# **Daily Devotion**



7 Day January Fast 20~26th January

### **Strengthening Our Foundation**

Monday, 20 - Sunday, 26 January 2025

January 2025								
Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
1	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	
2	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
3	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
4	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
5	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	



### In the Beginning

I have shared in some of our services and prayer meetings how *Strengthening our Foundation* (Isaiah 54:2) became the anchor for our January Fast. The journey began during an early morning workout on Tuesday, December 2nd, with Rob, my fitness buddy and coach. As part of our routine, we usually start with a preliminary walk-around before diving into the exercises. In these moments, we often engage in discussions, prayer, and occasionally record voice notes to capture profound insights or extraordinary moments—our *Kairos moments*.

On this day, our conversation centred on the ease (or difficulty) of obeying God when He asks us to do something unconventional. I remember referencing Peter, a fisherman accustomed to using nets, who was instructed by Jesus to fish with a hook instead. And as if that wasn't unusual enough, he was told he'd catch a fish with a golden coin in its mouth—sufficient to pay their looming tax bill.

As we explored this, Rob suddenly stopped mid-step, his face alight with excitement. "Isn't there a scripture that says something about enlarging your tent or so?" he exclaimed. Intrigued, we both pulled out our phones and searched our Bibles.

The next day, I shared this verse at a meeting of IIC and Burlington Baptist Church leadership teams, only to discover two remarkable things: first, our Burlington Baptist Church friends had received the same scripture the previous day, and second, I learned of a prophecy given to our church, IIC, on October 7, 2024, which was also rooted in this scripture. A summarised version of the prophecy is included elsewhere in this booklet.

Here's how the bit that jumped at me in this verse is rendered across various translations:

- "Drive your stakes in deep" (BSB)
- "Strengthen your stakes" (NIV, ESV, NKJV)
- "Make your pegs (stakes) firm [in the ground]" (AMP)
- "Drive your pegs deep" (HCSB)

As we reflect on this prophecy, it becomes clear that <u>strengthening</u> our foundation cannot be reduced to a mere cliché, nor can it be <u>rushed</u>. In today's fast-paced world, we have developed countless ways to accelerate processes—faster computers, instant communication, and more. Despite our advances, the human gestation period remains 40 weeks. Some things simply take time, and this is one of them.

Consequently, we are adopting the theme *Strengthening Our Foundation* beyond our January Fast to encompass this entire season. Frankly, we do not know how long this season will last, and it would be unwise to speculate. Instead, we remain open to God's guidance and leading.

### **Last Week**

Last week in our Daily Devotion, we explored fasting in depth, covering its definition, purposes, methods, and biblical examples. The devotion, titled *Rediscovering Depths: The Timeless Practice of Fasting*, offers valuable insights into this spiritual discipline. If you missed it, you could download it from our website at <a href="https://ipswichinternational.church">https://ipswichinternational.church</a>.

### Let's Go

Our January Fast starts on Monday 20 January for seven days. God's word to us is Isaiah 54:2 but it is important to give it context.

<sup>1</sup> "Shout for joy, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth in song and cry aloud, you who have never travailed; because more are

the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD. <sup>2</sup> "Enlarge the site of your tent, stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, do not hold back. Lengthen your ropes and drive your stakes in deep. <sup>3</sup> For you will spread out to the right and left; your descendants will dispossess the nations and inhabit the desolate cities. <sup>4</sup> Do not be afraid, for you will not be put to shame; do not be intimidated, for you will not be humiliated. For you will forget the shame of your youth and will remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. <sup>5</sup> For your husband is your Maker— the LORD of Hosts is His name— the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth.

Isaiah 54:1–5 (BSB)

God begins with a remarkable and counterintuitive command: for the barren to break forth in song. This instruction challenges human logic and emotions, calling for praise during unfulfilled desires and apparent lack.

Let's be honest—this is no easy counsel to follow. Our feelings often act as barriers, resisting the act of rejoicing when circumstances seem dire. The fear of disappointment looms large, whispering doubts and discouraging faith. Yet, it is precisely in this tension that the power of obedience lies: choosing to trust God's promises over our perceptions, singing despite the silence, and hoping against hope.

