

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Welcome to 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting. During this time, our church family will be seeking God's heart for our lives, our church, and our world. May this be a season when we see a fresh move of God in our midst, with His power and His glory being made evident to all.

WEEK ONE (JANUARY 11-17)

MONDAY: Throughout the centuries, Christians have used times of prayer and fasting as opportunities to seek God's heart and experience spiritual breakthrough. The focus is not on the actual acts of fasting and praying, but on the goal of drawing closer to God and experiencing more of His power and presence in our lives.

As a spiritual discipline rooted in Scripture, fasting ignites a spiritual hunger for more of God. As you fast, you choose to go without something good in order to focus more intently on something better. You assume a spirit of humility and submission before God, inviting His Holy Spirit to take you deeper into your relationship with Him. When combined with prayer and repentance, fasting can position you for tremendous growth!

Though fasting typically includes going without food—whether all food for the duration or only selected foods or meals—it may involve going without something else instead. For example, you might choose to fast from social media, television, coffee, or anything else that you enjoy. Rather than devoting time and energy to those pursuits, you choose instead to focus on the things of God and experience more of Him.

Through humble prayer, tell God what you will be fasting during these next 21 days and identify the area of your life where you most need Him to step in. Determine what lifestyle adjustments you will need to make, then use this reading plan to guide you through these 21 days. Write down your most needed breakthroughs and submit them to God.

Parents: Discuss with your children how prayer and fasting are spiritual practices that prepare the way for God to work in your lives. Help your children identify what they will fast and how they would like to see a move of God.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 58:6-9; Matthew 6:16-18; Acts 13:2-3.

Prayer: Father in heaven, during these next 21 days, I commit to seeking You wholeheartedly and ask You to reveal Yourself to me in new and fresh ways throughout this journey. With humility, I give You permission to do whatever You want to do in me or through me. Amen.

TUESDAY: Our world is full of darkness. People all around us are lost, hopeless, and helpless. Yet into this world of darkness, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus. He is the light that shines through the darkest night. His light always overcomes the darkness, and where His light shines, there is always hope.

Jesus described Himself as the "Light of the World". His light reveals, it purifies, and it shows you which way you should go. While those living in darkness are blinded and unable to find their way, those in the light are able to see clearly to safely reach their destination.

In what ways is Jesus "the Light of the World"? How has He brought light to your life?

Parents: Talk with your children about the differences between light and darkness. Describe how Jesus has been "the Light" in your life. How does this affect the way you approach life?

Scripture Reading: Psalm 27:1-5; John 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for shining Your light into my life. I praise You for the assurance that You never abandon me; You are always right there with me. Thank You for Your guiding presence in my life. Amen.

WEDNESDAY: Jesus set a standard of grace and forgiveness, not legalism and condemnation. He went to the Cross in order to offer you forgiveness, and He offers it to you freely. The expectation, however, is that you will in turn extend forgiveness to those who have hurt or offended you, too.

Is there someone to whom you need to offer grace and forgiveness today? What benefits are experienced by being a forgiving person?

Parents: Talk with your children about the importance of offering forgiveness. What does it mean to “turn the other cheek”? Whether with siblings, parents, or schoolmates, how are you acting like Jesus when you forgive others?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 6:27-31; Romans 8:1-2.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for Your amazing gift of forgiveness. I praise You I can live in freedom instead of guilt and condemnation. As I have received Your grace in my life, teach me to extend grace to those around me by offering forgiveness when they wrong me, too. Amen.

THURSDAY: Invite God to lay three specific people on your heart that you can influence for Him during the next 12 months. They might currently be far from God, they may be struggling spiritually, or perhaps they could simply use a mentor. Identify ways you can help them grow in faith and the steps you will take to initiate it.

Parents: Read John 3:16-17 with your children, then talk about God’s great love that propelled Jesus to enter into His Creation. Explain how He came to rescue each of us from bondage to sin.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:35-38; John 3:16-17.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for coming to save me. You have rescued me and set me upon a lifelong journey with You, and I know that You extend the same offer to each and every person. Use me to shine Your love to those around me. Teach me to gently and lovingly point others toward You. Amen.

