

JAN 12 - FEB 1

TWENTY-ONE

days

PRAYER AND FASTING



## **A Note About Fasting and Prayer**

As we embark on this corporate fast together, I want to share a few thoughts about fasting that I hope will encourage and guide you during this time.

### **Personally**

Fasting has been one of the most impactful—and challenging—spiritual disciplines I've ever practiced. During extended fasting, I've learned so much about myself, including how much food can become an idol in my life. These experiences have also revealed areas where my spiritual growth needs to deepen.

Some of my most powerful and intimate moments with the Lord have happened during times of fasting. I've also learned practical lessons—like how Michelle and I, out of love for one another, shouldn't completely fast from food at the same time. (She truly is the best wife!)

I believe fasting is a calling for specific times and seasons. It's not something to take lightly, but I am more excited about this fast than any I've done before. I genuinely believe God has great things to reveal to me, to you, and to our church. Together, as we fast from distractions, feast on His Word, and commit to prayer, I trust God will do amazing work in our lives.

### **Why We Fast**

The ultimate goal of fasting is to grow closer to God. Biblical fasting is about intentionally saying “no” to distractions for a spiritual purpose. It's a way to reset our hearts and souls, renew our spirits, and make room for God to work.

Fasting enables us to celebrate God's kindness and goodness while positioning our hearts to receive the blessings He desires to bring into our lives. It's important to remember that your fast should be both meaningful and personal. It should challenge you, but it should also be appropriate for your body, your circumstances, and how the Holy Spirit leads you.

There are many types of fasts—some may involve food, while others focus on eliminating other distractions. How you choose to fast is between you and the Lord. The key is to seek Him in prayer, listen for His guidance, and commit to a fast that helps you draw near to Him.

As we begin this 21-day journey, I encourage you to think not only about what you will fast from but also about what you will feast on. Let's commit to feasting on God's Word, His presence, and His promises as we pray and seek His will together.

**Be God's,  
Josh**

## Welcome to 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer!

We are thrilled to invite you on this incredible 21-day faith journey, where we will seek God's leading for our lives, our church, our families, our city, and beyond.

Our prayer is that through this season, our church will be mobilized to proclaim Jesus boldly, make disciples, and see our community renewed. Together, we have the opportunity to align our hearts with God's purposes and watch Him move in powerful and transformative ways.

### An Invitation to Fast and Pray

Will you join us in fasting—giving up something temporary to make room for spiritual renewal—and pray expectantly for God to reveal His power and faithfulness in this season?

We believe that as we come together in submission to God through prayer, He will make His presence and power known in unprecedented ways. He will advance the Gospel so that more people will meet, know, and follow Jesus.

This journey is just the beginning. Our prayer is that God will use these 21 days to increase your faith, refresh you spiritually, and deepen your love for Jesus. We also pray that this time will help cultivate a lifestyle of prayer that extends well beyond these three weeks—a habit of daily dependence upon God in prayer.

### How to Use This Guide

This guide has been thoughtfully designed to help us journey together in prayer, both individually and corporately. Beyond the 21 days, it also provides tools to encourage and sustain a vibrant prayer life going forward.

Each day includes:

- **Scripture passages** to reflect on,
- **A devotional thought** to guide your meditation,
- **Prayer emphasis** to lead you, and
- **An Action step** to take.

While there's no formula for connecting with God, practicing different ways of praying can deepen your relationship with Him and bring greater purpose to your prayer time.

The goal of this guide is not to add pressure or overwhelm you but to help you become more comfortable talking with God and making your prayer time more meaningful. The most important thing is committing to regularly entering God's presence in prayer.

## Tips for Using This Guide:

1. **Set a Place:** Choose a consistent spot where you can pray without distractions. It might be a favorite chair at home or even during your commute (just don't close your eyes while driving!).
2. **Set a Time:** Dedicate a regular time each day to meet with God. Whether it's morning, midday, or evening, consistency is key.
3. **Set Your Heart:** Approach this time as a privilege, not an obligation. Prayer is not a "got to" but a "get to"—a gift from God that allows us to draw close to Him.

The heart of this guide is to help you find new purpose, effectiveness, and joy in your prayer life. While prayer requires commitment and discipline to develop into a daily habit, it's also a profound privilege to commune with the Creator of the universe.

Let's embrace this opportunity together and watch God work in ways that transform us, our church, and our community for His glory.

## Let's begin this journey in faith and expectation!

### What is prayer?

The most basic definition of prayer is "talking to God." Prayer is not meditation or passive reflection; it is a direct address to God. It is the communication of the human soul with the Lord who created the soul.

Paul wrote, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6–7). Worry about nothing; pray about everything.

