

Pray & Fast

Praying from the Heart
3 Week Resource



Pray & Fast

Praying from the Heart

Dear Church Family,

As I write this, the rain is falling and so are the beautiful leaves that I have enjoyed so very much this fall. The weather is changing. A new year is coming and with the new year comes not only weather changes, but a change in how we write our year, going from 2011 to 2012. As I take a few moments to think about the changes that have taken place over the last year and reflect on the reality that changes will take place this year, I am reminded of one constant – that God still answers prayer.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join myself and the Pastoral Team in starting the church year with a three week focus on Prayer and Fasting. We have prepared this booklet to assist you as you participate. During January, I will be preaching a 3 week series from the book of Ephesians on the prayers of the Apostle Paul, entitled, “PRAYING FROM THE HEART”.

THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS:

- I. PRAY CONCERNING YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
- II. PRAY FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO CHRIST
- III. PRAY FOR THE CHURCH
- IV. PRAY FOR RELATIONSHIPS

THE EXPECTATIONS:

- I. TO PRAY DAILY FOR THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS
- II. TO FAST AS THE LORD WOULD LAY UPON YOUR HEART

Included in this packet, you will find a cord. This cord is simply given as a reminder of your commitment to pray and fast as the Lord leads and directs you. The cord can be kept in your Bible, your Prayer and Fasting resource book, worn around your wrist, placed in your office or home, or placed on an object that you often have with you, like your cell phone. It may even provide conversation opportunities for you to share with others about prayer and your relationship with God.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to fill out a prayer commitment card found at the Welcome Center. Our Prayer Team would love to be praying specifically for you during our three week focus. Thank you for considering joining with us in this special time of starting the year 2012 with prayer and fasting.

Sincerely,

Pastor David Grinder

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PART I: SCRIPTURES AND THOUGHTS FOR THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS

A. PRAYING FOR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

God seeks a personal relationship with each one of us. He seeks a relationship where love is shared between both parties. God has standards and expectations for us if we are to have a close relationship. His love for us is greater than we can ever imagine. As we study, meditate, and pray through Scripture, we come to hear His still small voice and communicate directly with Him. As we learn about Him, our love and intimacy will blossom. (There is information on meditating upon Scripture in another document in this booklet.)

In 1 John 5:14-15, we read, *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him.”* When we pray Scripture, we know God hears us and we know God will hear and answer our prayer in His divine way and time. Pray Scripture by taking a specific Scripture and personalize it for yourself or the specific person you are praying for. For example; if you are focusing on the first Scripture listed below, John 15:9-10, you might pray along these lines: *“Holy Father, thank you for loving me; help me love you more each day. Protect me from distraction and from the enemy of our soul so that I will always remain in your love. Help me know and keep all your commandments so that I do remain in your love. Help me know and follow your example of following your Father’s will in all things, and help me do the same.”*

You could also pray in a similar manner for another person who is on your heart. You could ask God to help them know that God loves them, that they would recognize His love and would then remain in His love. Ask God to help the person know God’s commands and desire to follow them, to desire to remain in God’s love and so on.

The following list of Scriptures will help you know the Lord better as you read and study them. As you read each Scripture, make time to also think on each word or phrase and then personalize it, all the while asking God to speak to you and clarify its message for you on that day. Make time to pray the Scripture back to the Lord for yourself. Don’t hurry through the list; spend sufficient time on each one. Enjoy!

Pastor Gary Morrison

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John 15:9-10

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love."

Jeremiah 33:3

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

John 1:12

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

Matthew 6:31-33

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 11:28-39

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Romans 10:9-10

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

Romans 12:12

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Mark 12:30-31

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Psalms 103:12-13

*"As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

*As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;" **John 10:27**
"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."*

James 1:5-6

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."