As I write this, Mary's counsel to the servers at the wedding in Cana of Galilee comes vividly to mind. In John chapter 2, we are told how the wine ran out at a wedding celebration Jesus and His disciples were attending. Mary, who was also present, brought the matter to Jesus' attention and then gave the servers a piece of timeless wisdom: "Do whatever He tells you." What followed defied logic. Jesus instructed the servers to fill nearby pots with water, draw from them, and present it to the master of ceremonies. On the surface, this command made little sense—it was irrational, even.

Yet they obeyed. The result? A resounding testimony: "You have kept the best wine for last!"

Fasting, like Mary's counsel, is a discipline that positions us to hear and obey God, even when our feelings, logic, and emotions threaten to get in the way. At its core, fasting is about tuning our hearts to hear God clearly. I strongly encourage you to be part of a relational cell group where you can process this journey of hearing God together.

In addition, I and the other leaders will be leading corporate prayer sessions on Monday, 20th January, and Friday, 24th January, at 7:30 PM in the Church Building at Barrack Corner. These sessions will include practical demonstrations of how we have learned to hear from God together as a community.

Don't miss the opportunity to join our **online Corporate Devotion** at **6:00 AM** via <u>iic.io/3g</u>, and be intentional about connecting with a relational cell group where you can pray, discuss, and fellowship with others in a deeper way. Click on the link to express your interest <u>iic.io/new</u>.

Finally, mark your calendars for **Sunday, 26th January**, when we will have a joint service with Burlington Baptist Church at **10:30 AM** in their building on London Road.

Let's embrace this season together. As we've declared during our recent Sunday services: "We will not allow you to deny us what the Father has for us through you!"

Remember we may not have it all together, but together we have it all!

Adewale Adefuye Ipswich, 15 January 2025



#### What Are Cell Groups?

Cell groups are small, welcoming gatherings of 6–12 people within Ipswich International Church (IIC). They meet regularly—either weekly or twice a month—in each other's homes to foster community, spiritual growth, and mutual support.

At IIC, our cell groups reflect the diversity of our church family, including people from various ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds. Whether you're looking for a group near your location or one that fits your stage of life, we'll do our best to connect you to the right cell group.

The name "cell group" is inspired by the concept of cells in a physical body. Just as cells work together to sustain and benefit the whole body, our cell groups are a vital part of the culture and spiritual makeup of IIC, helping our church community thrive and grow.

We'd love for you to join a cell group and experience this enriching aspect of church life!

### Why are Cell Groups Important?

Cell groups play a vital role in fostering meaningful connections within the IIC community. While our larger Sunday gatherings provide a space for worship and collective teaching, cell groups offer a more intimate setting to build deeper relationships.

They provide an opportunity to:

- **Connect Personally**: Build relationships with people you might not get to know during a larger service.
- **Grow Spiritually**: Ask questions about faith, discuss biblical teachings, and explore how to apply them to your life.
- **Support Each Other**: Share life's challenges and victories, offering and receiving encouragement and prayer.
- **Be Accountable**: Strengthen your walk with God by being open and accountable to others who care about your spiritual growth.

Joining a cell group is a great way to experience community and grow in faith together with others.

### How Do I Join a Cell Group?

Joining a cell group is easy! Simply turn over this leaflet to explore the various options available to connect with a group that suits your preferences. Take the next step and get connected today!



Do you want to sign up to a cell group but not sure which one?

Scan this QR code to register your interest in joining one and well try our best to match you to one.



Do you already know which group you would like to join?

The scan the QR code below or follow the instruction below on how to sign up using the 'My ChurchSuite App' on your phone...

