

40 Days of Metanoia Quiet Times: Sacred Assembly/Communal Repentance

Why choose “repentance” as a topic for a forty-day quiet time series? What is a “Sacred Assembly”? We want to be reminded that while repentance is a fundamental biblical concept, it is primarily a positive... not a negative thing.

Repentance renews our relationship with God and refreshes our lives. This renewal often came as God’s people repented... as a community.

In week one, we will see that the first message of the gospel was about repenting. Biblical repentance goes beyond behavioral change to a deeper heart and mind change. This is part of every Christians life-long transformation.

In week two, we will renew our appreciation for God’s power, goodness, and love. Repentance is simply our response to God’s character.

Week three, will show that often the call to repentance involved communal/community repentance. While God holds us individually accountable, he sees the collective sins of his people and calls them to change.

Week four, will show that community repentance often came about as a prophet of God called the leaders of God’s people to repent. In turn, the people responded to the leaders’ example. Each of us leads or influences someone.

Week five, reminds us of God’s expectations for us to live lives of repentance.

In week six, we’ll study some examples of the sacred assemblies of the Old Testament, where God’s people came before him and humbly repented of their sins together as a community.

This study is designed to be used as your main focus for the next forty days or in addition to whatever study you may currently be doing. Additional scriptures for each week’s theme are listed on the last page. May we together have **“times of refreshing”** (Acts 3:19)!

*“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that **times of refreshing** may come from the Lord.”*

Week 1: The Message of the Gospel Begins with a Call to Repent.

Consumer culture has invaded the thinking of the church! We often try to “market” the church as a place of love, fellowship, acceptance, great worship services and programs, etc. Those things are true, but the initial call of the gospels is to repent! The Greek word typically translated “repent” is *metanoia*. A *metanoia* is a transfiguration for your brain. The result is a radically transformed mind-set or perspective. It is a mental revolution which changes and affects the entirety of our lives!

Day 1 // Scripture: Luke 1:11-17

1. What was to be the role of John the Baptist?
2. Why do our hearts need to be “prepared” for the gospel?

Day 2 // Scripture: Matthew 3:3-12

1. Why do you think John the Baptist’s message started with “repent”?
2. What does it mean to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance”?

Day 3 // Scriptures: Matthew 4:12-17; Mark 1:14-15

1. How is Jesus’ initial message consistent with John’s?
2. How is “repent” good news?

Day 4 // Scripture: Mark 10:17-23

1. Why did the rich young ruler not see his need for repentance?
2. Why do you think he went away sad?

Day 5 // Scripture: Luke 15:11-31

1. What does it mean “he came to his senses”?
2. What do you see about God’s response to repentance?

Day 6 // Scripture: Romans 8:5, Galatians 5:13-15; 22-25

1. What does it mean to have our “minds set on what the Spirit desires”?
2. How does a Spirit led mindset affect your behavior toward others?

Day 7 // Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

1. What is the “pattern of this world?”
2. How do you renew your mind?

Week 2: It Starts with God!

Repentance (changing our minds leading to changing our behavior) begins with understanding who God is, how much he loves us, and what he offers us. There are many views of God. What is yours? When we understand the goodness of God in our lives, our appropriate response is repentance and allegiance. It all starts with God!

Day 8 // Scriptures: Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6-9

1. How does our world underestimate/not appreciate the power of God?
2. What helps you remember how powerful God is?

Day 9 // Scripture: James 1:16-18

1. Why is it hard for people sometimes to believe that God is good?
2. What are some of God's "good and perfect" gifts in your own life?

Day 10 // Scripture: Romans 5:1-8

1. Does it still inspire you that Christ died for you? How is that reflected?
2. Is your heart empty? Do you need God's love poured into your heart?

Day 11 // Scripture: Romans 3:21-26

1. Why is it hard to take sin seriously?
2. How is sin a contrast between God's character and our characters?

Day 12 // Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-8

1. Why was Isaiah overwhelmed? What do you feel overwhelmed about?
2. What can you learn and apply from Isaiah's response?

Day 13 // Scripture: Romans 2:4-11

1. How have you seen the "kindness, tolerance and patience" of God in your life? What can make it hard for you to see?
2. What does it mean that "God's kindness" leads us to repentance?

Day 14 // Scripture: Acts 3:19-20

1. According to the Bible, is repentance primarily negative or positive?
2. How have you seen "times of refreshing" come from the Lord?

Week 3: What is Communal Repentance?

When we think about repentance, we generally think about our personal responses to God and his message. Certainly, we are ultimately responsible and accountable to God for our individual lives. However, in both the Old and New Testaments we see that God often calls groups/communities of people to repent of their communal sins. In fact, in more than eighty-five percent of the examples of repentance in the bible, communal repentance is involved!

Day 15 // Scripture: Isaiah 5:18-21

1. What sins is God calling His people to repent of?
2. How can we be the same way today in our church? Will you change?

Day 16 // Scriptures: Revelation 2:1-6; 2:12-16; 3:1-3

1. Try to make the charges against the churches in Ephesus, Pergamum, and Laodicea applicable to us today. What might he say to your church?
2. What was the consistent solution for them? What will it be for us?

Day 17 // Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:1-12

1. How does personal sin affect the communal body of Christ (church)?
2. Should the church tolerate unrepentant individual sin? Why/why not?

Day 18 // Scripture: Isaiah 1:10-20

1. How did God feel about their hypocritical worship?
2. Do you see any hypocrisy in your life that hurts you?

Day 19 // Scripture: Amos 6:1-7

1. How did God feel about what they put their security in?
2. What does it mean “you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph”?

