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21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

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# PRAYER & FASTING

We're excited to kick off the new year with 21 days of prayer and fasting as a church family! During this time, we'll intentionally slow down, refocus, and seek God's presence, voice, direction, and strength for our lives.

## 21 Days

This guide is designed to help you stay focused & intentional throughout the fast, offering a clear structure week by week and day by day. Over the next 21 days, follow these three simple steps to draw closer to God and invite Him to work powerfully in your life and the world around you.

1

### **Repentance**

*The first step in beginning the new year with prayer and fasting is repentance. Simply put, repentance means turning toward Jesus and allowing Him to transform our minds and hearts. As we start this fast, we ask God to reveal areas in our lives that need change and surrender them fully to Him.*

2

### **Restoration**

*After spending time seeking God and aligning our hearts with His, we move into the next step: restoration. We serve a God who restores! Restoration is His power to heal, rebuild, and return what is broken to its intended wholeness. In week two, we focus on asking God to heal and restore the broken and hurting areas of our lives.*

3

### **Rejoicing**

*Lastly, we rejoice! We celebrate and praise God because He is worthy of all our gratitude and worship. We give thanks for His Son, Jesus, and the priceless gift of salvation. This is a time to reflect on and acknowledge all that He has done in our lives and among us, filling our hearts with joy and thanksgiving.*

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Over the next 21 days we will walk through these 3 steps and seek God both individually and corporately.

# Fast

## What Is Fasting?



Fasting is a focused period of time when we disconnect from the world (Fasting), so that we can connect more to God (Prayer). It is a time to slow down, fix our focus, and silence the noise of life, to hear what God is speaking. There are many reasons and benefits to fasting, but biblical fasting always has one primary goal, which is to draw near to God.

Jesus didn't require fasting, but he assumed it would be done as an essential part of keeping a healthy soul. Just like our body needs food and water to stay healthy and energized, so our soul needs prayer and fasting. It removes the gunk and makes room in our hearts to receive what God wants to bring into our lives. We often relate the process to giving our soul a pressure wash or hitting the reset button.

# Pray

## What Is Prayer?



As we remove things in our lives through fasting, we fill that time and space with prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God. Like any conversation, it involves talking, listening, asking questions, and often just sitting in silence to hear God's response. He speaks through our thoughts & emotions, through reading the Bible, and many other ways.

# Before You Start

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medications, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

## Start Where You Are

Your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it's very important to know your body, know your options, and most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. We are all at different places in our walk with God. Likewise our jobs, daily schedules, and health conditions are all different and place various levels of demands on our energy. So most importantly, whether you've fasted before or this is your first time, start where you are.

*It's better to commit fully to something small, than to commit partially to something big.*

## Start Slow

Depending on the type of fast you choose, it is very important to prepare your body ahead of time before beginning the fast. Take a week or so to transition into your fast; otherwise, you could get sick. For example, if you would like to go on a fruits and vegetables or juice fast, start eliminating meat, white grains, and refined sugars from your diet the week before. If you are going to fast from caffeine, you might want to ease off of it over the course of a few days.

## Finish Well

The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheese burger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that. This is especially important if you fast from all foods for more than 7 days.

# Types Of Fasting

As you prepare to fast, it's important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. This section provides general information about different types of fasts, but it is important to remember there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another.

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## Water Fast

A water-only fast is the normal fast referred to in the Bible. This is how Jesus and the New Testament church fasted. A water fast is no eating of any food or drinking of any liquids except water. Periodic water fasts can be very beneficial, but precautions should be taken. For some people it is hard to perform effectively at their jobs and have energy for their families while drinking only water. We recommend consulting your physician first, and water fasting only for a day or two unless your circumstances and job allow for you to really disconnect while having the energy needed for the fast.



## Daniel Fast

*The Daniel fast is a great model to follow and one that is extremely effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline, and purification of the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred to fasts. In the book of Daniel we find two different times where the prophet Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he only ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods, as well as no meat or wine. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits, nuts, and vegetables. (A plant based diet) Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual.*



## Media Fast

While fasting typically refers to refraining from specific food items, you may also find it extremely beneficial to fast from a regular activity or habit. This might include things such as television, social media, or electronics. Prayer and fasting are not just about connecting to God but also about disconnecting from the world. Try to tune out some of the regular distractions from your day as much as possible. Replace that time with things that will nourish you spiritually.