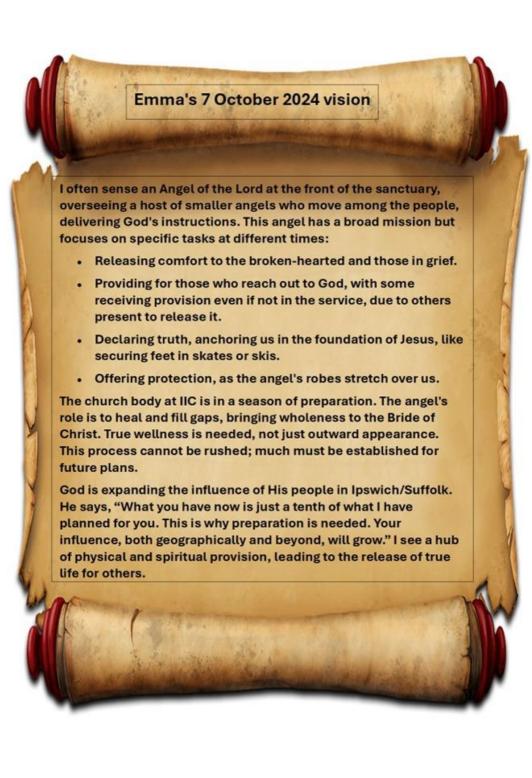




### Sign up via 'My Churchsuite App'

- 1. Open the App and Log in.
- Click on the menu button -Right)
- ≡ om
- 3. Click on 'Cell Groups'.
- 4. Click on the group you'd like to join.
- 5. Click the 'sign up' button -
- Finished.

Sign up





"The Three Little Pigs" is a classic fable about three pigs who each build a house out of different materials. The first pig builds a house of straw, the second pig builds a house of sticks, and the third pig builds a house of bricks. A Big Bad Wolf comes along and blows down the straw and stick houses, but he can't blow down the brick house. The wolf then tries to enter the brick house through the chimney, but the third pig outsmarts him by lighting a fire in the fireplace, causing the wolf to fall into a pot of boiling water.

The story teaches lessons about hard work, perseverance, and the importance of building strong foundations. It's a tale that has been retold and adapted many times over the years, becoming a staple in Western culture.

### **Strengthening Our Foundation**



7 Day January Fast 20~26th January

26th JAN ~ JOINT SERVICE with BURLINGTON BAPTIST 10.30am

# Connection Points during the Fast

### Corporate prayer in the Church Building

- 7:30pm on Monday, 20 Jan &
- 7:30pm on Friday, 24 January

### Various cell groups at different times

Tuesday – Thursday

### Daily online corporate devotion

6am at iic.io/3g

### Joint Service Sunday, 26 January 2025

at Burlington Baptist Church Time: 10:30am

#### Text for the Week: Matthew 7:24-29

**BSB** 

<sup>24</sup> Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because its foundation was on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its collapse!" <sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, <sup>29</sup> because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

#### **NLT**

<sup>24</sup> "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. <sup>25</sup> Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. <sup>26</sup> But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. <sup>27</sup> When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash." <sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

### Solid Starts: The Importance of Building Strong Foundation



Matthew 7:24-27



Jesus provides a vivid and timeless metaphor about the importance of building our lives on a solid foundation. He compares two builders: one who is wise and builds on a rock, and another who is foolish and builds on sand. The rock represents

hearing and acting on Jesus' words—a foundation of truth, obedience, and faith in God.

When storms come—symbolising life's challenges, trials, and uncertainties—the house built on the rock stands firm, demonstrating the unshakeable strength of a life grounded in Christ. In contrast, the house built on sand collapses, showing the fragility of a life built on anything other than God's truth.



Through this powerful parable, Jesus challenges us to examine the foundations of our lives. (1) What does the "rock" symbolise in this passage, and how can we apply this

metaphor to our own lives? (2) In what ways can we ensure that our spiritual foundation is strong and resilient? (3) What are some practical steps we can take to "hear" and "put into practice" Jesus' teachings, as mentioned in the passage? (4) How do the challenges and "storms" we face in life test the strength of our foundation? (5) What are the consequences of building our lives on unstable foundations, according to this passage? (6) How can we identify areas in our lives where our foundation might be weak or inadequate? (7) How can we support others in building strong spiritual foundations in their lives? (8) What are some modern-day examples of "sand" that people might build their lives upon, and why are they inadequate?



