

# **The World Awaits**

**40 Days of Faith 2009  
Users' Manual  
Dave Schmelzer**

## THE WORLD AWAITS

40 Days of Faith 2009

### I love 40 Days of Faith.

And I'm not alone! We get more feedback on the positive effects from these 6-week so-called "faith experiments" than just about anything else we do.

I got an email just this afternoon as I write this from a man who lives across the country, yet has followed two of our 40 Days and just wanted to tell me about his enthusiasm for the one that's upcoming. He tells stories of two major gifts to his life that have come his way through the two previous ones that he's followed from afar.

40 Days have been done as online experiences between friends, as small group experiences designed specifically to meet the needs of the group itself, as ad hoc gatherings of friends eager to see if God would offer them surprising gifts.

We hear lots and lots and lots of great stories of great things God does for people during 40 Days experiences. In my briefcase as we speak are hand-written stories from 174 people. (Some refer to an abbreviated version we tried in 2007 that spanned 21 days.) So here are a few picked essentially at random (*you* decide which of 174 stories of answered prayer are "the best"—it can't be done, let me tell you).

*(During the last 40 Days, I felt that God) asked me to fast for my daughter, whom I had been estranged from for 8 years. Two months after the fast, with one phone call from her we were reconciled.*

*During the 21 Days, I had seven very specific prayers around my business. These were legal and tax issues that I saw no way out of, and they were enormous headaches that would cost me thousands of dollars. During the 21 Days, I saw six of the seven resolve. I would describe the resolutions as seeing problems simply dissolve. It was like a rock wall just disappearing into thin air.*

*A few years ago we had an ectopic pregnancy—a very painful and distressing end to a pregnancy which led to our doctor saying we may never be able to have children. (We weren't excited about the specific medical interventions that were proposed, so) we used the 40 Days of Faith to pray (for a child). At the end of the 40 Days, we felt God say it was time... Nine months later our son was born and we now have a beautiful two-year-old.*

*I prayed to see God working in my life. It's weird. I don't know when it started happening, but I do. It hasn't faded but only gets stronger even when I'm not as faithful in doing the journey work. I see Him and His hand in every aspect of my life... from my relationships, my financial situation, work... everything. It's been amazing to not feel alone.*

#### **40 Days of Faith can be a little scary.**

Here's the thing about exercising faith. By definition, there are no guarantees, which is why it requires *faith*.

The risk you take by engaging with something like this is *disappointment*. You'll be invited to really engage in faith for some things you actually care about, both for yourself, for people around you, and for... well, I guess *America*. But, again, there are no guarantees with this sort of faith (except, as we'll talk about in a minute, that God will be with you every step of the way—I *do* think *that's* guaranteed, but sometimes that doesn't soften the blow).

So you'll need to decide how emotionally available you want to be to this under those terms. You'll have lots of support, I'm hoping. A big part of how these things work is that you'll do this in a supportive community, which is really important. But even *that* carries risks... because now you're risking that, where nothing much seems to happen for *you*, something profound might happen for some folks *around* you. Aaaaargh! Why *them*! How are *they* so special?!

So what do you think? Is that a risk you're willing to run?

#### **The world awaits.**

40 Days of Faith have a few rules to them that we've discovered through repeated trial and error.

They involve *personal* faith, as you'll note from the stories above. A big, big part of what we're hoping will happen for you during these six weeks is that you'll have an experience with God that's unprecedented for you. (Which, again, risks disappointment. But that is our hope.)

They involve faith for people around you. For reasons we'll talk about in some depth below, it's seemed irreducible to us that this sort of faith *has* to go beyond us to people around us who, otherwise, might have little hope for whatever the connection with God that we've experienced has offered us. The two things seemed linked.

And they involve faith for something beyond ourselves and our circle. Through previous 40 Days we've seen new church sites started, impressive at-risk youth (and other community) outreach experiences empowered and the campus we currently meet on both funded and discovered.

This year, we're focusing on something even a bit bigger than that, which I'd love to run by you both in the big picture and soon in a much-more bite-size chunk that you'll, I hope, actually pursue during these next six weeks.

As I looked for a phrase to summarize what we're hoping for this year, I thought of the name from the forthcoming album by friends of our many of ours, the amazingly gifted RyanHood (check them out at [www.ryanhood.com](http://www.ryanhood.com)): The World Awaits.

