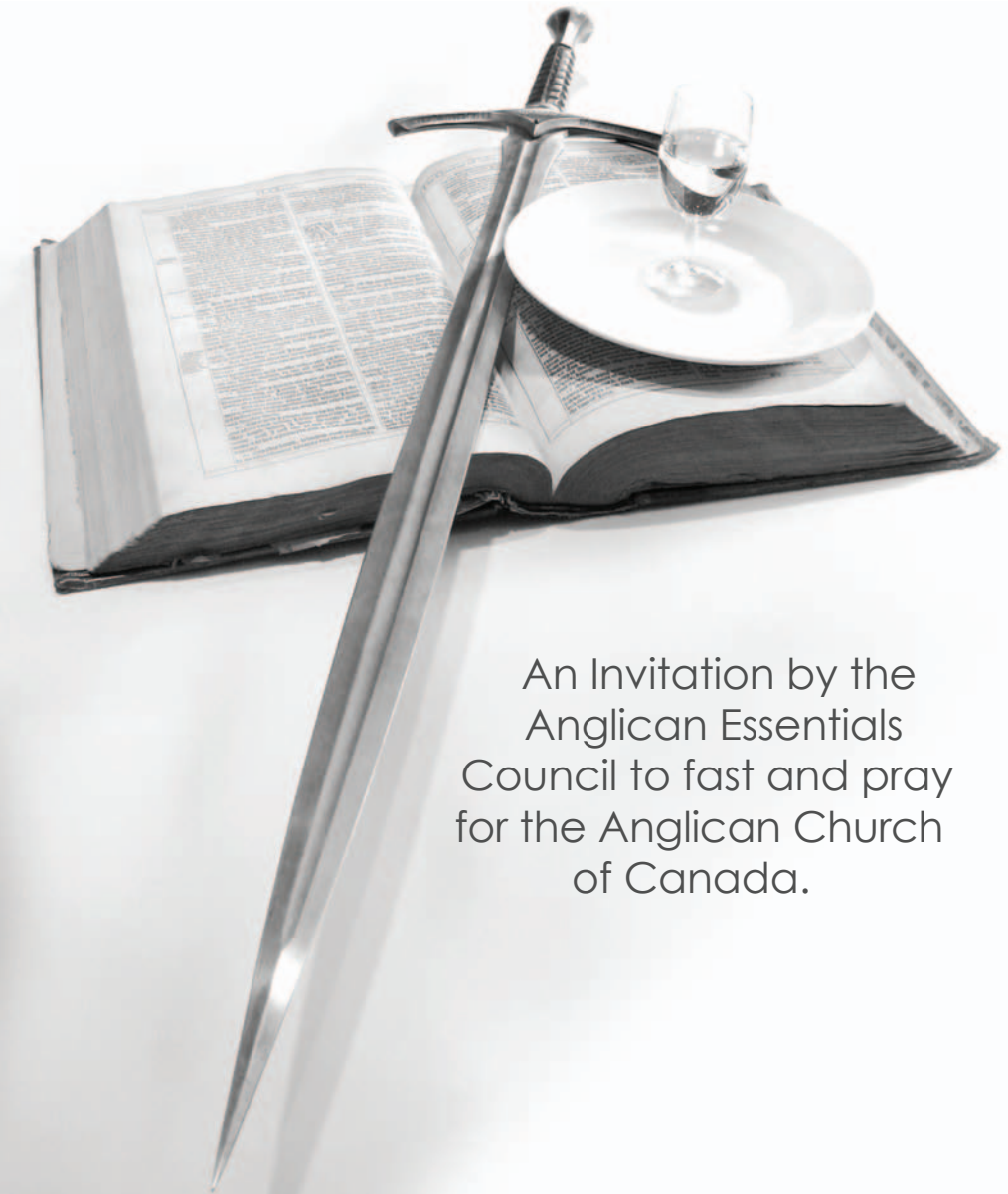
Below is a model or sample service that may be used to end the day of fasting. It utilizes the "Concert of Prayer" format that was developed several years ago and it affords everyone attending the opportunity to participate in prayer in a non-threatening way.

After the worship time, the congregation should be divided into small clusters of 4-5 people, preferably with a mix of ages and prayer experience. Each prayer segment should have a brief (3-4 minutes) introduction by the leadership before the groups begin to pray. A closing prayer at the end of each segment by the leader can draw the people back together and set the stage for the next topic.