(1) Thank God for providing the solid foundation of His Word and the wisdom to build our lives upon it. (2) Praise God for being the unshakable rock during life's storms. (3) Ask God to reveal areas of your life where your foundation may be weak or

built on "sand," and for the courage to rebuild on Christ. (4) Pray for a deeper hunger for God's Word and the discipline to study and apply it faithfully. (5) Pray for the wisdom to help others identify and strengthen their spiritual foundations. (6) Pray for a focus on eternal values, that your life and decisions reflect God's kingdom priorities.

#### God's Word: Foundation of Faith



Matthew 7:24-29; Genesis 1 & John 1:1-3



The opening chapter of Genesis repeatedly declares, "And God said," highlighting the foundational power and authority of God's Word in the act of creation. This repetition

underscores that all existence, order, and life came into being through His spoken Word, revealing its supreme role in shaping the universe. Similarly, the Gospel of John begins its account of redemption with a profound focus on the Word, introducing Jesus Christ as the eternal Word made flesh. Just as God's Word was central to the creation of the world, it is equally central to the new creation—God's plan of redemption and restoration through Christ. In this parallel, we see the unchanging significance of the Word in both the origin of life and the renewal of life, emphasising its role as the divine agent of both creation and salvation.



(1) What does it mean that "the Word was with God" and "the Word was God"? How does this shape our understanding of Jesus? (2) How does the eternal nature of the Word ("In the

beginning was the Word") provide assurance for building our lives on it? (3) How does the truth that "all things were made through Him" demonstrate the sufficiency and authority of God's Word as a foundation? (4) How can I practically build my life on the eternal and creative power of God's Word? (5) In what areas of my life do I struggle to trust in the sufficiency of God's Word, and how can I surrender those areas to Him? (6) How can I prioritise time in God's Word, recognising its eternal value and foundational role in my life? (7) What are some false "foundations" or worldly ideologies that challenge the place of God's Word in my life? (8) How does knowing the Word's eternal nature bring comfort in a changing and unstable world?



(1) Thank God for revealing Himself through His Word and for the eternal presence of Jesus, the Living Word. (2) Praise God for the power of His Word, through which all things were created and continue to exist. (3) Pray for a deeper understanding of Jesus as the

Living Word, fully God and the One through whom all life and light come. (4) Ask for a heart that reveres and treasures the Word of God, recognising its divine authority and eternal significance. (5) Pray for God's Word to be the foundation of your faith, providing clarity, strength, and direction in all circumstances.

### **Scripture First: Prioritising God's Word**



Matthew 7:24-29; Matthew 4:4 & Psalm 138:2



God holds His Word in the highest regard and expects us to approach it with the same reverence and trust. In Jeremiah 1:12, He proclaims, "I am watching over my word to perform

it," underscoring His active engagement in ensuring the fulfilment of every promise, prophecy, and decree He has spoken. This declaration reveals the faithfulness and sovereignty of God, assuring us that His Word is not merely a statement but a powerful, living force that accomplishes His divine will. It highlights His unwavering commitment to bring His declarations to fruition, no matter the circumstances or passage of time. For believers, this serves as a source of profound assurance: the Word of God is unchanging, reliable, and effective, and His purposes will be established without fail. It calls us to trust, align ourselves with His promises, and live with the confidence that the God who speaks is also the God who fulfils.



(1) What does it mean for me to "live by every word that comes from the mouth of God"? (2) How much priority do I currently give to God's Word compared to other sources of guidance or

nourishment in my life? (3) Are there specific areas in my life where I rely more on worldly wisdom than on God's Word? (4) Why do you think Jesus responded to temptation with a quotation from Scripture? (5) How does this verse show the sufficiency of God's Word in facing spiritual and physical challenges? (6) What connection can be made between physical sustenance (bread) and spiritual sustenance (God's Word)? (7) How can I incorporate God's Word more fully into my daily decisions and priorities? (8) What practical steps can I take to ensure that I am consistently feeding on God's Word as my primary source of strength and direction?