It seems that one surprising faith dynamic is that there's constant pressure on whatever faith we have to *shrink* over time. Who've thunk? Wouldn't you think that faith, by nature, would by definition *grow*? And, absolutely, that's the offer Jesus makes to us—that a tiny amount of faith can grow to a vast size *if* it's tended well. And yet the offer we're given in the very first chapter of the Bible focuses us towards a kind of impact on the *whole world* that most of us have a hard time keeping in our tiny heads.

Isaiah applies this to this “chosen” nation of Israel, who have, in a sense, served as God’s particular faith experiment up to that point in the Bible. God has massive plans for them, yet at this point in their history, they pretty much only want one thing: to get back to their home city of Jerusalem after God has let an enemy nation conquer them and deport them. Here’s God’s response to the shrunken state of their hopes for what God might do with and through them.

**Isaiah 49:6 (TNIV)**

**(The LORD) says:**

**"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant  
to restore the tribes of Jacob  
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.  
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,  
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."**

“You all want me to restore you all to your home city. Don’t you remember that I have *much* bigger plans for you? I want to give you the whole *world*! Think bigger! The world awaits!”

**An interlude on the state of faith in America.**

What exactly *is* this “world” that’s awaiting? Maybe it would serve to start by looking close to home.

America understandably is often regarded as the hold-out to the trends in the rest of the western world in which faith is rapidly shrinking as a national influence.

And yet there are some noteworthy trends here in the U.S. as well. Let me bullet-point a few of them for you.

- Outside of the South, Churches of Christ lose 80 percent of the kids in their youth groups once the kids graduate high school.
- Of those who leave, only 12 percent return once they marry and have kids of their own.
- Southern Baptists estimate that 88 percent of their kids leave church after high school.
- Josh McDowell Ministries, a group that focuses on youth, reports that 94 percent of high school graduates leave faith within two years.
- And that matches up with surveying the Barna group is doing:
  - “The vast majority of (secularists) don’t need to hear the Good News. They have been exposed to Christianity in an astonishing number of ways, and that’s exactly why they’re rejecting it. They react negatively to (churchgoers’) ‘swagger’, how (they) go about things, and the sense of self-importance (they) project.” They quote one outsider as saying: ‘Most people I meet assume that Christian means very conservative, entrenched in their thinking, antigay, antichoice, angry, violent, illogical, empire builders; they want to convert everyone, and they generally cannot live peacefully with anyone who doesn’t believe what they believe.’”
- Christine Wicker, this former religion reporter for the *Dallas Morning News* and the author of *The Fall of the Evangelical Nation*, tells us about a survey ranking eleven groups in terms of respect.
  - Non-Christians rated evangelicals tenth, above only prostitutes.

- The fastest-growing faith group in America is non-believers.
  - Between 1990 and 2001, their percentage of the population went up 75%.
- In 2006, the Southern Baptists set a goal of baptizing a million people.
  - They prepared for 2 years.
  - They prayer-walked, went door to door, talked about God in the workplace and did street preaching.
  - The big year came, the results came in...and their baptisms declined 4%.
    - *(Much of this came from Christine Wicker's The Fall of the Evangelical Nation.)*

So all of that, to me at least, seems notable! While there is much rich faith in our country, the larger culture seems rapidly to be moving towards secularization, much as happened in Europe in the last century.

That said, in a fun development, a fair amount of folks from around the country (and even a few from overseas) have been encouraging us that we might have a particular role to play in engaging with a country that's experiencing these trends. About 70 churches have, through word of mouth alone, asked us for our SEEK program, which sets up conversations about faith with people coming from many different vantage points. Last summer we hosted our first conference on being people of faith in a secularizing world and, again only through word of mouth, folks from 13 states joined us. A handful of folks have talked with us about being "faith ambassadors" (there has got to be a better phrase for this) with us—meaning that, wherever they live, they'd love to start up faith conversations and even faith groups among their friends and neighbors, and would love our help in that. I've been invited into some fun conversations recently, including a very enjoyable conversation with a leading atheist writer.

Is there any opportunity for us as a community to try some things out on behalf of our whole country?