FRIDAY: Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch woman who suffered in one of the concentration camps during the Second World War, described the futility of worrying about things you cannot control. She said, “Worry doesn’t empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.” Far too often, though, worry is permitted to preoccupy our thoughts and lives.

What causes you to become anxious? What thoughts keep you awake, tossing and turning at night? Take the time to memorize Philippians 4:4-7. Through prayer, ask God to replace worry with hopefulness, peace, and joy.

Parents: Create a safe environment for your children to express the things that cause them to worry or fear. Spend time praying about these together.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:4-7; 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Prayer: God, regardless of the worries or concerns I might face, I’m grateful that You invite me to bring them before You and lay them at Your feet. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, remind me that You’re on my side and that I can trust You. Amen.

SATURDAY: God is a generous God, and He has demonstrated this generosity to us in a multitude of ways. As He transforms and shapes us by His presence, He teaches us to also be generous. Like with fasting, He uses generosity to break the hold that “stuff” can have on us, enabling us live in freedom instead.

Express this generosity by choosing at least three items in your home to give away to someone else. Select items that are in good condition, not ones that have outlived their usefulness. Do your best to select items that would carry some significance for those who receive them. Give up those items for the benefit of others, thanking God for the opportunity to be a blessing in their lives.

Parents: Involve your children in this process while discussing the value of generosity.

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 11:24-25; Acts 2:44-47; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

Prayer: Father, thank You that you are a generous God. As I grow more and more like You, teach me to show others the same generosity You have shown toward me. Amen.

SUNDAY: Set aside a block of time for worshipping God and expressing your adoration toward Him. It might take 30 minutes, an hour, or more. It might involve singing along with some worship music, or it could mean sitting in quiet reverence. Perhaps you’ll be prompted to express your love for God through a poem or artwork. Praise Him for adopting you as His beloved child. Thank Him for bringing you into His spiritual family.

Parents: Invest time with your children today, whether playing a game at home or going out into the community. God has entrusted you with the raising of your children, so devote time and attention into your relationship with them. Have fun and create some new memories together!

Scripture Reading: Psalm 19:1-14; Psalm 86:8-13; Psalm 105:1-7.

Prayer: Jesus, I am honoured to be part of Your family. Thank You for inviting me into community with You and for welcoming me as a full participant in Your Kingdom. I am so grateful for all You have done. Amen.

WEEK TWO (JANUARY 18-24)

MONDAY: Words are powerful, carrying with them the power of life and death. They can build up, and they can tear down. They can create, and they can destroy. They can express gratitude, and they can convey contempt.

How can you speak words of life today? Is there someone you could bless? Call a friend or family member who could use a word of encouragement and speak into his or her life. Pray for them to experience a fresh sense of God's presence.

Parents: Guide your children to create a card or letter to express thanks to someone who has provided them with a positive influence and an example to follow.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 33:4-9; Luke 6:44-45; Ephesians 4:29-32.

Prayer: God, thank You that none of us travel through life alone. You are with us, and You call us to be there for one another. Use me to be an encouragement in someone's life today. Amen.

TUESDAY: People often find themselves pretending to be something they are not. They might appear to have it all together outwardly, but inwardly they may be battling with a multitude of problems and temptations. God does not look upon your appearance, though; He looks at the heart.

What, if anything, would you like to lay bare before Him? In what ways do you want to experience more of His grace and mercy today?

Parents: While a person's actions are important, God is much more concerned with his or her heart. Name some of the qualities He wants to develop within each of us.

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 139:23-24; Hebrews 4:12-16.

Prayer: Father, thank You for what You are doing in my life. I do not want to merely do the right things; I want You to make me Christlike in my character, my motivations, and my passions. Please continue to transform my heart to reflect Your heart. Amen.

WEDNESDAY: God has chosen to work through His people. The gifts and abilities He has given you are intended to be used in loving service for others. Only as we each live and serve according to God's design can we reach our full potential, individually and corporately.

Consider the gifts and abilities God has given you. Can you identify at least one practical way you can show God's love by using your gifts and abilities in service to others?