(1) Thank God for providing His Word as spiritual nourishment and guidance for every aspect of life. (2) Praise God that His Word is sufficient for all our needs, offering wisdom, correction, and sustenance. (3) Pray for wisdom to give God's Word top priority in your

daily life, making time for study and meditation. (4) Ask for God's help in removing anything that competes with or distracts from your focus on His Word. (5) Pray for unity in your faith community, with a shared commitment to His Word, fostering a spirit of love and cooperation.

### Scripture First: Planting God's Word in Our Heart



Matthew 7:24-29; Psalm 119:11-20



Psalm 119:11-20 is a heartfelt reflection on the psalmist's deep commitment to God's Word and its transformative role in his life. It captures a longing for spiritual purity, divine

guidance, and a closer relationship with God. The verses emphasise the psalmist's reverence for Scripture, describing it as a source of wisdom, joy, and sustenance.

Amid life's challenges, the psalmist openly acknowledges his dependence on God's commandments for direction and strength. The imagery of being a sojourner on earth highlights the need for divine instruction to navigate a world that feels unfamiliar and fraught with opposition. This passage invites us to consider our relationship with God's Word—challenging us to treasure it, meditate on it, and let it shape our journey of faith and obedience.



(1) What does it mean to "store up" or "hide" God's Word in my heart? How am I doing this in my daily life? (2) How does meditating on Scripture help me resist sin and align my actions with God's will? (3) How deeply is God's Word rooted

in my heart, and how does it shape my desires and priorities? (4) Why does the psalmist express such delight and dependence on God's commands (v. 14-16)? How can I cultivate a similar attitude? (5) Why does the psalmist pray for God to "teach" and "open his eyes" (v.12, 18)? What does this say about our need for God's guidance to truly understand His Word? (6) How can we practically store up God's Word in our heart so that it influences our choices and actions? (7) How can planting God's Word in my heart help me share it effectively with others? (8) How can I encourage others to treasure and delight in God's Word as the psalmist does?



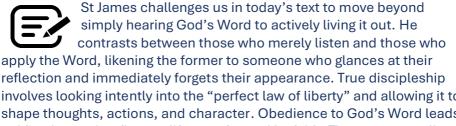
(1) Thank God for His Word, which guides, strengthens, and sustains us in every situation. (2) Praise God for the transformative power of His Word to shape hearts and lives. (3) Pray for a deep longing and desire to know, study, and meditate on God's Word daily. (4) Pray for

a heart that delights in God's Word, cherishing it above all material wealth and worldly treasures. (5) Ask God to help you align every aspect of your life with His statutes and precepts. (6) Ask God to unite His people in a shared love and commitment to His Word, building up the body of Christ.

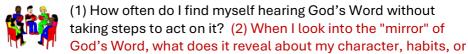
### **Scripture First: From Hearing to Doing**



Matthew 7:24-29; James 1:22-25



involves looking intently into the "perfect law of liberty" and allowing it to shape thoughts, actions, and character. Obedience to God's Word leads to blessing, as it reflects a life transformed by faith. These verses call us to self-examination, commitment, and alignment with God's truth, emphasising the power of practical application.



priorities? Am I quick to forget what I've seen? (3) What specific areas of my life need greater alignment between hearing and doing God's Word? (4) Hearing vs. Doing: Why does James place such strong emphasis on being a doer of the Word and not merely a hearer? (5) The Mirror as God's Word: How is Scripture like a mirror in the way it reflects truth about our spiritual state? (6) Deception in Hearing Only: What does it mean to deceive ourselves when we hear God's Word but don't act on it? (7) What are some practical ways I can be more intentional about applying God's Word in my daily decisions and relationships? (8) How can I ensure that I respond quickly and meaningfully to what God's Word reveals to me? (9) Blessing in Doing: How have I experienced God's blessing when I've acted on His Word? How can I keep this motivation in mind?