### **What if you always had access to the Greater Boston Vineyard?**

And, just to mention—in a final note to this preamble—one of the earliest dreams of the Greater Boston Vineyard was that many people would come here from all over the world, find something unique and helpful from God, and then take that back to their long-term home. Now, that said, let me just make it abundantly clear that we want as many of you as can pull it off to stay in Boston for the long haul to partner with what's happening here! Don't go anywhere!

But some of these folks who *do* move away nonetheless stay in touch with us and say nice things. Here are a few nice notes that have come in in the last month.

*"It was by far the highlight of my year in Boston/Cambridge. I miss it so much, and would love to return someday."*

*"I miss you all so much. There really isn't any other experience like this and EVERYONE (around me now) knows about it, and use you all as a template of how they want to be!"*

*"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much! My experience with you prepared me for this next stage of my life."*

We've never lost that sense of having long-term partners all over the world. And we hear from a pretty large swath of folks who've left that they'd be eager for whatever long-range partnership we could pull off with them. It's not that they haven't found a great community of faith wherever they've landed. But it's more that they haven't fully replaced what they found here.

We do have some increasing thoughts about this early dream (to recap: that any folks who need to leave the area could very much stay in partnership with this community, should that be a helpful thing for them). We'll start to explore those in this 40 Days.

### **We do this during Lent.**

It's not coincidental that we target these 40 day faith experiments to happen during the traditional season of Lent, also a 40 day stretch that precedes Easter. For two millennia, people looking to experience God have found spiritual power in preparing for the celebration of Easter (where God's power is most fully shown in the resurrection of Jesus). Lent (the word comes, simply enough, from a Germanic word for "spring" and an Anglo-Saxon word for "March") has become one of the world's most enduring spiritual practices. Here's hoping our take on it gives you a hint of why it's caught on.

### **What does it look like to participate in 40 Days of Faith?**

Okay, let's not kid ourselves: it's going to take some faith.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." Jesus says to a woman who's been healed by his touch, "*Your* faith has made you well."

Here are some concrete steps that, we hope, will really help you exercise this kind of faith.

#### **1. Join a small group, if only for the 40 Days.**

Our experience has been that it's certainly possible for great things to happen during a 40 Days even when we just do them on our own. But a far-more frequent experience is that the best, most-powerful stories come from people doing this with others. And some of the activities these 40 Days will only be happening in the small groups. We have 55-ish groups in the church—all of which you can learn about through our website or from lists available at Sunday services—so there should be one that would be a great match for you. But it's your call. If it were me, I'd go for the group.

#### **2. Invite God to address a major personal need.**

This is how the folks with the great stories we started with experienced those great things. They asked themselves the question, ***What do you want Jesus to do for you?*** This was not a small question. For some people it was obvious. For others, it took some prayer and reflection. What did they actually have at least a smidgen of faith that God might do for them? If God were to do something that would really improve their lives, what might it be? And then they prayed for this every day during the 40 days, and invited others—spouses, friends in their group—to pray for them as well, even as they promised to pray for *those* folks' 40 Days' prayer hopes.

And this is where the prospect of disappointment can come in. A fair number of my 40 Days prayers for myself over the years have focused on this long-standing dream I've had about publishing fiction. I've seen some pretty remarkable *almost*-answers to these prayers. I've gotten not one, but two noteworthy agents for my fiction (about a one in two-hundred shot for people writing novels, according to the things I've read). But my fiction still remains unpublished at a wide level.

Which brings me to a second question people have often found helpful: **What do you really want Jesus to do for you?** This acknowledges that, God forbid that our prayer as asked doesn't find an answer on the terms we've prayed it. What if—just asking—there's actually a *deeper* desire lurking just beneath our first prayer? So, in my case, I realized that lurking just deeper than my desire to be a successful novelist is a desire to participate in our larger, national, cultural conversation. I'd love the opportunity to talk about faith at a wide level with all sorts of disparate people. My fiction writing, I've hoped, might help give me the platform for that—along with being lots of fun on its own terms. But what if it could happen without the fiction-writing part? How would that feel? Well, for the moment, I've had the opportunity to experience that—I've had a small, but increasing platform along those lines—and it's not half-bad.

