

## RISE: 5-Day Food and Water Challenge



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Usually, when we feel hungry or thirsty our first question is “*What* shall I eat or drink?” In a society where there are enormous numbers of options, and food and beverages are plentiful, most of us are not concerned with whether we will have *enough* to eat or water to drink, or whether what we drink will make us ill.

Despite economic events of the past year, we are still surrounded by abundance. Most of us have a place to live, work to do, and food on the table. It is easy for us to take eating and drinking, shelter and clothing, work and play, for granted. But there are many places in our world where morsels of food and sips of water are a matter of life or death. For people all over the world, the question is a daily one, “*Will* there be enough today?” And sadly, in circumstances that are contrary to God’s will, the answer that will resound over and over again today is “No.”

Every day, hunger claims the lives of 16,000 children. Another 5,000 children die from water-related illness—every day.

Hunger. Thirst. Life. Death.

And God’s question is:

*“Is not this the fast that I choose: Is it not to share your bread with the hungry ...”*

And God promises:

*“If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”* Isaiah 58:6-7, 10

## What Can We Do?



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### **We Stand With Those Who Hunger and Thirst**

For most Americans, nourishment is easy. We go to the grocery store, head to a restaurant, or drive past a window where prepared food is handed to us in a matter of seconds. We turn on a faucet, and clean water flows instantly into our homes.

We are an exception.

It's a critical situation. Every five seconds, a child dies from hunger-related causes. Every fifteen seconds, a child dies from water-related diseases. And with the global economic slide, another 100 million people have slipped into extreme poverty.

More than 1.1 billion people don't have access to clean water. In many parts of the world, women and children carry 40-pound jugs for miles to retrieve their daily allotment—and even then, the water may not be safe to drink.

### **The 5-Day Food and Water Challenge**

During this next week, we have an opportunity to deepen our awareness and concern for people, who on a daily basis, face the peril of not having enough food or clean water.

This challenge has two parts:

**We Stand: 5-Day Food and Water Challenge** We will eat and drink in solidarity with those who hunger and thirst as a way to grow in awareness of these critical needs that

many in our world face.

**We Give: Solutions to Hunger and Thirst** We will begin to take a stand against global hunger and thirst by providing funds for food and clean water solutions.

### ***Take the 5-Day Challenge***

As an act of solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the globe, we encourage you to eat for five days, March 30 – April 3, as the bottom economic half of the world does every day. Eat the three meals of your day using only the options below. Set aside the money you would have spent on additional groceries, and donate it to RISE: 5-Day Food and Water Challenge, which will support those who struggle with hunger and thirst.

### ***Meal Options***

Plain oatmeal or Cream of Wheat

A tortilla, rice, and beans

Rice with bits of fish or chicken, and a vegetable

Tap water

### ***Food Portions***

Portion sizes around the world are much smaller than a typical American meal. One cup or eight ounces is a generous portion. Meat is a luxury, with the average African consuming about  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce per day—the size of a small chicken nugget. Fresh fruit is rare, available only if locally grown and in season.

While these meals seem small by American standards, they actually represent diets in the broad middle when compared to the rest of the world. Half the world's population lives on no more than \$2 a day. Approximately 1 billion people live on even less—only \$1 per day.

### ***Sample Menu***

Remember that many of the embellishments we add to our food in America: butter, cheese, milk, sugar, sauces, etc. are luxuries that are not added to food in much of the world. One day's menu might look like:

Breakfast – 1 cup of plain oatmeal prepared with water

Lunch – One tortilla with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of rice and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of pinto beans

Dinner – One cup of rice with  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce chicken and a vegetable

Drink plenty of tap water throughout the day.

*(Remember this is an example only, you can vary the mix in whatever way works best for you.)*

### ***Doctor's Recommendations***

Please use your discernment in determining portion size and water consumption that will allow you to function in a safe manner while also experiencing what life is like for the other half of the world. If you have a medical condition, follow your physician's recommendations. Contact your doctor if you are unsure about participating in this challenge.

## Donate to Hunger and Thirst

In reducing your consumption of food and drink, you will save on your food bill. To support those who struggle with hunger and thirst, donate the savings on your food costs at the grocery store. Give the savings achieved from drinking tap water instead of bottled water or another beverage. Put the money you would have spent on a meal at a restaurant or fast food establishment into your fund. Offer the difference saved by not purchasing a Starbucks drink or a Jamba juice ...

Then donate your household savings from this experience to RISE: 5-Day Food and Water Challenge. Your donation can make a life-changing difference to people in need of food and clean, accessible water. All donations received by Centerpointe will be used to provide food and water solutions, in the fight against global hunger and thirst.

To make a donation, place your gift in the offering at any worship service or mail it to the Centerpointe office. Checks should be made payable to Centerpointe Presbyterian Church with a note of "Food and Water Challenge" in the memo.

## Involving Your Kids

Beyond standing with others against global hunger and thirst, the 5-Day Challenge is also an experiential opportunity for you to express compassion in a tangible way: seeing a need and doing something about it.

Throughout this challenge, use discernment with your children. Be wise with dietary limitations, and encourage honest conversation about how each person feels. Those discussions will be key in opening your family's eyes to the needs of others.

