



We're family

MISSIONS FEST 2020

A DAILY DEVOTIONAL
EASTBROOK CHURCH

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A DAILY DEVOTIONAL BY
THE PEOPLE OF EASTBROOK CHURCH



About Eastbrook 365

Due to the uncertainty of the season we find ourselves in, we at Eastbrook are writing and producing a year of daily devotionals that we are calling "Eastbrook 365." These devotionals will align with our sermon series from September 2020-August 2021 and will help Eastbrookers near and far grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus, while also continuing to pilgrimage together as a Church.

You can read these devotionals in a variety of ways.

- Download the Eastbrook App for your phone and read each day (eastbrook.org/app)
- Download individual PDFs of each devotional to read at home or print out at home (eastbrook.org/devotionals)
- Sign up for the Eastbrook 365 Devotional email to be delivered to your inbox each morning (eastbrook.org/email)
- Pick up a paper copy at church as each devotional begins (limited copies available)

We pray God's blessings on you as you spend time with Him each day.

How to use this Devotional

1. Plan a 15-minute window each day when you can thoughtfully do the daily reading. Set a time, create a pattern, and stick to it.
2. Decide whether you want to invite your friends, family, or small group to join you.
3. Begin each day by visiting eastbrook.org/devotionals/werefamily and watching the video for the day. Then spend time reading the Scripture passage printed at the top of each page.
4. Reflect on what you have seen, heard, and read. Use the "Dig Deeper" questions to talk about it with someone else or to journal on your own.
5. Consider inviting others to follow along with you during this year of devotionals from Eastbrook, which we are calling "Eastbrook 365." Find the online version at eastbrook.org/devotionals/werefamily. Use Eastbrook's Facebook page (facebook.com/eastbrookchurch) and other social media outlets such as Twitter and Instagram (@[eastbrookchurch](https://twitter.com/eastbrookchurch)) to share ideas. Post your comments, thoughts, and questions in the online version. Read others' comments. This is a great way to learn from the perspective of others.

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Welcome & Introduction

READ ROMANS 12:10

At first glance, the theme “We’re Family” may seem a bit out of place for a missions conference. Shouldn’t we be focusing on how to reach the lost in our city and world? Good question, so here’s the background.

At the end of last year’s MissionsFest I (Dan Ryan) asked everyone to complete a survey of sorts. We provided a card to each person in service and asked them to share where they are serving in the city and in the world. The responses were incredible. Our church family has certainly answered the call!

However, a trend emerged among the responses. The vast majority of responses were how people were serving as individuals, on their own.

To understand the history of Eastbrook missions is to understand that we have a history and a heart for being on mission together. Not that a centralized singular person tells us all what to do and where, but that we commit ourselves to one another as to go out together, as family. While there are ways we are serving on mission together today, last year’s responses show that there is room to grow in this area.

For today’s reading, start with Romans 12:10, reflect on that passage, and then expand your reading to the whole chapter of Romans 12. Spend time with God individually reflecting and praying over this passage and our theme for this year’s MissionsFest. Then take the next step outlined below for a small group discussion.

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- One person reads the Bible passage out loud while everyone else follows along.
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Seeing the Humanity in Everyone

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:24

For today's devotional, Jim Dressner shared a story from his time overseas in Asia. In that country's context, extreme poverty would push many to begging on the streets, sometimes rather aggressively. It is easy to see those begging as a nuisance, something to be avoided, or even ignored.

Jim shared how a fellow field worker challenged him not to see these people as obstacles to avoid, but rather to see the humanity in each one. This led Jim to pause and take time talking when a beggar would come to his window. He began asking for their names, learning about their family, and maybe even hearing part of their story.

Jim found that this was transformational for both him and for those begging. While he wouldn't always give to them, it did create a sense of dignity and worth. This was true particularly on Jim's regular commute routes where the beggars would see him coming and be sure to greet him and talk with him, even if no money was given.

In today's world of social media, politics, and divisiveness it has become too easy to see people as "other", and not as neighbors made in the image of God. Take time today to read 1 Corinthians 10:24 and reflect on how you approach people in your life.

