

# prayer & fasting

I believe that fasting truly changes the lives of those who choose to go on this spiritual journey. This is not for the faint of heart, but for those who are truly seeking all that God has in store for them. Fasting is a sacrifice and a discipline, both of which are keys to success in any area of life. I am asking you to make some sacrifices for the next 10 days and to pray with us corporately believing that at the end of this time you will have experienced a new found level of closeness with God and felt His presence urging you to make adjustments in your life that may have previously been difficult.

Before starting a fast, be sure to consult your physician if you have existing medical diagnosis's.

## **Fasting is an expectation:**

Jesus, in His inaugural sermon on the mount began to give the disciples and those who heard Him a perspective change about numerous things. Along with instructions about persecution, enemies, identity, and prayer, He gives us some guidelines around fasting found in Matthew 6:16-18: *Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the [a]hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you [b]openly.*

Jesus didn't say, "If you fast", however, he stated, "When you fast" indicating that it is an expectation that God has for our lives as followers of Jesus. We must have a lifestyle of prayer and fasting that surrenders our hearts, minds, and lives to Him on a regular basis.

- Fasting gets YOU out of the way so that God can move.
- Fasting sharpens your spiritual insight and sensitivity to The Voice of Holy Spirit.
- Fasting changes YOU, not God. (Malachi 3:6)
- Fasting Creates intimacy with God
- Fasting is to be done in secret (don't broadcast with the motive to be "seen" or applauded)
- Fasting should be filled with times of prayer, worship, and reading the Word of God.
- Fasting is an opportunity for worldly appetites to decrease, and your godly appetite to increase.

***\*Preparing for the Fast...***

**WHEN** will you pray?

**WHERE** will you pray?

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**WHAT** will you pray for?

**WHAT** will your fast meal plan and schedule be?

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***\*Guideline for the Fast...***

**1. Fast as Spiritual Commitment**

**2. Be Specific about Sacrifices, Menus, Worship and Devotion Times**

**3. Reflect Inner Desire by Outer Discipline**

**REMEMBER:**

- The Fast will take place Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> @ 12 am - Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> @ 12 pm.
  - The Fast requires abstinence from fried food (meat, if possible), junk foods, sugar and strong drink.
    - If you must eat meats consider baked poultry and fish
  - **Join Daily Devotions @ 11:30 am via teleconference @ 727-731-1671 and Social Media Sites.**
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Over the next ten days along with Fasting, it is imperative to spend time in Prayer, Worship and Meditation. Below you will find ten areas to focus on through-out the day. Make a plan on how you will integrate these practices into your daily lifestyle.

**I. Remember and Rejoice in the Character of God. Wake-up Scripture Reading (8:15am)**

Reflect and meditate on the character of God: he is all powerful, all knowing, never-changing, ever-present, full of loving-kindness, mercy and grace toward all who call on his name. **Psalm 27:1-2**

*1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.*

**II. Pray Specifically. Morning Prayer Focus (10:15am)**

Express your fears, anxieties, and concerns to the Lord. Pour out your heart to him. Seek his face and ask for him to hide you in his shelter during this time of trouble. **Psalm 27:3-5**

*3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. 4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. 5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.*

**III. Sing a Song of Praise to God. Praise and Worship (12:15pm)**

Sing or listen to a hymn, song, or psalm. As you do, reflect on the Lord's goodness, and ask him to help you trust him with your fears. **Psalm 27:6**

*6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.*

**IV. Pray for Community and World.** Prayer Time (2:15pm)

Pray for the needs of the world around you: family members, neighbors, medical workers, governing officials, those who are suffering financially, and those who are sick. Ask the Lord to sustain, provide, heal, and guide. Ask him to give his people endurance, wisdom, and hope. **Psalm 27:7**

*7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!*

**V. Pray for those who do not know the Lord.** Prayer Time (4:15pm)

Consider those in your life who do not know the Lord. Pray that they would seek the Lord during this pandemic. Ask the Lord to open their eyes, ears, minds, and hearts to the truth of his Word. Pray that they would turn to the Lord and find salvation, refuge, and help. **Psalm 27:8-10**

*8 You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek." 9 Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! 10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in.*

**VI. Ask the Lord to teach you and protect you.** Prayer Time (6:15pm)

Pray for protection—both physically and spiritually. Ask the Lord to use this time of crisis to draw you closer to him and teach you more about his Word and his ways. **Psalm 27:11-12**

*11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. 12 Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.*

**VII. Ask the Lord for endurance.** Bedtime Meditation

We do not know how long our trials will last. Pray that the Lord will conquer quickly. Also pray for endurance to stand in the midst of the trial, however long you may be called to endure. **Psalm 27:13-14**

*13 I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! 14 Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!* Spend some time meditating on what you've been learning through present trials. What is God's Word teaching you? What truths about God are comforting your soul? How is this experience changing you to be more like Christ?

*We encourage you to join with others in prayer. You could pray with a friend on the phone, connect with your small group over a video call, or pray with your family at home. Use the midday prayer time as an opportunity to gather with fellow Christians to pray together.*

THOUGHTS:

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