So we've had lots and lots of folks pray for spouses, and we have many stories of people who've indeed found spouses directly following a 40 Days. But, as you'd guess, we've had many others who haven't. No guarantees! (Which is why it takes faith.) But a lot of those folks have asked themselves what they *really* want Jesus to do for them on this front. If, God forbid, their upfront prayer isn't answered in a timely fashion, is there a *deeper desire lurking behind it* which would not be half bad if God were to address *that*? So some folks have prayed that God would give them a deep experience of intimacy with others and with God, and a deep sense of renewed purpose for their lives, with or without a spouse. And many people have seen some pretty profound answers on *that* front. Maybe not their first choice. (I'd still love to be a bestselling novelist; don't get me wrong.) But a pretty profound thing in its own right.

And, again, the point of these prayers is to have an actual encounter with God ourselves. With that, our faith for all the other stuff can come into focus. So this is not a step to skip.

So...

**What do you want Jesus to do for you?**

---

---

And

**What do you really want Jesus to do for you?**

---

---

---

### **3. Learn more about faith with your friends.**

One great opportunity we have while we're together is to work with each other to learn whatever lessons about faith that this community might have to offer. It would be a shame to leave someday and only run across these thoughts *later!*

So for three of the six sessions in the small groups during the 40 Days, we'll be talking about my short book *Not the Religious Type: Confessions of a Turncoat Atheist*. (Actually, we've been beaten to the punch on this. Since September, seven other churches have had their entire small group network read through and discuss the book, and then use it as well in a way I'll mention in a moment.) Whatever the merits of the book, it does talk about a kind of faith that we've done our best to live out here and which has informed our outlook on faith in the wider world, the subject of this 40 Days. Our hope is that, whatever your response to the book, engaging with it in your group will be a fun and maybe even "aha-inducing" experience for you.

And we're heavily subsidizing the experience! The book retails for about \$17. Our bookstore has been selling it for \$13. (I've been donating my royalties—not that, would only, I get \$4 per book...) For this, we've subsidized the book down to \$5. So no one is profiting on this—we really do want to engage in a community-wide conversation for whatever benefits that will offer. After this, its cost will pop right back up to \$13. ☺

### **4. Take advantage of the daily Bible guide to learn more about God's heart for all people and how you fit in.**

One very popular feature of each 40 Days we've done has been a daily Bible guide and commentary that's helped each of us who are participating have a shared growth experience around a key and related section of the Bible. This 40 Days, Brian Housman will be our guide through the entire Bible as it addresses this one crucial theme: how are people of faith encouraged to relate to the big, wide world around us? I'm looking forward to learning a lot and having a lot of great conversations with many of you about this stuff.

### **5. Learn about faith alongside your non-churchgoing friends.**

In the spirit of Isaiah's word to the Israelites, how about using this 40 Days to have a conversation with at least one non-churchgoing friend about faith and see what you learn? I've been doing that a fair amount these days, and have been learning a ton!

I have several suggestions as you pursue this.

First, keep your goal in mind. Your goal isn't to persuade your friend about anything. It really is to have a generative conversation in which you both learn more, at least about the other person. My approach in these conversations might be summed up in the phrase "Tell me more!"

I'd encourage you to ask God to direct you to a friend who is open to actual conversation. Some folks are prone to either withdrawing or speechifying, and neither will serve here (actually, now that I think about it, those two things won't serve coming from *us* either).

Pray beforehand for God to do good things in this conversation. Ask your group to pray. And then pay attention to how God answers that prayer.

Consider one of three approaches to the conversation:

- i. **Invite one or more of your friends to take a spiritual survey and see what interest they have in these sorts of conversations.**

Say it's a project from your church if that's helpful. Here's a sample possibility.

Spiritual survey

1. Do you regard yourself as spiritual?
2. Do you practice a faith tradition? If so, which one?
3. What sorts of things have you found most helpful in your practice of the spiritual life?
4. Have you found conversations with others to be a particularly important element of your spiritual connection?
5. If so, would you have any interest in any sort of short-term discussion group around spiritual themes?
  - a. Would you prefer a group with some structured shape to it?
  - b. Or would you prefer an unstructured group equally led by all of the participants?

Get together with any friends who seem responsive and continue the conversation. Ask them to fill out whatever spiritual tips they mention. Presuming they return the favor and ask you how you'd answer those questions, tell them (without any particular agenda behind telling them apart from to enjoy the conversation and see what their response is, if any). See where the conversation goes. If they want a group, see if others in your circle would like a group as well and set one up. Consult with your small group for thoughts on how that group might go.