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Walking with Others

READ ROMANS 12:10

In today's devotional video, Jason reflects on two key lessons from his time overseas.

The first is something many of us struggle with: a pursuit of significance through missions. Jason humbly shared how his enthusiasm early in his time overseas led him to this pursuit. He also shared how over time, God moved in his heart to see how important the church family was not only to his ministry but also to supporting and caring for his own family. He learned that God valued community over significance.

The American church often turns to the idols of significance, productivity and effectiveness. At the feet of these idols we place relationships with one another as a sacrifice so that we can "accomplish" something. How many times have you sacrificed relationships or avoided people because it would make achieving something easier. Consider this question though: what if God's heart is not achieving a goal, but building a family?

Today we invite you to read and reflect on Philippians 2:1-4, and ponder on this question.

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Finding Family

READ MARK 10:28-30

For today's devotional, Lisa Sinclair shares about her time overseas in Africa where she served with her family for over ten years. After homeschooling her son for a season, the time came to send him to a boarding school in a neighboring country. It was not an easy decision, and once the day finally came the emotions were overwhelming.

After saying goodbye, Lisa was overcome with emotion and in her home weeping when she learned she had visitors. When she went outside, she found that a group of women from their village had come. They were not asking for anything, but rather they came to grieve with Lisa. They shared stories, cried together, and encouraged Lisa that God is with her son.

In a moment where she felt so alone, she was reminded of today's passage which is Mark 10:28-30. Although she and Paul had left family to serve overseas, God had richly blessed them with a family many times over with these precious women and many other neighbors in their village.

After reading today's passage, spend time reflecting on how you view your church family. Have you had the chance to experience such depth as Lisa was able to? If not, what can you identify as holding you back?

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Letting the Church Restore You

READ 1 JOHN 4:7-21

For today's devotional, Christina shared about how the church can bring you people that are both easy to love and difficult to love. She shared about a wonderful friend she made while here in the U.S. It was one of those friendships that was easy to form, they shared many things in common, and enjoyed their time together in fellowship and prayer.

But Christina was also able to see how the church can restore and heal us if we allow God the opportunity. In Christina's case, the church family that was difficult to love was actually for her friend. You see, her friend was from a culture that experienced terrible things at the hand of another culture. Christina just happened to be serving in the context of that second culture when her friend came to visit.

After spending a few days with Christina's local church in that culture, the friend confessed to Christina that she had initially been very hesitant to come visit due to those deep cultural divisions. Her friend said, however, that this short visit had provided deep healing of these divisions in her heart- and it was done through the local church.

Read 1 John 4:7-21 and reflect on Christina's story. How can you allow relationships within the church heal pains or divisions you are carrying in your heart?

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The Light of the Family

READ JOHN 13:34-35

Throughout the history of Eastbrook our church family has welcomed people from all around the world as they arrive here in Milwaukee. We have provided meals, furniture, hospitality and friendship. Welcoming these new friends is close to Rob and Amy's heart.

Earlier this year, Amy and Rob learned that her cancer had returned and that she would require chemotherapy. They made the decision to keep their home open and continue to welcome these precious new friends into their lives and the lives of our church family.

God used this opportunity to shine the light of the church family to these new friends. In today's video, Rob shares how our church family came together to pray, care, host, and love each other. Their new friends were able to see firsthand what it means to be a church family, and it has brought us all together in deeper relationships and conversations with these friends from overseas.

When they reflect on that night, Rob and Amy are brought to John 13:34-35. Spend time reflecting on this passage, and on Rob & Amy's story. Do you approach the areas where you serve with the same heart towards community? What are some ways you can return to this core truth?

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Accepting Church as Family

READ COLOSSIANS 3:11-17

In today's video Zach shared an experience he had while he was overseas serving in Asia. During his season overseas, his grandfather passed away. His family is close, and not being able to come home to be with them was very difficult for Zach. He found himself withdrawing from his team and spending time alone grieving.