Matthew 16:24

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'"

Luke 6:47-49

"As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Luke 12:31

"But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

John 14:21

"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

II Corinthians 5:21

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

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Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

James 4:8

"Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

I Peter 1:14-15

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;"

I John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

*"I am the gate;
whoever enters through
me will be saved. They
will come in and go
out, and find pasture.
The thief comes only
to steal and kill and
destroy; I have come
that they may have life,
and have it to the full."*

John 10:9-10

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B. PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH

Jesus, the model for all Christian believers to follow, offered prayer for the Church in John 17:20-26. He prayed for believers, (the believing Church), to impact those who did not believe in a way that they might come to faith. His prayer was that the Church would know the measure of love that God the Father has for His Son. A church having that measure of love would surely impact an unbelieving world. May we join the Lord in praying for the Church to know and share such love to a needy world and nation.

Pastor Jerry Miranda

Jesus cleansed the Temple to make it a “House of Prayer”

“On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Mark 11:15-17

Prayer was offered for the salvation of a nation

“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.”

Romans 10:1

Pray for new believers to enter a deeper relationship in Christ

“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” Ephesians 1:15-17

Pray for Pastors (messengers) to clearly preach the Word of God

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” Colossians 4:2-4

Pray for the Church to stand firm and grow in maturity while following the will of God

“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.” Colossians 4:12

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Pray for the Church to live a sanctified life in Christ

“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.” 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

Pray for the Church to live in such a way as to please God

“Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

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C. PRAYING FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO CHRIST

Jesus prayed in John 17:20 for those who would come to faith through the message of the believing community. Jesus prayed for unsaved souls. We, the Church, are to carry out His plan to bring unbelievers to His deliverance. We have a great privilege in being a part of His plan. We can pray for the souls we encounter, that they may come to faith. May the seeds we scatter germinate.

Pastor Jerry Miranda

Please consider these scriptures:

Daniel offered prayer for the nation of Israel, who had left God out of its ways. We may pray for the souls of our nation and for others.

“In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed:

“Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

“Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

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“Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.” Daniel 9:1-18

The Lord sent Philip to intersect a chariot on the desert road to offer salvation to an Ethiopian man. Pray that you may be a Philip to someone.

“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

*“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before the shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” Acts 8:26-38

Pray that the Gospel may spread rapidly

“Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.” II Thessalonians 3:1

Pray that the sins of others may be forgiven

“And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.” James 5:15

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Pray that we would share His praises with one another

*“Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.”* Psalm 96:1-3

Pray that we would be witnesses to the work of Christ

“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 9:22-23

D. PRAYING FOR RELATIONSHIPS

The Bible speaks of relationships from cover to cover. This is an astounding thing we find in reading the Bible – that God desires to have a very near relationship with each of us. The New Testament teaches that it is not merely just the prophets or the priests who can speak to and hear from God. A stand-out relationship in the Old Testament simply declares that Enoch “walked with God”. God desires nearness to us in relationship.

Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1-4). The disciples were told to address God as Father. That was kinship of the highest relationship. Jesus taught that we can restore a broken relationship to God through the prayer of repentance. Prayer, says James 5:16, is “*powerful and effective.*” In my own personal life, relationships were stressed and broken until I received the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Once the vertical relationship was restored with God, the Lord began improving those horizontal relationships I shared with others. Prayer is the source of grace, forgiveness, and strength, which are needed in order to have relationships that are pure and holy.

Pray for each other

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

James 5:16

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Doctors are called among other things, “to do no harm”. Believers are called to a higher order. Followers of Christ are called to bless and to do good to those who curse and persecute them. We are to love our enemies (Luke 6:27-28). In order to respond to relationships in the manner called by God, it will require the grace and help of God’s love and power. We must pray if we are to love others above ourselves. We are to mend broken relationships on earth. We are to be peacemakers. We are to seek out those who have differences with us and seek to restore our relationship with them (Matthew 5:23-24). We are called to be at peace with all men (Romans 12:18). We will need a supernatural power to fulfill that call. As we grow near to God, we find that grace.