Day 20 // Scripture: 1 John 3:11-19

1. Why is it sometimes hard to “love one another”?
2. What can you do to help make the church a more loving place?

Day 21 // Scripture: Romans 12:9-21

1. How many of these admonitions are practiced without involving others?
2. What does v.18 mean as it applies to your being part of the church?

Week 4: Leaders Lead in Their Example of Repentance; then People Follow.

If communal (church) repentance is part of God’s plan, how does a group repent? Generally, God sent a prophet to the people, who proclaimed the message of repentance. Often the spiritual leaders of the people led the way in repenting; the people then followed. You may not consider yourself a “leader,” but each of us has an influence on someone.

Day 22 // Scripture: Ezekiel 33:30-33

1. What was the people’s ultimate reaction to Ezekiel’s message?
2. How do you react when you’re called back to God’s way in the Bible?

Day 23 // Scripture: 2 Chronicles 15:1-15

1. What effect did Azariah the prophet’s message have on King Asa?
2. What effect did Asa’s repentance have on the people?

Day 24 // Scriptures: 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

1. God deeply desired Manasseh’s attention? Does he have yours?
2. How does God respond when we display a heart of humility?

Day 25 // Scripture: Luke 24:45-47

1. How has Jesus opened your mind to understand the scriptures?
2. Are you staying in your word long enough to be clothed with power?

Day 26 // Scripture: 2 Chronicles 34:14-21, 29-33

1. How is it possible for you to “lose” the Word of God today?
2. What does it mean for you to “renew the covenant” with God?

Day 27 // Scriptures: Jeremiah 25:1-3; 26:1-9

1. Why do we sometimes resist a call to repentance?
2. What keeps your heart soft to God’s message?

Day 28 // Scripture: Jonah 3:1-10

1. Why was Jonah so reluctant to the word of the Lord?
2. How do you find yourself being reluctant to God's word in your life?

Week 5: What does God Expect?

What practically does *metanoia* mean in our lives, both as individuals and as a church? How are we to live in response to God's love and grace? How is repentance demonstrated, and what are its effects? Why do we lose perspective that repentance is a lifelong experience?

Day 29 // Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

1. What does this passage have to do with repentance?
2. What helps you stay in touch with God's grace, the love of Christ, and the cross?

Day 30 // Scripture: 1 John 1:5-10

1. What makes it hard for you to see your sin?
2. What will it require of you to "walk in the light?" today?

Day 31 // Scripture: 2 Peter 3:8-16

1. What does God want for everyone?
2. How have you seen God's patience in your life? Where has it led you?

Day 32 // Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

1. How would God describe your devotion to the fellowship?
2. How can God use your gifts to make your church family more like this?

Day 33 // Scripture: Colossians 3:1-17

1. What does it mean for you to "set your hearts on things above?"
2. What is God calling you to "put to death/rid yourself of" for His glory?

Day 34 // Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

1. What is the difference between being sorry for sin and Godly sorrow?
2. Where do you see yourself today, as you reflect on God's word?

Day 35 // Scripture: Luke 15:6-7, 22-24

1. How does God feel when He sees His sons and daughters repenting?
2. Do you see repentance as worthy of celebrating? Why or why not?

Week 6: A Sacred Assembly/Communal Repentance

Often in the Old Testament God's people came together for what the prophet Joel called a "**sacred assembly.**" They heard the word of God, confessed their sins (often with tears), they prayed, and they renewed their commitment to God. They always left these communal assemblies filled with joy! We will have our own sacred assembly/time of communal repentance at the end of this study.

Day 36 // Scripture: 2 Chronicles 30:1- 31:1

1. Why do you think the people who gathered prolonged the festival?
2. How did God's people respond as they left the celebration (31:1)?

Day 37 // Scripture: Ezra 8:18-10:6

1. What effect on the people did Ezra's sorrow for their sin have?
2. Do you believe our personal/collective sorrow will move God's heart?

Day 38 // Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-9:3

1. What's the connection between communal repentance & celebration?
2. What must happen for you to say, "the joy of the Lord is my strength"?

Day 39 // Scriptures: Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-17

1. Do you believe if you "rend your heart" you'll see God's blessings?
2. Since it's not about outward appearance, what sin might be hardening your heart, that God knows, and you know...but no one else knows?

Day 40 // Scripture: Mark 7:21-23, Ephesians 4:31, Psalm 51:10 and Acts 3:19

1. Do you have any bitterness, anger, slander or malice toward anyone?
2. Do you believe repentance brings times of refreshing? Why/ Why not?
3. What from this forty-day study has helped you the most?

Additional scriptures to consider if you want to go deeper each week

Week 1 // The message of the gospel begins with a call to repent.

Matthew 9:13; Mark 6:12; Luke 3:1-14; Luke 5:32; Luke 13:1-9; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:22-41; Acts 11:18; Acts 17:22-31; Acts 20:21; Acts 26:20

Week 2 // It starts with God!

Psalm 8; Psalm 19; Isaiah 40; Isaiah 55; Ezekiel 18:30-32; Ezekiel 33:10, 11; Romans 11:33-12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Week 3 // What is corporate repentance?

Leviticus 26:40-42; Romans 12:15-16; Romans 14:19-20; Romans 15:1, 2; Revelation 1-3

Week 4 // The leaders repent; the people follow.

Judges 2:10-12; 1 Samuel 15; 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25; 2 Chronicles 17:9, 10; Daniel 9:4-6

Week 5 // What does God expect?

Mark 12:28-31; Luke 9:22, 23; Luke 14:25-34; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4, 5; Philippians 2:1-13; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Hebrews 10:19-31; 1 Peter 1:13-16

Week 6 // A sacred assembly.

Leviticus 26; 1 Samuel 7:2-6; Ezra 10:1-17