It was in that space that he spent time with God, took his grief to the Father, and was taught a core truth of our faith. He shared how during a time alone with God, he heard God reveal that while Zach was apart from his biological family, God's family was here with him and was there for him. This changed Zach's perspective and he re-engaged with his team and church family where he was.

For today, read and reflect on Colossians 3:11-17. Reflect on whether you have approached church as something for your own personal spiritual growth, or if you have approached it as a family who walks through life together. Prayerfully consider where you can take steps into deeper relationships in our church family.

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Your Invitation to Family

READ GALATIANS 5:13-26

Today marks the halfway point for this devotional, and we wanted to pause and invite you to an opportunity that is available to you today.

Throughout this devotional series and week of MissionsFest, we have been sharing stories from our city and world about how we are on mission together, as a family. But I (Dan Ryan) am worried that we can start sliding into a mindset that this focus can start to be used as a strategy for missions rather than a core part of our Christian faith.

Today Eastbrook Church is hosting a Small Group Launch event because being part of a church is more than simply attending a worship service. Whether you have been attending Eastbrook for a while, or are new during this unique season, we hope that you are a part of a small group. To get started, you can participate in this virtual connect event to get connected into a small group with other Eastbrookers that will help this church become more of a family than an event. Visit eastbrook.org/groups for more information.

For today's reflection, read Galatians 5:13-26. This passage is usually read through the lens of personal behavior, but we challenge you to view this passage through the lens of community and what that means for you in the upcoming months.

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Letting the Family Answer Your Prayers

READ PSALM 68:4-6A

For today's devotional we heard a story from our dear friends Mary & Bob Mulloy who welcome refugees and immigrants to the city of Atlanta. Their focus is on building relationships and helping to meet both short-term and long-term needs.

In the video, Mary shared about meeting a large family that was struggling financially as they were settling into the Atlanta area. It was a need beyond the ability of Mary and Bob to meet themselves, but they did commit to praying for the need. Shortly after, it was through the kindness of a stranger that helped meet the need, who also turned out to be a Christian.

It brings up a good reflection point. When we pray to God to intervene in the lives and needs of those around us, how often do we seek the supernatural when in fact God could use our church family to answer our prayers?

Read Psalm 68:4-6a and reflect on this thought. Pray for God to open your eyes to others in the church who may be able to meet needs that you have been praying for God to meet. Let us allow His church to be part of his supernatural movement in the lives of those in need.

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Inviting Others into the Family

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-12

For today's devotional thought, Bernard shared about his experience at Eastbrook's food pantry. Many times when we think about reaching out, we think it is a matter of using reason or persuasion. What if we looked at it through the lens that Bernard did in this video: inviting people into the family.

It can sound like an easy concept, but think about the last time you allowed your worlds to intersect. To invite work or other friends to join a gathering of our church family, whether on a Sunday or in your home. Many of the barriers that people have to faith are in fact misperceptions and the best way to address those is not to argue, but to allow them to be a part of our church family's community.

Also, think about how you serve in the community. Have you created a perception that there are two groups of people: those who help, and those who are helped? Think about Bernard's story when he blurred the lines, and allowed someone to belong to community and not simply receive from the community.

Read Ephesians 2:1-12 and reflect on these thoughts. Spend time with God exploring how you can invite others into our church family.

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Inexpressible Joy **READ HEBREWS 13:1-3**

Part of the work at the International Community Center is to help refugees and immigrants with filling out forms and applications. It is part of the routine, and at times can be tedious. In today's video Jim Dressner shared about how he recently was asked to help a family with their application for emergency benefits following COVID-19 related hardships.

For Jim, the timing was not the best, but the work at ICC is about people, and so we make time when these types of situations come up. What meant about an hour of work for Jim meant the difference between financial crisis and stability. When the paperwork was prepared and ready to go, Jim was surprised to see the father of the family crying. It wasn't tears of sadness but rather joy for the love and care Jim had shown.

Let's look at the lesson of this story through the lens of our church family. Do we make room for each other, particularly when in need? Or do we only allow for convenient relationships in our life? Read Hebrews 13:1-3 and reflect on these questions and this passage. Spend time with God asking for Him to reveal areas where you could prioritize people over productivity.