Pastor Jerry Miranda

Scriptures to consider:

Pray for those who persecute you

“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
Matthew 5:44

Pray that others will be rooted and established in love

“...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love.” Ephesians 3:17

Pray that we might be active in sharing our faith

“I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” Philemon 1:6

Pray for good health

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” III John 1:2

Pray for those who mistreat you

“...bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

Luke 6:28

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PART II. JOURNALING

A. THOUGHTS ON JOURNALING

Journaling can take many forms. It can be an opportunity to express your heart by writing your prayers and thoughts to the Lord. Writing down the cares and burdens of your heart can help you empty yourself by surrendering the cares on your heart to the Lord. Journaling can assist in mediating upon the scriptures by writing down thoughts and applications for your personal life. Journaling can provide an opportunity to give God praise for what He has done and is doing in your life as you record some of the things going on in your life. Journaling can also provide a record of the way God is working in your life that can be a source of encouragement as you review them from time to time.

You will notice there are journal pages for the 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting included in this booklet. We would like to suggest for you to take the time to reflect on the scripture and the quote listed each day. They are meant to be starters, as you journal what the Lord is showing you or placing on your heart.

TIPS FOR JOURNALING

Journal from your heart

Relax and enjoy the journey

Consider what you hope to accomplish through journaling

Be consistent and try to do a little each day

Be willing to grow, learn, and develop

Don't worry about filling the page

“Ideas can come from anywhere and at any time. The problem with making mental notes is that the ink fades very rapidly.”

Rolf Smith

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PART III. PRAYER AND FASTING

A. THOUGHTS ON PRAYER AND FASTING

Prayer is the way to intimacy with God. Without a near relationship, we relegate God to a distant position in our lives that leads to erosion in the relationship. (Non-communication will achieve the same result in any relationship).

Prayer and fasting is found in both Old and New Testaments. The prophet Daniel had a burden on his heart to pray for the deliverance of Israel from Babylonian captivity. Daniel pleaded with God in “*prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes*” (Daniel 9:3). It is clear that Daniel was deeply moved in his heart to put sackcloth against his skin and fast and pray. Some call this prayer, intercessory prayer.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Christ stands between us, and we can only get in touch with our neighbor through Him.” Prayer and fasting is a way to gain greater nearness to God and man as He provides a view through the portal of His heart.”

Fasting, denying ourselves food for a time, helps us become more acutely aware of our Lord and His presence. While a complete fast is not recommended for everyone due to health issues, a partial fast may be an alternative for some by eliminating your favorite food for a time. (Favorite – not meaning broccoli or cauliflower). The aim is a greater awareness, nearness and hunger for God.
Pastor Jerry Miranda

Fasting is a personal experience between a person and God. Scripture makes it clear that fasting is to be done in secret. It instructs, “But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”
Matthew 6:17-18

Fasting flows out of a relationship with God. Though not actually a part of the normal worship service, it is unquestionably an element of personal worship. Fasting was an element of worship in the early church. Scripture records, “*While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off,*” Acts 13:2-3. R.T. Kendall states, “Fasting by itself is no magic answer to our problems. It is effective only when it symbolizes a deep longing for spiritual reality, and it demands a life of holiness and obedience to God.”

Pastor David Grinder

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B. SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Prayer and Fasting for Israel

“In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.”

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

“O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.”

Prayer is powerful

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

James 5:16

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“Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

“Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.” Daniel 9:1-18

Gain greater insight and understanding

“...while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.” Daniel 9:21-22

Fasting is between you and God

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting prescribed by Jesus

“They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.” Jesus answered, “Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.” Luke 5:33-35

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C. RESOURCES FOR FASTING

Fasting

There really is no better way to reset our spiritual compass and bring about refreshing in every area of our lives than through prayer and fasting.

We have set this time aside intentionally so that you can participate at any level. Whether you have done a twenty-one-day season of prayer and fasting before, or if this is your first time, you can start where you are and experience what God has in store for you in a powerful way.

You will find some tools to help you navigate through your personal twenty-one-day journey. As you read over the information, please consider how it applies to you and your personal circumstances and convictions.

We pray that you will experience the presence and power of God in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to Him over the next twenty-one days.

May God continue to bless you and enlarge you as you seek Him first!

Different Types of Fasts

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, and the like.

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.

In a fast, you may omit a specific item(s) from your meal plans. 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.

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Important Note: 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 medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

As you prepare to fast, it is important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. We have provided some general information about different types of fasts, however, it is important to mention that there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do. Do not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. Keep the main thing the main thing, which is drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God. Here are a few tips to keep in mind before getting started.