If you have school-aged kids who are participating in the challenge, help them determine how to explain global hunger and thirst to friends who ask about the rice and beans they eat and/or the cup they use to drink.

Set aside time each day to talk about the experience, and to pray for families around the globe who face hunger and thirst every day of their lives.

### Teaching a Faith Lesson to Your Kids

The Bible is very clear that God loves all people, and wants us to have personal involvement in helping those in need.

Discuss that value together as a family by looking at Matthew 25. Below are some suggested steps to guide your conversation:

Before gathering, print Matthew 25:35 on a piece of paper.

Start your time by praying together. Thank God for your day and invite Him to speak to each of you through what you read.

Read Matthew 25:34-40 together.

Explain that there are many places in our world where people don't have food and

clean water.

Show the Matthew 25:35 verse.

Ask the following questions:

*What do you think God means in this verse?*

*Is helping others with food and clean water our responsibility? Why or why not?*

*What changes can we make as a family so we can give money to help others with food and clean water?*

Decide as a family how to apply this scripture to your life, and discuss next steps in giving financially toward global hunger and thirst.

Pray for those who hunger and thirst in our world, and ask God to grow you in compassion and care for those less fortunate.

Other texts you can look at include: Isaiah 58:1-10; Psalms 10, 89:14, 106:3, 140:12; and Proverbs 21:3.

## Facts on Hunger and Thirst

### Hunger Facts

An estimated 963 million people in the world go hungry.

Each year, 3 million under-five children die because they are undernourished. Far more children live with undernutrition than die from it. For infants and young children, the effects of chronic malnutrition in the early years of life are largely irreversible. *(Source: The World Bank Group (2008). Nutrition: What is Malnutrition? July 17, 2008, <http://youthink.worldbank.org/issues/health/nutrition/malnutrition.php>)*

In the United States, 11.7 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means one in ten households in the U.S. are living with hunger or are at risk of hunger. *(Source: Household Food Security in the United States, 2005. USDA Economic Research Service. November 2006.)*

Research shows that preschool and school-aged children who experience severe hunger have higher levels of chronic illness, anxiety and depression, and behavior problems than children with no hunger. *(Source: Pediatrics, Vol. 110 No. 4. October 2002.)*

### The Global Water Crisis

Water is critical to life, health and sustainable development. Yet, worldwide, more than a billion people do not have access to this basic resource.

The global water crisis is a term that refers to the status of the world's water resources relative to human demand. This term has been applied to the worldwide water situation by the United Nations and other world organizations. The two main aspects of the crisis are overall scarcity of usable water and water pollution.

The United Nations, as part of the Millennium Development Goals set in the year 2000, specifically named water scarcity as a target, with a goal to "reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by the year 2015."

## **Water Facts**

### *Water and Health*

More than 1.1 billion people—approximately 20 percent of the world's population—lack access to clean drinking water. More than twice that—2.6 billion people—lack adequate sanitation. 25,000 people die every day because of an inadequate or contaminated water supply.

At any given time, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from a water-related disease.

Nearly 90 percent of all diseases in the world are caused by unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene. Every year, there are 4 billion cases of diarrhea as a direct result of drinking contaminated water; this results in more than 2.2 million deaths each year—the equivalent of 20 jumbo jets crashing every day.

The weakest members of communities are the most vulnerable; every day water-related diseases claim the lives of 5000 children under the age of five. That's roughly one every 15 seconds.

"Clean water and sanitation are among the most powerful preventative medicines for reducing child mortality. They are to diarrhea what immunization is to killer diseases such as measles or polio: a mechanism for reducing risk and averting death."

*(Source: United Nations Development Program, 2006)*

### *Water and Education*

More than 150 million school-age children are severely affected by waterborne parasites like roundworm, whipworm, and hookworm. These children commonly carry up to 1000 parasites at a time, causing anemia, stunted growth, and other debilitating conditions.

### *Water and Women*

Many women spend 15-20 hours per week collecting water, often walking up to 7 miles in the dry season.

It is typically women who collect water, often waiting for long periods, and having to get up very early or go out late at night to get their water; they carry heavy water containers for long distances over uneven terrain. It is women who have to buy, scrounge, or beg for water, particularly when their usual sources run dry. The tragedy is that the water they work so hard to collect is often dirty, polluted, and unsafe to drink.

Women trapped in this situation have little time for other activities such as childcare, rest, or productive work. The time spent collecting water disempowers women by reinforcing time-poverty and lowering income.

“Research in Uganda found households spending on average 660 hours a year collecting water. This represents two full months of labor, with attendant opportunity costs for education, income generation, and female leisure time.” *(Source: United Nations Development Program, 2006)*

## Poverty

The water crisis is, above all, a crisis for the poor. Almost two thirds of people who lack access to clean water survive on less than \$2 a day; one third live on less than \$1 per day. Some lack water because they are poor, others are poor because they lack water. But the statistics show a two-way relationship between poverty and water deprivation.

In Africa, the money lost from missed work opportunities due to water-related illness exceeds the amount of aid and debt relief to the region.

*Information and statistics have been gathered from Bread for the World, Living Water International, CARE, and Willow Creek Church (which developed the idea of the food and water challenge) websites. Thanks goes to each for sharing this valuable information.*