- ii. **Or give your non-churchgoing friend a copy of *Not the Religious Type* and get together to talk about it once they've taken a look at it.**

This is what those other seven churches did, and it seemed to go very well. As you'll note, the book is written both for interested churchgoers and spiritually-open non-churchgoers and seems to have done equally-well among both groups.

Some people like book discussions. (I've had one of these already with one local non-churchgoing friend, and it led to a great email exchange and a dinner date for our families to keep the conversation going.)

- iii. **Or if you have a very open and close non-churchgoing friend, get together with them and ask them how they approach spirituality and what's worked for them.**

Feel free to have whatever give and take they're interested in.

- iv. **Or, if you do get a group together, invite them to do a 40 Days together and see what happens.**

We're putting together a version of this 40 Days that's not specific to this church or to churchgoing. Some folks have done this with non-churchgoing groups in the past and have seen very positive things happen as a result.

When you've all given this a shot, share with your small group how it's gone and reflect upon what you've learned.

Here's the thought with this part of the 40 Days. Believe it or not, this is the first step for these "faith ambassadors" we mentioned—just finding out who in their circle of friends would be open to spiritual conversations and then seeing what God might do with that. Many people see this as a crucial next step for faith in rapidly secularizing America—connecting over faith across religious (and non-religious) lines and seeing what we learn together. Some of these "faith ambassadors" (sorry, I can't help using the quotes—it all still seems pretty new and ever-defining-itself) have thoughts about next steps for folks who want more. They're planning to do book groups around *Not the Religious Type* and to do 40 Days experiences and even to host conferences on the subject—big dreams. But the starting point is right here.

So go for it! The world awaits even in this humble beginning! I'll be eager to hear how it goes!

#### **6. Pray daily that our church and its alumni would have a greater and greater role in our national conversation about faith.**

Let's engage in a group faith experiment together! Wouldn't it be fun to see if all of us really could play a role in this fast-changing national conversation about faith? Lots of us are, say, working in universities or leading neighborhood associations or working with media or the arts or business or...whatever. I'm getting a few opportunities along these lines (and by all means pray that I'll have more), but I think a bigger and better dream would be that God would open up more along these lines for us *as a community*. Would you join me in praying daily for this during the 40 Days? I promise to do my best to keep you posted with any ways I hear about God answering this!

And, finally:

#### **7. Consider staying in partnership with the Greater Boston Vineyard should you ever move on to another part of the world.**

We'll suggest some preliminary ways to keep this in mind in a sermon during the 40 Days. But we'd very much love to stay in whatever partnership with you—should you, tragically, need to move on from Boston—would appreciate. I'd expect a good deal of this partnership might direct itself towards our goal these 40 Days of having a helpful role for faith in the wider secular world. But more soon.

### One final note:

As you pursue these things, you might want to **consider fasting in some way**—a central element of Lent for many people over the centuries. You might have noticed that when people really wanted something from God in the Bible, they almost always fasted.

What does fasting do?

Fasting tells God and our own spirits that we really are desperate for *God* to meet some need or hope that we have. If you participate in this year's 40 Days, you're hoping for profound vision for your *life*. That sounds like "fast territory" to me.

Though fasting—in any fashion (and we'll talk about some options in a minute)—is, by definition, *hard*, it's actually meant to be a *joyous opportunity*. Suddenly we're really serious about something with God; we're really expecting him to come through; we aren't just playing around. That can often be exhilarating!

### What are options for fasting?

Well, first off, fasting often involves abstinence from food in some way. In shorter fasts, that can be a total abstinence from food. These are usually called "**water fasts**," because water is the only thing going into us. For the most part, I don't recommend these at any length beyond a week's time, because after that, health problems can ensue. (Clearly God can speak and call you into anything—but I'd just be aware of the risks if you water fast for more than a week, and be in good touch with a doctor. You can also feel free to call our church office for more suggestions about fasting.)

**Also, I do not recommend water fasts if you've ever suffered from an eating disorder.** Those in our midst who've suffered from eating disorders historically have a difficult time separating this sort of fasting from the very motivation that drove them to the disorder, and thereby risk serious health problems. There are other great fasts that will do you a lot of good, if you've been in this situation, and can I ask that you'd pursue those?