Start Where You Are

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. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but it's very important to know your own body, know your options and, most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Remember, the goal of fasting is not just to do without food. The goal is to draw nearer to God.

There isn't one approach that works the same for everyone. Follow the Holy Spirit, find what works for you!

Choose Your Type of Fast

While preparing for your fast, it is important to choose ahead of time what type of fast, or what combination, you will pursue. Not only will this help with making the necessary preparations to implement your plan, but as you commit to a specific fast ahead of time and know how you're going to do it, you will position yourself to finish strong.

Below you will find options and variations of fasts. As you read over the information, please consider how it may or may not apply to your personal circumstances and convictions.

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You may choose to fast all twenty-one days. On the other hand, you may choose to fast several days out of the twenty-one days, such as three or four days a week throughout the twenty-one day period. Maybe you will do that and do three to seven consecutive days at the end or you may choose to fast one meal a day. This is your personal decision and should be prayerfully considered as it applies to your circumstances.

Specific Food or Activity Fast

In this type of fast, you omit a specific item(s) from your meal plans. Or, you may exclude things such as television, social media, and the like, for a period of time.

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; the foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Juice Fast

A juice fast is simply consuming vegetable and fruit juices and water instead of solid food. Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan, as well.

Water Fast

A water-only fast is the normal fast referred to in the Bible. A water fast is just that - no eating of any food or drinking of any liquids except water. Consult your physician first before entering into a water fast.

“Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.”

Andrew Murray

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Begin and Break the Fast Well

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 fruit and vegetable or juice fast, start eliminating meat, white grains, and refined sugars from your diet the week before. Also, start to cut back quite a bit on dairy products and some of your caffeine intake.

It is very important to drink lots of water while fasting. Drinking about one hundred ounces of water per day will help to support your critical liver function. The liver is the filter for the body, so when you don't drink enough water, the liver doesn't function at its highest capacity.

Breaking your fast well is just important as beginning. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that.

To help you succeed with your fasting experience you can find resources and detailed guidance at the following websites or books:

Websites:

www.jentezenfranklin.org/fasting/
www.awake21.org

Books:

Fasting For Spiritual Breakthrough by Elmer Towns
Fasting by Jentzen Franklin

Pastor Larry Knight

“Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a source of sustenance beyond food.”
Dallas Willard

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D. A TESTIMONY ON FASTING

For years, both Cindy and I had talked about fasting, we had even made a few “attempts” to fast, but like many, became convinced that we just couldn’t fast. We had watched and talked with others as they fasted. I had participated in many conversations on the value and the impact of fasting. We heard firsthand stories of how God had worked as people fasted. We knew that fasting needed to be a significant part of our spiritual journey, yet we were not able to assimilate regular fasting into our lives.

We found ourselves more often saying, “I feel like I need to fast,” not really knowing why or how. However, the draw would not go away. One day, Cindy ran across a little book simply titled, *FASTING*. As Cindy read this little book and shared things that God was putting on her heart, we knew God was calling us to fast. God was messing with our hearts and our heads, but why? We jumped into scripture and found many scriptures that God used to speak to us and show us that God desired for us to seek His heart through a fast. We soon decided that we not only needed to fast, but that God had placed in us a desire to fast. With God’s help, we decided to begin the New Year with a fast. After much discussion and prayer, we decided on what kind of fast we would do, how long we would fast, and what we felt God was putting on our heart.

What happened surprised us (I hate admitting that)... it should not have surprised us at all. As we began to fast, we found an amazing new sensitivity to the Lord began to surface. We found ourselves hungry, but not for the things we were fasting from, but for the Lord. The Holy Spirit began to bring us closer together and closer to Him. We found that through the day we were drawn to pray...not just about our “stuff”, but for others. When we would sit down at the end of the day, we often found the Lord had put the same people on our heart, or we were drawn to read the same passage, as He put the same thoughts and challenges on our minds. The Lord taught us so much about ourselves and about Him.