(1) Thank God for the blessing that comes from doing His Word. Ask for a heart that seeks to live in a way that honours Him in all things. (2) Pray for a heart that desires to not only hear God's Word but to act on it in every area of your life. Ask God for strength and courage to live out

His commands. (3) Pray for discernment to recognise when you are merely hearing God's Word without applying it. Ask for the resolve to be a doer instead of just a hearer. (4) Pray for wisdom and understanding as you study God's Word, that it may penetrate your heart and transform your life. Ask God to open your eyes to the truths that will guide your actions. (5) Seek clarity on how to practically apply guidance to specific situations you are facing in your life.

### Storms of Life



Matthew 7:24-29



Storms—both literal and figurative—are an inevitable part of life. This truth is poignantly illustrated by the recent wildfires in Los Angeles, which engulfed entire neighbourhoods, destroying

homes and claiming lives, leaving families devastated and communities in need of rebuilding. Such events underscore the importance of having a firm foundation, not just in physical structures but in our spiritual lives.



(1) Can we really build storm-proof lives? (1) Both houses faced the same storm. What does this teach about the fact that everyone, regardless of their foundation, encounters difficulties?

(2) What are some storms (trials, hardships, or temptations) I have faced in my life? How did they test the foundation of my faith? (3) How do I typically respond when storms come? Do my reactions reflect trust in God or reliance on something else? (4) In what ways am I actively preparing for the storms of life by building on a strong foundation? (5) How does a life built on obedience to Jesus' words provide stability and strength during life's storms? (6) What are some modern examples of "sand" foundations that people rely on? How do these crumble under the pressure of trials? (7) How have storms in my life revealed the true state of my faith and my reliance on God's Word? (8) What valuable lessons have I learned from past storms about God's faithfulness and the sufficiency of His Word? (9) How can I develop spiritual resilience so that I remain steadfast, even when storms feel overwhelming?

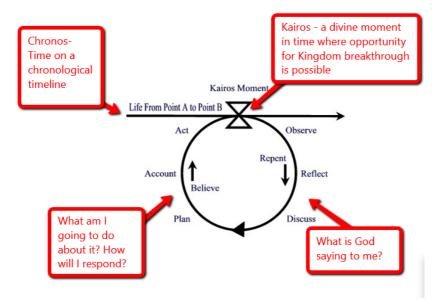


(1) Praise God for providing a solid and unshakable foundation in Jesus Christ and His teachings. (2) Thank God for His presence and strength during life's storms, sustaining you through every trial. (3) Ask for an understanding heart to hear and obey Jesus' words,

ensuring your life is built on the rock of His truth. (4) Ask for strength and steadfast faith to endure the storms of life without wavering. (5) Ask for spiritual wisdom to prepare for life's challenges by deepening your relationship with God and aligning your life with His Word. (6) Ask for the ability to recognise when your foundation may be shifting toward "sand" and the courage to rebuild on Christ. (7) Pray for wisdom and compassion to support and encourage those who are struggling through their own storms. (8) Ask God to make your life a testimony of faith and resilience, pointing

(8) Ask God to make your life a testimony of faith and resilience, pointing others to Jesus as the ultimate foundation.

### Pause. Reflect. Process



It's time to pause, reflect, process and act on your week's Kairos moment(s).

This week,								

### A New Rhythm of Fasting: Mark your Calendar

In 2025, we are embracing a more consistent rhythm of fasting, both individually and as a community. We started the year with a focused seven-day fast in January and will continue with three days of fasting each month. This intentional practice is designed to help us seek God's guidance regularly and cultivate a stronger spiritual foundation throughout the year.

As we look ahead, please take note and prepare for the designated fasting days in February and March. Let's approach these times with prayerful anticipation, trusting God to move powerfully in our lives and our community.

Wed, 5-Fri, 7 February 2025

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
5	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
6	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9	24	25	26	27	28		

Wed, 5-Fri, 7 March 2025

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
9	24	25	26	27	28	1	2
10	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
12	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
13	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
14	31						



# **Our Priorities**