Parents: Explain to your children how they can serve God by serving others. Recognize times they have selflessly served others already.

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:4-10; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Peter 4:10.

Prayer: Lord, teach me what it means to serve others in love. Give me opportunities to use the gifts and abilities You have given me to be a blessing to others. Amen.

THURSDAY: As we reach the halfway point of these 21 days, what has God been revealing to you so far? What have you been learning about Him? What have you discovered about yourself? Are there actions, thoughts, or attitudes for which you need to seek forgiveness? Have you gained a new appreciation for what He is doing in your life?

If He has revealed something powerful to you, share it with someone else. If He has uncovered areas of sin, confess it and ask Him to forgive you. If He has reminded you how you have harmed others, seek reconciliation.

Parents: Prompt your children to say a prayer of repentance for something they have said or done that requires forgiveness.

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 4:9; Deuteronomy 8:10-14; James 1:22-25.

Prayer: Father, my desire is to glorify You in word, thought, and deed. Forgive me for times I have failed. I ask you to cleanse me and empower me to live a life of integrity before You. Amen.

FRIDAY: Jesus is the Light of the World, and He has directed you as His follower to shine His light all around. Take a walk or drive through your community, praying for the people in the homes you pass. Pray for the transforming presence of Christ in their lives.

As you pray, ask the Lord to direct you and be responsive to His leadings. Seek His heart and divine insight. Recognize the deep compassion God has for the people all around you, and invite Him to instill that same heart within you. Then, motivated by this compassion, offer yourself to serve as His representative within your community.

Parents: Pray aloud during your prayer walk or prayer drive, taking turns with your children as you go.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 2 Corinthians 4:1-12.

Prayer: Jesus, I pray for those in my community who are far from You. I pray that they come to know You personally, that You may be glorified in their lives and homes. I offer myself to serve as Your representative, lovingly and gently pointing people toward You. I ask this in Your holy name, Amen.

SATURDAY: Perform an act of kindness for someone else as an expression of God's love. For example, you could provide free babysitting for a single parent, pay for someone's gas, or prepare a meal for someone who is lonely, sick, or overwhelmed. Opportunities to show kindness abound, so be attentive and creative. With no expectation of reciprocity, how can you selflessly seek to bless another?

Parents: Choose an act of kindness that your children can perform alongside you.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:13-16; Galatians 5:13-14; Philippians 2:1-13.

Prayer: Lord, I'm grateful for the privilege of representing You and showing Your love through simple acts of kindness. May the things I do for others be a true reflection of Your great love for them. Amen.

SUNDAY: A preoccupation with the problems and difficulties of life can leave us enslaved to feelings of bitterness, criticism, and frustration. This is not God's desire for us, however, as He calls us to live in freedom instead. Rather than becoming consumed by negativity, choose to focus on His many blessings, developing a heart of gratitude and grace in response to His goodness.

How has God blessed you? What are the top three ways He has recently shown His favour toward you? Glorify Him and spend time in His presence, giving thanks for all He has done.

Parents: While eating a meal together as a family, take turns describing the many blessings of God.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 103:2; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Prayer: Lord, I celebrate Your presence within me. I have hope because of who You are and what You have done in my life. Thank you for your many blessing in my life. Be glorified through me I pray. Amen.

WEEK THREE (JANUARY 25-31)

MONDAY: Life can be chaotic, and sometimes we add to the chaos ourselves. Amidst the commotion of activity and noise that we surround ourselves with, we can find ourselves unable to rest in God's presence or to hear Him speak into our lives. Indeed, the thought of spending time in solitude and silence before Him might seem like nothing more than a lofty ideal.

As difficult as it may be, set aside your busyness for 30 minutes today for the purpose of connecting more with God. Instead of giving yourself to all the distractions vying for your attention, choose to invest that time in still silence, meditating upon God and His Word. Invite God to speak to you and receive whatever He has to say.

Parents: Encourage your children to sit in silent prayer, too, for one minute per year of age. Reiterate that this is not punishment; it is an opportunity to enjoy the presence of God. Finish with a discussion about the experience.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 46:1-11; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2; Mark 1:35-39.