We discovered in the days of fasting God drawing us to Him. We did not so much pray for what we wanted, but for what God wanted in us. Fasting was not a way for us to “get” God to do what we wanted, it really was us getting God’s heart in us. God changed us. Our sensitivity to God increased like we never really expected. Looking back after our first fast, and even now, we see ways God has been at work, and we experienced God changing us. Has God answered many of our prayers? YES! That is not the goal; it is us getting closer to God. It is God changing our hearts.

Now, we find ourselves ready to fast as we feel God calling us. Not so we can get God to work for us, but so we can draw closer to Him and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts.

Cindy and I make it a practice to begin our year with a fast. We would challenge you to spend some time as you begin the year to fast as God leads, to break away from the regular routine of life, hear God’s voice, and experience Him in a new way.

We’re Pastor Larry & Cindy Knight and that’s part of our journey.

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PART IV. OTHER RESOURCES

A. MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURES

Deepen your intimate relationship with God by praying Scripture and by meditating upon the words from the Bible. Desire, allow, and invite the Lord to speak to you personally. Meditation on God's Word can take several forms. I have noted three different ways people use for intimate two-way communication with the Lord, but you can use one that best fits you.

Write the specific Scripture, what you sense the Lord is speaking to you, your questions, His responses, and so on, in a journal.

Make time to review past entries in your journal if that helps you remember all that He has shared with you and is teaching you. The review will also remind you of specific ways He has blessed you which will enhance your time of praise and adoration.

Pastor Gary Morrison

Method 1

Read a paragraph of the Bible and meditate upon three questions related to that paragraph. First, ask, "What information does the passage convey?" Second, "What is the meaning of all of the information and how does the meaning connect with the larger teachings of Scripture?" When you have completed that phase, ask, "What are the implications of this passage for me?"

(From: *Praying; Finding Our Way Through Duty to Delight*, by Packer and Nystrom)

Method 2

Put yourself into a particular scene of the Gospels. Use your imagination to put yourself into the scene as an observer, watching and listening, focusing your attention on the words and acts of God, or of Jesus. Ask yourself how the words have implications upon you. Ask what truth, insight, or promise you should continue to think on, meditate upon, or pray upon.

(From: *Praying; Finding Our Way Through Duty to Delight*, by Packer and Nystrom)

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Method 3 – the 3 P's

Ponder the text - spend time lingering on each word. Ask questions like these, What does this word mean here and in other places? Why might the author have used this word instead of another? How does it relate to the words before and after it? etc.

Personalize the text – see the implications of the words to your own life; allow the Holy Spirit to determine what part of your life needs it.

Pray the text – direct the truth of the text back to the Lord, align your words and heart with what you've heard the Lord says to you.

From *Living Prayer; The Lord's Prayer Alive in You*, by Dennis Fuqua

B. MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURES, LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of meditating and praying the Scripture. It is a four step process for reading Scripture and listening to the Lord. Its purpose is to develop an intimate relationship with God by praying Scripture.

Introduction:

- Do you thirst for more of Jesus? God put that within us. The Scripture says, "*If any one is thirsty, come unto me.*"
We must have nourishment to grow.
- Psalm 18:19, "*...he rescued me because He delighted in me.*" We are called to delight in Him, also.
- We move from prayer and Scripture reading being a duty to becoming a delight by growing an intimate relationship with God.
- Seek God out of delight, not duty – relationship vs. religion
- Cultivate a relationship – takes time, sharing, listening

We need to have a regular Bible reading plan, we need to spend time in prayer, and we need to also have a two-way communication. It's the third piece that this addresses. The focus here is on hearing and intimacy with God.

Imagine going into the Holy of Holies and sitting before God.

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Step 1: Slowly, reverentially, read a brief passage in the Bible

- Read so you can listen to the still small voice – to hear God
- It's like reading a love letter
- It is not ordinary reading, like reading a novel
- Deep reading
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind, heart
- Read a brief passage, read it again, again... be attentive

Step 2: Meditation – Ask God to give you a word or phrase He wants to talk with you about.