Other food-abstinence fasts involve imposing some sort of **conditions** on our eating over a period of time. (Some folks prefer not to call these "fasts"—reserving that title for water fasts—but prefer to call things like I'll suggest here "**consecrations**." Choose whatever terminology works for you!) This can involve anything from giving up some beloved food item for a time (desserts or sugar or caffeine being popular favorites) to something more challenging, like the so-called "**Daniel fast**," which involves abstaining from everything but vegetables.

For longer fasts, I've sometimes done a "**one meal a day**" fast. It's pretty much what it sounds like. The key is to actually eat a *smaller* meal than you normally would at the time, and to make that "it" for the day. If you ever know I'm on a "one meal a day" fast and it looks after awhile as if I haven't lost an ounce, have a little talk with me.

People often pursue "**juice fasts**." Again, this would customarily apply to *shorter fasts*, but it's just like a water fast, except you're allowed to drink juice, which will keep your blood sugar up and actually allow you to function at near-normal capacity.

*Are there any non-food-related options?*

You bet! Fasting from **television** is a popular choice for folks who aren't fasting from food. Or **computer games**. Or **catalogues**. Or whatever you'd notice.

These can really involve, under God's direction, doing without *anything* that feels costly to give up for a season. I've heard about fasts (or, again, "consecrations") from *criticism*!

The point of fasting is that, under God's direction, we're feeling desperate for something and we direct that desperation towards God. It's just hard to truly be desperate for God and what he might do for us when our bellies are full and all our needs are abundantly provided for.

*What does it mean to fast "for" something?*

If you fast, I'd encourage you to let God know, frequently, what it is you're fasting *for* which, I'd think, would at least tie into the "what do you want Jesus to do for you during these 40 Days?" category. So, for instance, during one long fast I realized in, like, Day 3 that I didn't really have a specific *focus* for my fast, and I asked God. He seemed to tell me that it was a fast primarily on behalf of a close friend of mine who was really far from God. Not long thereafter, that friend plunged himself into a life of pursuing Jesus for the first time in his life.

*Does fasting help us lose weight (and I know you're asking that on behalf of a friend)?*

Isn't this one of life's colossal bummers? The answer, from all reputable sources, is, "No, not really." There are 2 problems that keep this from being, for most people, about weight loss. First, once we've fasted (from food) for awhile, our metabolism slows way down (a good thing if we were ever to face famine!). Second, sadly, it seems to be human nature that, whatever weight we lose in fasting, we quickly put back on once we resume our previous diet. One national level leader who's known for his frequent long fasts actually seems to have gotten significantly *more* overweight as the years have rolled on.

Now, the upside of this truism is that we really *can* let God know that we're doing this because we want deeper desperation for and connection with him. This really is about more than body image

**So three cheers for 40 Days of Faith 2009! The world awaits!**

I'll be so eager to hear how it goes for you. I'm praying!

**THE WORLD AWAITS**  
40 Days of Faith 2009

**Isaiah 49:6 (TNIV)**

**(The LORD) says:**

**"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant  
to restore the tribes of Jacob  
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.  
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,  
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."**

**What does it look like to participate in 40 Days of Faith?**

1. Join a small group, if only for the 40 Days.
2. Invite God to address a major personal need.

**What do you want Jesus to do for you?**

**What do you really want Jesus to do for you?**

3. Learn more about faith with your friends.
4. Take advantage of the daily Bible guide to learn more about God's heart for all people and how you fit in.
5. Learn about faith alongside your non-churchgoing friends.
  - i. Invite one or more of your friends to take a spiritual survey and see what interest they have in these sorts of conversations.
  - ii. Or give your non-churchgoing friend a copy of *Not the Religious Type* and get together to talk about it once they've taken a look at it.
  - iii. Or if you have a very open and close non-churchgoing friend, get together with them and ask them how they approach spirituality and what's worked for them.
  - iv. Or, if you do get a group together, invite them to do a 40 Days together and see what happens.
6. Pray daily that our church and its alumni would have a greater and greater role in our national conversation about faith.
7. Consider staying in partnership with the Greater Boston Vineyard should you ever move on to another part of the world.

**One final note:** As you pursue these things, you might want to **consider fasting in some way.**