Everything? Yes, God wants us to talk with Him about everything. How often should we pray? The Biblical answer is "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This could mean eyes closed and hands together, but it doesn't have to be limited to that.

Prayer can be audible or silent, private or public, formal or informal. You can pray any time of day, while doing chores, working, resting, during family time or alone time. We should keep a running conversation going with God all day long. Eyes open or closed, out loud or in our hearts, we can be creating a continual dialogue with God.

Your prayer life is not measured in minutes. Prayer is a lifestyle. Prayer is a constant two-way communication with God. There is no special formula for how to pray. We should just do it. We can pray in any and all circumstances. Prayer develops our relationship with God and demonstrates our trust and utter dependence upon Him.

## **What is fasting?**

As part of these 21 days, we encourage you to consider fasting. You may have never fasted before, but it is Biblical. You can read further about fasting in the following scriptures. (Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:1- 14).

One definition of fasting is deliberately abstaining from the normal routines of life. Its purpose is to spend focused time in prayer and the study of God's word, seeking to align our lives with His will.

Ultimately, fasting is more about replacing than abstaining. It is filling our lives with God's Word instead of with food, social media or entertainment. It is finding satisfaction and enjoyment in God and in God alone. Fasting helps us humble ourselves before the Lord and positions us to experience spiritual breakthroughs in our lives.

There are different types of fasts, but first some helpful words from Richard Foster in his classic, *Celebration of Discipline*: "As with all the Disciplines, a progression should be observed; it is wise to learn to walk well before we try to run."

Biblical fasting almost always concerns food. Since the purpose of fasting is to focus on God, to humble ourselves and to remind ourselves that we are sustained by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, then the task in fasting is connecting our "going without" our "hungering for God."

This alone takes time, focus and prayer. Please do not expect to be an "expert" at fasting right away. Fasting is a discipline that can take a very long time to understand well. Also, do not let this fact deter you or intimidate you.

**Complete Fast:** In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option. Start slowly. Begin with fasting for only a part of a day (lunch, or lunch and dinner). Do this for one day a week, or perhaps three days a week. You determine the timing and duration. Take a step of faith. Fasting is risky and involves our faith.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY HEALTH CONDITIONS OR ARE CONCERNED ABOUT FASTING THEN YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR OR COMMIT TO A NON-FOOD FAST.**

#### **4 Types of fasts:**

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**Selective Fast:** This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

**Partial Fast:** This fast is sometimes called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sun-up to sundown.

**Non-Food Fast:** This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

***As we begin our 21 days of prayer and fasting you may find the items below helpful to do.***

### **01: SET SOME GOALS**

What would you like to see God do in these 21 days? Begin with clear personal goals, church goals, breakthrough goals. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Is there something you are specifically praying for? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of your marriage or resolution of family issues? Are you facing difficulties? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Write these requests in a journal or a notebook or create a digital journal using your favorite note-taking program or app. Keeping a journal throughout your fast is a great way to track and remember all God does during your fast.

### **02: FEAST ON THE WORD OF GOD**

Prayer and fasting is ultimately an expression of humility and dependence on God. It is about focusing specifically for the next 21 days on communicating with God and also replacing the daily intake of food, entertainment and human contact with focused times of prayer, spending time reading the word of God, letting it nourish your soul. And actively listening, to what the Holy Spirit saying to you.

### **03: OPEN YOUR LIFE BEFORE GOD**

One of the great benefits of a focused time of prayer and fasting is a heightened awareness of God's presence and power in our lives. It is not that God has moved but that we have. Prayer and fasting has a great way of moving us towards a deeper spiritual dependency and away from wilful self-dependency. The greatest breakthrough will take place when you make time to examine your life and discover what areas most need breakthrough.

### **04: EXPECT GOD TO MOVE**

The Word of God says, "And without faith, it is impossible to please God, for anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). These next 21 days have the potential to impact you and your relationship with Jesus as well as the countless people and situations that we will pray and fast over. If you have doubt, ask God to meet you in your doubts and lead you in overcoming them, just as the apostles prayed, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5).

## Week 1: Staying the Course in Faith

### Day 1: Trusting God's Plan

- **Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5–6; Isaiah 55:8–9
- **Devotional Thought:** Trusting God's plan requires releasing control. His thoughts are higher than ours, and His ways are perfect, even when we don't understand. Fasting shifts our focus from self-reliance to God-reliance.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Surrender areas of anxiety or uncertainty to God. Pray for faith to trust Him completely.
- **Action Step:** Write down your biggest fears or uncertainties and pray over them. Commit to trusting God in these areas during your fast.