- Know God has a new word for you each day
- Pay attention to feelings as you read
- God will speak to us
- Pay close attention to each word and phrase, then repeat – slowly and prayerfully

Step 3: Prayer – in response to God's Word

- It is not intercession, petition, praise – we need to do all, but this is not them
- We are not doing all the talking
- It is two-way conversation; keep company with God, a loving conversation
- Ask Him to purify your mind
- Ask God why He gave you that word, phrase – LISTEN
- God often speaks with a “still small voice”
- Your goal is intimacy with God
- Write in a journal the thoughts that come to your mind
- Write questions that come – wait – write responses from God
- Ask God what is most important in His heart
- The answer we get is not as important as the time we spend with God
- Answer back what you think is His answer
- Sit like Mary sat

“Satan trembles when he sees the
weakest Christian on his knees.”
William Cowpe

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Step 4: Contemplation with Jesus – sit silently at the feet of Jesus

- Cease talking so you can listen
- A difficulty is a wandering mind – ask God to control it
- Use names of God, like Abba, to help refocus your mind
- Remember, Jesus wants an intimate relationship with each of us
- We must take the steps to daily open the door of our hearts to Him
- Ask, “Jesus I love you, what are you trying to tell me?”

Revelation 3:20, *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

God’s word to Peter at the transfiguration, in Matthew 17:5, reads, *“This is my son, whom I love: with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him.”*

Our talk is not as important as our listening to Jesus.

This is for the person who –

- Is seeking a richer life,
- Longs for greater intimacy with Jesus,
- Wants more of Jesus,
- Is willing to pay the price for a better relationship

My personal experience-

- I sit with God in this way after I have read Scripture. I read from the daily devotional I am using through the year and meditate upon the specific verse used in the day’s devotion.
- Many days, I have “sensed” a word or phrase standing out. Then, I have a conversation.
- Other days, I have not sensed anything. I need to remember sitting at the Lord’s feet is always worth the time.
- Most days, I have to fight distraction.
- Some days, I have sensed He wanted me to focus on the entire Scripture verse.
- I often ask Him questions I have about ministry, decisions I need to make, etc.

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God has richly blessed me. I encourage you – make time to grow in your relationship. I believe we are all meant to be life-long learners.

One particular morning, I sensed the Lord highlighting one word from the Scripture I was meditating on, it was the word “turn”. I then sensed Him telling me to continually turn to the Lord. Self, the world, Satan, strive to turn us away, even in tiny increments that are often unnoticeable. I then remembered that C. S. Lewis, in his book, *Screwtape Letters*, shared that one of the devil’s most important weapons is to slowly, one small increment at a time, turn people from the truth, until finally they are faced away from God. I choose to turn to the Lord as each new day starts.

I am finding that prayer is so much more than a duty, than a list of concerns I need to present to God. It is a time of communion with God, sitting at His feet, worshipping, listening, learning, and being strengthened to go out and serve. May God find us faithful servants with the balance of loving Him with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, and then go out and serve with all our strength.

I would encourage all of us to make time to meditate with the Lord each day. A really close relationship with a friend here on earth takes time to develop, so does our conversation with the Lord. It has been my experience that the more I meditate on Scripture, whether I use this method or one noted in another document in this booklet, the more I learn to recognize His voice. What a great blessing that is.

Learning with you,
Pastor Gary

“Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty.”

E.M. Bounds

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C. Five Steps to Victory in Prayer

Luke 11:1-4

Praise: The Tuning-in Step

"Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name."

- a. Who He is.
- b. What He has done in scripture and in our lives.
James 1:17

Cooperation: The Connecting Step

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

- a. Pray for God's kingdom to come in your city, your church, and family; every part of your life.
- b. Submit and fit into God's will and leadership in your life. Romans 12:1

Petition: The Receiving Step

"Give us this day our daily bread."

- a. Concerns - Philippians 4:4
- b. Intercession
- c. Asking for wisdom - James 1:5
- d. Praying for and receiving prosperity - III John 2
- e. Be specific. Detail in steps for what you are asking.

