

pocket guide

# OVER THE FENCE

five simple ways to **connect** & **share**



# Introduction

*Where does my life fit into the great and grand story of God's mission?*

What would it look like if our own backyard were the starting point of God's mission in our lives? Sometimes we prefer to stay home with the curtains drawn, the garage door sealed, and the fences built nice and high. But the mission of God is an invitation to get out from behind the fences in our lives and connect with the people nearby. This pocket guide will outline one way to live this kind of life and mission by equipping us with five simple practices made into a handy acronym: **FENCE**.

## God's Mission

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." – **Matthew 28:18-20***

**Our mission is to follow the example of Jesus in drawing all people into loving relationship with God.** Jesus tells us to get over the fences in our lives to connect and share with others. But more than that, He Himself did exactly this for us – setting the example first by becoming human and crossing the divide between us and God.

*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.*  
**– John 1:14 (The Message)**

This pocket guide provides practical, everyday ways to become more like Jesus by reaching out to others. Get over the fence by walking through the five steps of  
**FENCE ...**





# OVER THE FENCE

five simple ways to **connect & share**

**F** **First Pray** I will pray for the people in my life and the places God has sent me.

**E** **Ears Open** I will listen to and discover the needs of others and the places where God is at work.

**N** **Nourish** I will share meals and spend time with the people in my life.

**C** **Caring Acts** I will respond to the needs of others and help them in tangible ways.

**E** **Exchange Stories** I will share with others the story of Jesus and the story of what He is doing in my life.

# First Pray

*"God, may Your kingdom come and Your will be done. Please provide me with an opportunity today to cross the barriers between myself and others. Help me to be aware of Your presence and Your leading today."*

We can pray for the people who are part of our day-to-day lives.

**Who do you live, work, and play with that is far from God? *Pray that God would create spiritual curiosity in them.***

We can even pray over the places where we spend time.

- **Where does pain exist here? *Pray for healing.***
- **Who makes the decisions here? *Pray for guidance.***
- **Who throws the parties here? *Pray for community.***
- **Where are resources needed here? *Pray for provision.***

# Ears Open

*"God, how do You want me to impact my world today?  
Help me to listen to and discover the needs of others and  
where You're at work."*

Before we can help others find Jesus, we need to listen to them first – their hopes, pains, challenges, and dreams.

**Who in my life today needs a listening ear?** In your interactions with others today, take the posture of a learner. Lay down your assumptions, practice being present, and listen for Gospel themes. Pay attention to the local news and ***ask God how you can meet those needs.***



# Nourish

*"God, show me how I can extend hospitality today. Show me relationships I can deepen today by sharing a meal or a coffee."*

Simply put, eating is one of the fastest ways to move a relationship from acquaintance to friend.

**Who can you share a meal or coffee with who is far from God?** A co-worker over lunch? A neighbour during the day? A friend or family member over the weekend? Is there a place you regularly visit (coffee shop, gym, etc.)? ***Ask God to give you opportunities to eat with people. Ask God to inspire you with creative ideas for recipes, restaurants, and other ways to be hospitable.***

# Caring Acts

*"God, You know the needs of the people I'll interact with today. How can I serve them in ways that show Your love for them?"*

Before jumping into serving people with caring acts, have we taken the time to pray for, listen to, and share a meal or coffee with them? Doing these things first helps us discover ways we really need to care for them.

**Who can you serve this week?** Who do you know that has a practical need? ***Ask them how you can help them. Ask God to empower you to serve others with the humility of Jesus.***

*Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of Himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, He set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! – **Philippians 2:5-8 (The Message)***



# Exchange Stories

*"God, You've made such a difference in my life ... Will You give me opportunities and words to tell people all about it?"*

Sharing the story of God is essential to participating in God's mission. It helps people to hear how Christ has actually made a difference in our own life.

## **What difference has God made in your own life?**

It might take some reflection on your part to remember how Jesus has changed things for you, but you might be surprised by what comes to mind as you reflect on your story. Unexpected themes might emerge even as you share your story with others. This step can make a big difference in the lives of others, but in your own as well!

Here are some tips on how to share the story of God with others:

- When the timing seems appropriate and natural (don't force it), talk with your friend about how God has shaped your life.
- Point out how you see God at work in *their* life.
- Don't feel like you have to tell your life story all at once. Think bite-sized stories.

# Next Steps

## Daily

Every day, intentionally look for ways to connect with people on the other side of the fences in your life.

## Weekly

Commit to asking the people in your family or small group these questions:

- *What are the fences in your life?*
- *Who do you keep at a safe distance by putting up fences?*
- *How can you get over the fences in your life?*

You don't have to do this alone! We can help you find a missional community or small group where you can live on mission: **[faccalgary.com/smallgroups](http://faccalgary.com/smallgroups)**

*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine on us – so that Your ways may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. – **Psalm 67:1-2***



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