### Day 2: Unshakable Faith

- **Scripture:** Hebrews 11:1–3, 6; Romans 10:17
- **Devotional Thought:** Faith is the foundation of your walk with God. It's the assurance of what you hope for and the evidence of what you cannot see. Fasting reminds you to trust in God's promises and not in visible circumstances.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for a stronger faith to believe in God's promises, especially in areas where you've experienced doubt.
- **Action Step:** Memorize Hebrews 11:1 and recite it when you face moments of doubt.

### Day 3: Guarding Against Distractions

- **Scripture:** Matthew 6:33; Luke 10:38–42
- **Devotional Thought:** Like Mary, who chose to sit at Jesus' feet, we must intentionally prioritize time with God over the busyness of life. Fasting teaches us to eliminate distractions and focus on God's kingdom.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for clarity to identify distractions and for strength to place God first.
- **Action Step:** Limit or remove one distraction for the remainder of your fast (e.g., social media, excessive screen time) and spend that time with God.



#### Day 4: Strength in Trials

- **Scripture:** James 1:2–4; Romans 8:28
- **Devotional Thought:** Trials test and refine your faith, producing perseverance and maturity. God works all things for good, even the hard seasons. Fasting equips you to endure challenges with joy and hope.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for strength and wisdom to navigate your current trials. Ask God to reveal how He's using them for good.
- **Action Step:** Journal about a difficult season in your life and how God worked through it.

#### Day 5: The Race of Endurance

- **Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27
- **Devotional Thought:** Staying the course requires discipline, focus, and perseverance. Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him—He is your ultimate example. Fasting helps build spiritual endurance.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for renewed strength and perseverance to stay faithful in your spiritual race.
- **Action Step:** Set a spiritual goal (e.g., consistent prayer, Bible reading) for the rest of this fast and take steps to achieve it.

#### Day 6: God's Faithfulness

- **Scripture:** Lamentations 3:22–23; 2 Timothy 2:13
- **Devotional Thought:** God's faithfulness never wavers. Even when we are unfaithful, He remains constant. Reflecting on His past faithfulness builds confidence to trust Him for the future.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Thank God for His steadfast love and for specific ways He's been faithful in your life.
- **Action Step:** Start a gratitude journal and list three things you're thankful for today.

## Day 7: The Power of Prayer

- **Scripture:** Philippians 4:6–7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18
- **Devotional Thought:** Prayer connects you to God’s peace, which surpasses understanding. Fasting heightens your focus on prayer, helping you align your heart with His.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for peace in areas of stress or worry. Commit to a posture of gratitude in your prayers.
- **Action Step:** Set aside 15–30 minutes today for focused, uninterrupted prayer.

## Week 2: Staying the Course in Purpose

### Day 8: Called for a Purpose

- **Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:11; Ephesians 2:10
- **Devotional Thought:** God created you with a specific purpose in mind. Even when the path seems unclear, you can trust that He is working everything for His glory and your good.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for clarity in your purpose and for courage to walk in it.
- **Action Step:** Write down one way you can live intentionally in your calling today.

### Day 9: Serving with Joy

- **Scripture:** Colossians 3:23–24; Galatians 6:9–10
- **Devotional Thought:** God calls us to serve with a joyful heart, knowing our ultimate reward comes from Him. Fasting helps you focus on serving others selflessly.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for joy in serving others and for opportunities to be a blessing.
- **Action Step:** Perform an act of service today, whether big or small, for someone in need.

### Day 10: Boldness in Obedience

- **Scripture:** Acts 4:29–31; Joshua 1:9
- **Devotional Thought:** Bold obedience flows from a deep trust in God's presence and power. Fasting strengthens your courage to follow Him, even when it's hard.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Ask God for boldness to obey His calling and to trust Him with the results.
- **Action Step:** Take a step of faith in obedience today, whether sharing your faith, offering help, or pursuing a calling.

### Day 11: Persevering in Hope

- **Scripture:** Romans 5:3–5; 1 Peter 1:3–7
- **Devotional Thought:** Hope grows as we persevere through trials, knowing that God is faithful. Fasting draws us closer to the hope we have in Christ.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for renewed hope in Christ and perseverance in challenging times.
- **Action Step:** Encourage someone today who may be losing hope with a word, prayer, or act of kindness.

### Day 12: Embracing Your Mission

- **Scripture:** Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8
- **Devotional Thought:** You are part of God’s mission to share the gospel and make disciples. Fasting aligns your heart with His urgency for the lost.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for boldness and wisdom to share the gospel with those around you.
- **Action Step:** Reach out to someone who needs to hear about Jesus, even if it’s through a simple conversation or act of love.