## Selective Fast

In this type of fast you omit a specific item(s) from your meal plan. For example, you may choose to eliminate all red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. Most people can incorporate this type of fast relatively easily. It can also prove to be a great solution for people with specific dietary needs or medical conditions that may cause certain limitations.

# The Fast Zone

When most people start fasting, there is typically some level of discomfort. However, it is possible to get used to the fasting routine pretty quickly. Quite simply, you must learn to fast in a way that works for you. While any true fast does involve abstinence from food or at least certain types of food, typically different fasting combinations work better for different people. The goal to having a successful fast is all about finding what we like to call your Fast Zone, and that is different for everybody and can change depending on the season you are in.

The best way to describe your Fast Zone is the place where you feel light and spiritually in tune, your mind is easily focused on God and spiritual things, you have an increased spiritual energy, and you can feel the fast working. Just like runners know what their target heart rate is to see the benefits of their physical training, the Fast Zone is similar in a spiritual sense.

Finding your Fast Zone helps you choose both the type and length of fast. Let's say you choose to go on a Daniel fast (fruits, nuts, and vegetables). Should you eat beans? If you can eat beans and stay in your Fast Zone, go ahead. But for some people eating beans takes them out of the zone. Should you eat peanut butter? Probably not. Peanut butter is more of an indulgence, and not many people can stay in a Fast Zone while enjoying indulgences.

If you drink coffee regularly, one of the worst mistakes you can make is to fast for one to three days and cut caffeine out completely. Please don't do that, or you will spend this time grumpy and in withdrawal instead of enjoying God's presence.

There isn't one approach that works the same for everyone. Follow the Holy Spirit, mix it up, find what works for you, and stay in your Fast Zone!

# **Spend Time With God**

We really want to encourage you to look daily for opportunities to seek God. As you fast a meal or activity during the day, give that time to God. Spend quiet times with Him in prayer. Disconnect from the world and connect with Him in worship. Read and meditate on His word. Focus on His goodness and greatness. Use this guide to help you focus your heart and prayer times. Fasting is hard work, but it is worth it!

## ***Don't Forget!!!***

Most importantly, remember that the goal of these 21 days is about connecting with God and NOT about sticking perfectly to your fasting plan. If you mess up and eat that cookie, it's OK! Start again tomorrow. (God is not disappointed!) God is also not impressed by our ability to fast and pray perfectly. He simply wants to spend time with us. This guide and these 21 days of fasting, are simply a tool to help us accomplish that goal.

**“The goal of fasting is not just to go without food. The goal is to draw closer to God.”**

# REPENTANCE

**Psalm 139:23-34** Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

day 1)

day 2)

day 3)

day 4)

day 5)

day 6)

day 7)

## Daily Action

Read Psalm 139:23-24 each day this week and spend time in silence asking God to search your heart and reveal anything that needs to be surrendered to him. Write down the things that come to mind.

# RESTORATION

**Luke 4: 18-19** "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

**Psalm 51: 10-12** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

1) My Marriage \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) My Family \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) My Community \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) My Mind \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) My Body \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) My Desires \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) My Finances \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Action

This week we are asking God to bring healing and restoration to the areas of our lives that need it. Use the daily topics as a guide and write out a prayer each day, asking God for healing and restoration.

# REJOICING

**Psalm 145:8-13** The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. The Lord is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation. All of your works will thank you, Lord, and your faithful followers will praise you. They will speak of the glory of your kingdom; they will give examples of your power. They will tell about your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of your reign. For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Action

Find time each day this week to read Psalm 145. As you read it, let it position your heart into a posture of praise. List one or two things you can praise God for. Take the time to really inventory God's goodness in your life.

# Write It Down...

Here is some extra space to record your thoughts throughout the fast. We find it helpful to write down anything we think God might be saying, things we see God doing, people / things we are praying for, and even prayers that you are praying throughout the fast.

# C3 Prayer & Worship

<b>MON.</b> <i>Noon Prayer @ C3</i>	<b>TUE.</b> <i>Corporate Prayer &amp; Worship 6:30-7:15pm</i>	<b>WED.</b> <i>Noon Prayer @ C3</i>	<b>THU.</b> <i>Corporate Prayer &amp; Worship 6:30-7:15pm</i>	<b>SAT.</b> <i>Morning Prayer (Zoom)</i>
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# Church Wide Worship Night

January 24th | 6pm-8:30pm | The ELM