<b>Praise and Worship</b> • Choose songs or hymns that focus on God's faithfulness and mercy.	15 minutes
Divide into clusters of 4-5 people	5 minutes
<b>Confession and Repentance</b> • The example of Nehemiah's prayer could be used. Confession should be both personal and on behalf of those who have gone before us. Let the reality of our own culpability impact us here. After some time of group prayer, you may want to wrap up this section by using the General Confession on page 19 of the BCP – Evening Prayer. The collect for Advent Sunday on page 95 of the BCP would be very helpful too.	10 minutes
<b>Prayer for National Leadership</b> • House of Bishops, Primate and Archbishop of Canterbury. To conclude, this time, you may want to use Prayer #1 in the BCP on page 39.	10 minutes
<b>Prayer for Local Diocese</b> • Bishop, Synod and diocesan staff. You may want to draw together this section by using the Prayer for the Clergy and People on page 13 of the BCP.	10 minutes
<b>Prayer for Local Parish</b> • Rector, associate clergy, wardens, youth and children's ministries. A suggested final prayer might be Prayer #9 on page 44 of the BCP.	10 minutes
<b>Prayer for ministry and leadership of Essentials</b> • God's direction, protection and provision.	10 minutes
<b>Prayer for Renewal in the Church and Revival in our Nation</b> • A move of God's Spirit that will touch every aspect of our church life • A "harvest" of thousands coming to know Christ for the first time. You may want to conclude this section with the Prayer for the Extension of The Church, prayer #3 on page 40 of the BCP followed by singing or saying the hymn: Come Down O love Divine.	10 minutes
<b>Thanksgiving</b> • For God's mercy and faithfulness • For specific blessings within the lives of individuals and/or parishes. The General Thanksgiving on page 14 of the BCP would be a wonderful way to conclude.	10 minutes
<b>Total</b>	90 minutes

# A CALL TO PRAYER

## FOR A CHURCH IN CRISIS



An Invitation by the Anglican Essentials Council to fast and pray for the Anglican Church of Canada.

We live in difficult and troubling times. Recent events both in the world at large and within the Anglican Church of Canada have given rise to growing uncertainty, confusion and fear. From terrorist attacks and the threat of war to division and strife in our Church over issues of morality, leadership and the credibility of the Scriptures, these events all work together to create a feeling of insecurity and deep anxiety about the future.

For those Anglican Christians who remain committed to the Word of God as the only true standard for belief and conduct, there is also a numbing sense of impotence to stop the erosion of biblical values that has been going on for decades.

What can we do? Does it all really matter? It all seems so hopeless!

Significant events in history that have a powerful impact upon us are often referred to by observers as a “wake-up call”, and the current situation in the diocese of New Westminster is a case in point. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Romans, also exhorts the believers on their need to “wake up”:

*“Another reason for right living is that you know how late it is; time is running out. **Wake up**, for the coming of our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So don't live in darkness. Get rid of your evil deeds. Shed them like dirty clothes. Clothe yourselves with the armour of right living, as those who live in the light.”* (Romans 13: 11-12 NLT)

There is a sense of urgency in these words, and although written centuries ago, they can and do still challenge us. Have we been asleep? Have things slipped by us unnoticed? Do we need to “wake up” and clothe ourselves with “the armour of light”? It would seem that the obvious answer is “yes”. So, how do we “wake up”? What action can we take that will actually make a difference?

The biblical response to that question is always Prayer - consistent, heart-felt, fervent prayer. There are numerous scriptural examples in the lives of Daniel, Nehemiah, David, Jehoshaphat, Gideon and the disciples of the early church that demonstrate that God is the King of the “hopeless” situation and is simply waiting for His people to come to the end of their own resources and humbly turn to Him.

Look at this powerful promise that the Lord made to His children:

*“If My people, who are called by My Name, will **humble themselves and pray** and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and **heal their land.**”* (2 Chronicles 7:14 NLT)

If we were to replace the word “land” with the word “church”, isn’t that what we desperately want and desperately need? Then the time has come to meet the clear requirements that the Lord lays out: humbling ourselves (through fasting) , prayer (both individual and corporate), seeking His face (by taking time to spend with Him), and turning from our wicked ways (of complacency and prayerlessness).

The purpose of this little booklet is to challenge us to a deeper commitment to pray and to give us practical help in getting started.

## PRAYER

The kind of prayer that we’re engaging here is not a “religious observance” or duty, nor are we encouraging mere increased religious activity. Whether it’s a collect, written centuries ago, or a spontaneous cry from our heart, genuine prayer is a conversation between two persons who passionately

love one another. In God’s heart, we are the Beloved, the ones He gave His Son for, and we should not see ourselves as some wretched beggar who has somehow furtively crept into the King’s throne room and is pitifully begging for mercy and crusts of bread. Recognizing the passion with which God loves us does not make us arrogant and proud; indeed, it is humbling when we see His love and faithfulness in the light of our own sin and failure.