### Day 13: Trusting in God’s Timing

- **Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 3:1–11; Psalm 27:14
- **Devotional Thought:** God’s timing is perfect, even when it feels delayed or unclear. Waiting is often a part of His process to refine and prepare us. Fasting teaches us to rest in His timing and trust that His plans are always good.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for patience and trust in God’s timing. Ask Him to help you rest in His sovereignty over every season of your life.
- **Action Step:** Reflect on a time when God’s timing didn’t align with your plans but ultimately worked for your good. Write about it and thank Him.

## Day 14: Living for Eternity

- **Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 4:16–18; Colossians 3:1–4
- **Devotional Thought:** Staying the course requires fixing your eyes on eternity. The struggles and joys of this life are temporary, but the reward of living for Christ is everlasting. Fasting helps refocus your priorities on things of eternal value.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Ask God to align your heart with eternal priorities and to give you a heavenly perspective in your daily decisions.
- **Action Step:** Evaluate your daily schedule. Adjust one area to better reflect eternal priorities, such as spending more time in prayer, Scripture, or service.

## Week 3: Staying the Course in Obedience

### Day 15: The Word as a Lamp

- **Scripture:** Psalm 119:105; John 15:7–8
- **Devotional Thought:** God's Word is your guide and sustenance on the journey of faith. Fasting deepens your hunger for Scripture and sharpens your ability to hear His voice.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for a deeper understanding and love for God's Word. Ask Him to illuminate areas of your life that need His guidance.
- **Action Step:** Commit to reading one chapter of the Bible daily for the remainder of the fast. Start with Psalm 119 or a gospel.

### Day 16: Walking in the Spirit

- **Scripture:** Galatians 5:16–25; Romans 8:5–6
- **Devotional Thought:** Walking in the Spirit empowers you to stay the course and resist distractions. The Spirit produces fruit that reflects Christ in your life. Fasting invites the Spirit to work more deeply in your heart.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you daily and to produce His fruit in your life. Pray for specific areas where you need His help.
- **Action Step:** Choose one fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) to focus on today. Ask the Spirit to help you demonstrate it in your actions.

### Day 17: Humble Obedience

- **Scripture:** Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Samuel 15:22
- **Devotional Thought:** Jesus modeled humility through obedience, even to death on a cross. Obedience often requires surrendering your own desires to align with God's will. Fasting cultivates this humility in your walk with Him.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for humility and a willingness to obey God's commands, even when it costs you.
- **Action Step:** Reflect on an area where you've resisted God's will. Surrender it to Him today and take a step of obedience.

### Day 18: Standing Firm in Truth

- **Scripture:** Ephesians 6:10–17; John 8:31–32
- **Devotional Thought:** In a world full of shifting values, standing firm in God's truth is vital. Fasting strengthens your resolve to live out His Word boldly and faithfully.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for strength to stand firm against temptation and to live according to God's truth. Ask for wisdom to discern lies from the enemy.
- **Action Step:** Memorize one verse from today's reading (e.g., Ephesians 6:13). Reflect on how to apply it in your spiritual battles.

### Day 19: Strength in Weakness

- **Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 12:9–10; Isaiah 40:29–31
- **Devotional Thought:** God's power is made perfect in your weakness. He delights in sustaining you when you feel unable to press on. Fasting reminds you of your dependence on His strength.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Thank God for His grace in your weakness. Pray for His strength to sustain you in areas where you feel inadequate or weary.
- **Action Step:** Share your testimony of God's strength with someone who needs encouragement.

### Day 20: Finishing Well

- **Scripture:** 2 Timothy 4:7–8; Philippians 1:6
- **Devotional Thought:** Finishing the race of faith well requires consistency, discipline, and reliance on God. Fasting sharpens your focus on the eternal reward awaiting those who persevere in faith.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for endurance to finish your spiritual race well. Thank God for His faithfulness in sustaining you.
- **Action Step:** Reflect on areas where you may need greater discipline in your spiritual walk (e.g., prayer, worship, community) and take a step to grow in one today.

## Day 21: Staying the Course

- **Scripture:** Revelation 3:11; 1 Corinthians 15:58
- **Devotional Thought:** Staying the course means holding fast to what you have in Christ and remaining steadfast in your faith. Fasting helps you recommit to living for God, trusting in His ultimate victory.
- **Prayer Emphasis:** Thank God for His sustaining grace through this journey of prayer and fasting. Pray for perseverance in your faith and a deeper intimacy with Him.
- **Action Step:** Celebrate the completion of your fast by worshiping God for His faithfulness. Reflect on what He has taught you during these 21 days and set a plan to continue growing in your walk with Him.