Prayer: God, as I spend this time in silence, I invite You to speak into my life and reveal Yourself to me. Give me ears to hear and eyes to see what You have for me today. Amen.

TUESDAY: Jesus promised His followers that, as long as they remained in Him, they could ask whatever they wanted and their request would be granted. (See John 15:7.) This was not a license to act selfishly, however, but rather an invitation to align themselves with Him. His desires would become their desires, which would be reflected in the requests they made.

The same is true for followers of Jesus today. As you draw closer to Him, you experience Him working in and through you according to His will and for His glory. Your wants begin to mirror His wants. Your thoughts begin to reflect His thoughts. Your heart begins to resonate with His heart.

What would you like to ask of God today? Express your heart's desire to Him, while inviting Him to guide and shape you in the process.

Parents: Talk about the difference between praying selfishly and praying selflessly. What does it mean to remain in Jesus while asking God to act?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:31-33; Matthew 26:39-42; John 15:5-8.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for loving me so selflessly and giving of Yourself so freely. Thank You, too, for making Your power available to me through prayer. Help me and guide me to use it according to Your will and for Your glory. Amen.

WEDNESDAY: Bring glory to Jesus by offering praise for who He is and what He has done in your life. Identify three ways you have been changed by His presence, then share them with someone else.

Parents: Talk with your children about what it means to grow in your love for Jesus. Help them put into words what following Jesus means to them.

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 5:22-25.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your transformative work in my life. Little by little, You are changing me into Your glorious image. Please continue this work until that day when it is finally finished and I stand complete in Your presence. Amen.

THURSDAY: God designed us to live in community with one another, encouraging and spurring one another on in our spiritual walks. Pray today for those who God has placed around you in Christian community.

Parents: Guide your children to pray for their teachers and their children's ministry leaders.

Scripture Reading: Romans 1:8-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25.

Prayer: Father, thank You for those You have placed around me on this faith journey. Bind us together in community, empowering us to support, serve, and encourage one another along the way. Amen.

FRIDAY: The message of Jesus is for you, but not only for you. It is for every other person on the planet, too. Is God laying a particular country or people group on your heart today? Perhaps one that holds a personal connection for you? Spend some time praying that the Word of God would be proclaimed with power and that lives would be transformed by His grace in that part of the world.

Parents: Pull out a globe or map and talk with your children about how missionaries have gone throughout the world to share the message of Jesus, often at great personal risk. Choose one country and look up information about it. As a family, pray that the people in that country would be receptive to Jesus. Pray for the safety and effectiveness of those proclaiming His message throughout the region.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:35-38; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.

Prayer: Lord of the harvest, I pray today for missionaries who have travelled to foreign lands as Your ambassadors, often at great personal risk. I pray for Your blessing and anointing upon them, that they might see abundant fruit from their ministry. Amen.

SATURDAY: Write down your story. Describe what life was like before encountering Jesus, how you came to know Him, and how your life is different now because of Him. Avoid making it too complicated; simply express who Jesus is to you. See if you can clearly tell your story in two minutes or less. Then pray that God will give you the boldness to seize opportunities to share your story with others.

Parents: Practice telling your story with your children, and allow them to tell you their stories, too.

Scripture Reading: John 9:13-25; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Peter 3:15-16.

Prayer: Jesus, You have made all the difference in my life. Give me opportunities to tell others what You have done within me, that they may come to know You, too. Amen.

SUNDAY: Reflect on your experiences as you break this 21-day fast. What has Jesus been revealing to you about Himself, yourself, or others? For what experiences are you most grateful? What new step is He now calling you to take?

Parents: Allow your children to tell you about their experiences during these 21 days, too.

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 3:1-6; Romans 8:31-39; Philippians 1:3-6.

Prayer: Father, I thank You for Your work within me. You have refined me and transformed me, and I praise You for all You have done. Even though the process can be difficult, I know that You are doing something wonderful. Thank you for the new life You have given me. Continue to lead me and shape me I pray. Amen.