This conversation with the One who so deeply loves us may contain a variety of elements: -  
Worship – our expression of adoration and love,  
Thanksgiving – our expression of gratitude for the things that God has done for us,  
Confession – the unburdening of our heart over our sin,  
Intercession – “standing in the gap” on behalf of other people,  
Petition – our expression of personal needs.

## Fasting

As we pointed out above, fasting is a form of humbling ourselves before God, one of the requirements for Him to “heal our land”. Fasting was regularly practiced in both the Old and New Testaments at times of personal or national crisis, at times of seeking God for specific guidance and direction, and at times of conviction of sin and repentance. Names such as Moses, David, Ezra, Isaiah, Joel, Daniel, Nehemiah, Jehoshaphat, Esther, Paul & Barnabas; all were servants of God in different centuries who saw fasting as an essential spiritual practice

Fasting intensifies prayer and is a spiritual partner with prayer. Let’s define fasting as “the practice of deliberately abstaining from food for spiritual purposes”. On rare occasions, it may include going also without water. Fasting might be abstaining from food for one meal, one day, several days, or even weeks. It is a means by which a believer can bring his/her body into subjection, making the body the servant not the master. It denies the insistent self-gratifying appetites of the body. It’s a means by which we can “*sow to the Spirit, and not to the flesh*” (Galatians 6: 7-8), and it frees up time, that commodity we never seem to have enough of, to seek the Lord and spend time with Him.

## Coming Together

Whereas there is much merit in individuals praying and fasting concerning the healing of the Church, the full power of prayer seems to be released only when we come together in a corporate expression of worship, repentance, and intercession. The Acts of the Apostles describes several incidents where the fledgling church came together in powerful prayer. On one occasion, “*after they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*” (Acts 4: 31). Something was definitely released by their corporate prayer!

Anglican Essentials is encouraging concerned congregations across Canada to declare a day of fasting, perhaps beginning at sundown and proceeding through until the following evening, and culminating in a special prayer service (see sample service below). However it is structured, such a prayer gathering should have the following components: -

## Worship

A sustained time of worship and praise is essential in bringing us into the presence of God. It’s not that He’s moved, but our ability to hear His guidance and direction in prayer will be greatly enhanced if we have been built up and focused through worship. “*Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Ephesians 5: 19-20).

## Repentance

Our natural response to recent events in the church may be anger – “How can they do that?”, frustration – “Where is the leadership when we need it most?” or grief – “All the things that are dear to me are falling apart”. But all of this degeneration didn’t begin last month. There has been a process for decades of a growing disregard for the authority of scripture and of the church’s position on social issues being dictated by the world’s agenda rather than by God’s Word.

And most of us did nothing. We can’t point a finger or blame anyone. We have not prayed as we ought. We have not sought the Lord and cried out to Him on behalf of the church. For this complacency and prayerlessness, we need to repent – “*turn from our wicked ways*”.

We need to also repent on behalf of those who have influenced the church’s position away from the authority of God’s Word, perhaps going back several generations. When Nehemiah, whom God used ultimately to rebuild the walls of the demolished Jerusalem, was still in exile, he received news of the devastated condition of the city of God. This was his reaction: -

*When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days **I mourned and fasted and prayed** before the God of heaven. Then I said; “O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God . . . let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins that we Israelites, **including myself and my father’s house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant, Moses.**”* (Nehemiah 1: 4-7 NIV)

Repentance has to start somewhere if healing is to occur. Let it start with us.

## Intercession

Pray for the House of Bishops, clergy, and lay leadership throughout the church that God will give them wisdom to know His will, and the power of the Holy Spirit to courageously walk it out. Pray for your own diocese and bishop, parish, rector and wardens that they will have the strength to stand for the truth of God’s Word and not be compromised by peer pressure or “political correctness”.

Pray for the ministry and leadership of Anglican Essentials as they seek to be “salt and light” while carrying a prophetic burden to call the church back to the authority of Scripture.

Pray for revival for our church and our nation. The only thing that will reverse the current moral slide and abandonment of God’s laws is changed hearts, radically changed hearts.

## Thanksgiving

Despite our sin, God has indeed been merciful. He has not brought judgment upon the church. He has given us time to repent and return to Him. He has given us opportunity to “wake up”. Thank Him for His mercy and grace that He continues to extend to us.

We have a window of opportunity that the Lord has given us. It will not last forever. May we see our parishes, clergy and bishops indeed “wake up”, and may we be faithful to God’s call to humble ourselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways so that He indeed will hear from heaven forgive our sin, and heal our church. Amen.