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Walking as Family Around the World

READ MATTHEW 12:48-50

In today's video, Paul Sinclair shares a story from a recent trip teaching doctoral seminary students in Asia. Many times when we partake in short-term trips, we tend to focus on what we can give and what the people we visit need. But a lifetime in this type of ministry has taught Paul to approach these trips as equals. To give those we serve the same dignity and invitation to minister to us as they give to us.

During this recent trip, he was reminded of the beauty of the family of God when we take such an approach. As Paul and Lisa arrived, they were weighed down by news from home of medical and other emergencies family were experiencing. Upon hearing the burden, the doctoral students came around them and interceded with prayer for Paul and Lisa during this very difficult time.

What a beautiful image of how the family of God is not split between those who give and those who receive, but that we are all one family who stands with one another. For today, read and reflect on Matthew 12:48-50. How do you view the family of God, particularly other Christians or neighbors you serve?

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Returning to the Family

READ ACTS 20:17-37

It today's video, Zach shared a story about his return to Eastbrook after being overseas for a season. He was not expecting the response he received on his first Sunday back. He experienced person after person, who didn't just give a quick greeting, but genuinely connected. This type of welcome can leave a lasting impression on those who serve overseas. Most assume that the longer they are away, the more distant they become to our church family. But through our Missions Prayer Class and many other groups, we as a church stay connected to those serving overseas. We are family with them.

This commitment changes how we view missions. It is not simply something for a select few to embark on at a distance. Rather, it is something that we journey on together as a family.

Today we challenge you to read the story of Paul and the elders of the church at Ephesus as told in Acts 20:17-37. This is a story of a group of believers who have walked the road of deep relationship and difficult ministry. Reflect on the tearful goodbye between the two, and on how you engage with those of our church family who go to serve around the city and world.

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Be the Church

READ ACTS 2:42-47

Today marks the end of our MissionsFest devotional on the theme of We're Family. For today's reading, we invite you to turn to the picture of the first church as found in Acts 2:42-47.

In our current season of distance and division in our surrounding culture it can be easy to lose sight of this picture of what church could be. We can also downplay our church family for the sake of efficiency and productivity. We must guard against these two pressures. Not only is the church the goal of missions, it is also the means of mission.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ who come around the cross and let the Holy Spirit renew and lead us in the city and the world. This creates a bond that is deeper than our own personal preferences. May we be a church family that walks with one another, carries each others' burdens, and lives on mission together.

After all, our own areas of ministry are merely temporary, but we will have eternity to enjoy with one another. So why not start now? Read Acts 2:42-47 and reflect and spend time with God exploring your part in creating such a church family at Eastbrook. May this be part of our foundation as we launch out into mission in the city and the world.

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Artist Statement

"OPEN TABLE"

by Jonathan Shaw

One of my favorite names for God is Immanuel, "God With Us." God with us in the pain; God with us in the joys; God with us in every season of life. His desire is for dwelling forever with His children; gathering unto Himself as many people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. What a beautiful picture of community; what a beautiful picture of family.

God has sent us an invitation into His holy presence as adopted sons and daughters through Jesus Christ. This painting reflects on God's heart for community and celebration. I enjoy painting in this whimsical style because it ushers me into a state of child-like wonder and playfulness. The dinner table signifies a sacred place to intimately share life together. Each seat around the table remains open as a reminder that the invitation is still open to cultivate our relationship with Jesus. The image appears fractured speaking of how Christ redeems us, creating wholeness and beauty from our brokenness. Here are two passages that harmonize well with what I'm trying to portray through this painting.

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Psalm 16:11

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23:5-6

See more of Jonathan's artwork on his website: yehonatan.art.com.