Forgiveness: The Healing Step

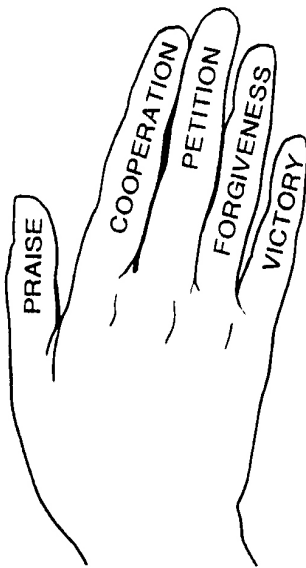
"And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sinned against us."

- a. Confession and cleansing - I John 1:9
- b. Forgiving and blessing those who have wronged you.
Hebrews 12:15; James 3

Victory: The Can Do Step

"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever."

- a. Ask for and claim victory over temptation.
James 4:7-8
- b. In Jesus' name claim deliverance and protection from Satan's attacks - I John 4:4
- c. Be glorified in my life.
- d. Make positive affirmations - Philippians 4:13



Further helps for extended prayer

Spend time in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and waiting before the Lord.

Pray through your appointments for the day, asking for help, guidance, and blessing.

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D. Intercessory Prayer List

"I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone... This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:1, 3

Pray for those who do not know Jesus Christ, that they will accept Christ as Savior and Lord. Each one of us has a circle of influence. These are friends, relatives, peers, and associates at work or at school. People are more open and trusting of someone they know. In the New Testament, Jesus had the disciples use these pre-existing circles of influence to reach others for Him. See Luke 10. Who has God placed in your life that He wants you to influence for Him? Write their names here and pray for them. As you receive direction on what you might do to share Christ with them, write it down.

Name _____ Date _____

Direction _____

Answered _____

Name _____ Date _____

Direction _____

Answered _____

Name _____ Date _____

Direction _____

Answered _____

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E. Prayer Requests

Specific Prayer Requests _____

_____ Date _____

Answered _____

_____ Date _____

Specific Prayer Requests _____

_____ Date _____

Answered _____

_____ Date _____

Specific Prayer Requests _____

_____ Date _____

Answered _____

_____ Date _____

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E. Prayer Requests

Specific Prayer Requests _____

_____ Date _____

Answered _____

_____ Date _____

Specific Prayer Requests _____

_____ Date _____

Answered _____

_____ Date _____

Specific Prayer Requests _____

_____ Date _____

Answered _____

_____ Date _____

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F. Bibliography of Recommended Books for Further Study & Development

Reading one book during the three week focus would be a great way to start the new year.

Fasting, by Jentzen Franklin

Charisma House Publishers, 2007 - ISBN # 0-9759594-8-4

How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life, by Dr. Gregory Frizzell

Published by The Master Design, 2000 - ISBN # 1-930285-00-0

How to Pray, by Elmer Towns

Published by Regal, 2006 - ISBN-13: 978-0830741878

Intimacy with the Almighty, by Charles Swindoll

W Publishing, Inc., Dallas, Texas, 2000 - ISBN # 0-8499-5610-2

Knowing God Through Fasting, by Elmer Towns

Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2005 - ISBN # 0-7684-2069-5

Living Prayer: The Lord's Prayer Alive in You, by Dennis Fuqua

Published in Association with D.C. Jacobson & Associates LLC, 2010

ISBN # 978-1-61658-027-8

Prayer Begins with Relationship, by Cynthia Hyle Bezek

Published by NavPress, 2011 - ISBN # 13: 978-1-61521-976-6

Prayer: Does it Make a Difference?, by Philip Yancey

Published by Zondervan, 2010 - ISBN-13: 978-0310328889

Prayer Power, by Peter Lundell

Revell Publisher, 2009 - ISBN # 978-0-8007-3263-9

Praying: Finding Our Way Through Duty and Delight, by J.I. Packer & Carolyn Nystrom

Published by Inter-Varsity Press, 2006 - ISBN # 978-0-8308-3354-2

The Experience of Prayer, by Terry W. Glaspey

Cumberland House Publishing, Nashville, TN, 2000

ISBN # 1-58182-134-4

Walking with God: 30 Days to Change Your Prayer Life, by John Franklin

Available through johnfranklinministries.org

SKU # NM31245