Special Thanks

Editor

Dan Ryan

Eastbrook 365 Team

Jim Caler, Liz Carver, Nic Fridenmaker,
Laure Herlinger, Dan Ryan, Rachael Sheets

Cover Artwork

Jonathan Shaw

Design and Layout

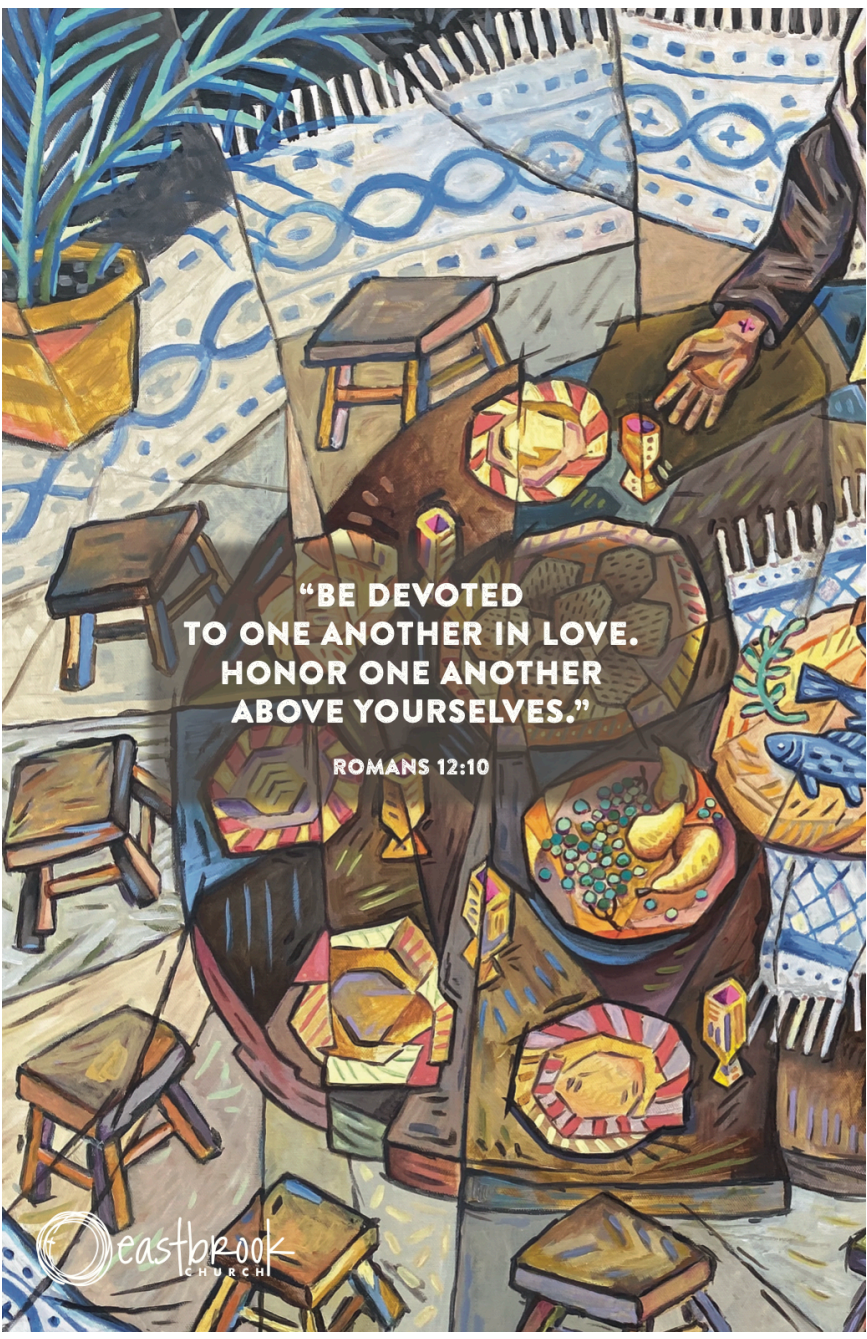
Andrea Beck & Liz Carver

Inquiries

Eastbrook Church
5385 N. Green Bay Ave. | Milwaukee, WI 53209
414.228.5220 | info@eastbrook.org
eastbrook.org

Works Cited

1. All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted. *The Holy Bible*, New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan House, 2011.



**"BE DEVOTED
TO ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE.
HONOR ONE ANOTHER
ABOVE YOURSELVES."**

ROMANS 12:10