

PATHWAYS | 7 DAY FASTING GUIDE

[WHY ARE WE PRAYING AND FASTING?]

In Acts 13:2-3, we read, “While they (Church Elders) 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.”

The early Church discerned its next steps when it sought God’s will through prayer and fasting. In Church history, spiritual awakenings and Christ-centered revivals have come to regions where God’s people have gathered together for prayer and fasting.

It is our desire that this would be true of The Bridge Community Church in this season in its story. We long to see the expansion of God’s kingdom through the unique vision He has entrusted to us as a Church. This 7-day prayer and fasting guide is designed to help us pursue that goal.

As you pray each day, listen for the Holy Spirit to speak and keep your heart open to what He has to say. Journal as much as you can and confess your struggles and doubts should the Father bring up any issues in your life (1 John 1:9).

Most of all, BELIEVE that in response to your prayers, God is about to do immeasurably more than all you could ask or imagine here at and through The Bridge Community Church

[BUT I’VE NEVER FASTED. WHAT AM I DOING?]

Fasting in the biblical sense is choosing not to partake of food because your spiritual hunger is so deep, your determination in intercession so intense, or your spiritual warfare so demanding that you have temporarily set aside even fleshly needs to give yourself to prayer and meditation. - Wesley L. Duewel

Fasting is an intentional abstention from food (or any craving) for a set period of time to seek God’s will through prayer. Through fasting and prayer, we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our Church, strengthen our families, and draw our communities to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

This may be the first time some of you are participating in the Christian discipline of fasting and we want this to be a positive, life changing experience. We have therefore proposed several different levels at which you can participate.

FASTING FOR BEGINNERS LEVEL: This is a great option if you have never abstained from food for lengthy periods 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 a set duration during the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

You can choose not to view any media from 6:00 pm to midnight, and spend that time praying at the top of each hour. You can also skip one meal each day, and spend that mealtime praying at the top of each hour. So, if you skip breakfast and you get up at 6:00 am, you can pray once at 7am, 8am, 9am, 10am, 11am, and wrap it up at noon.

FASTING FOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL: You can do what's known as the Daniel fast. The Daniel Fast eating plan is like a vegan diet with more restrictions. The only beverage is water and the primary foods are fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes. There are no sweeteners on the fast and no processed foods or chemicals. For more information about the Daniel fast, visit this website (<http://danielfast.wordpress.com/>). During this fast, set aside four times during the day to pray: 9:00a.m, 12:00noon, 3:00p.m, and 6:00p.m. If you are an early riser, add a 6:00a.m prayer time.

FASTING FOR ADVANCED LEVEL: In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option during the duration of the fast. Certain medical conditions do not allow for some to engage in a food fast. If you have health concerns, seek the advice of a physician before fasting from food. Before fasting, you may be tempted to eat a large meal to stock up. This can have some negative effects on your body. It is best to wean yourself from food. Make your last meal before the fast a light meal consisting of fruits and vegetables. Stay away from greasy or oily foods. When breaking your fast, do so slowly. If engaging in an extended fast, ease your body back into a normal pattern by eating a light diet consisting mostly of fruits and vegetables. After a few days, you can begin to eat meats again.

[WHAT WILL YOUR PERSONAL FAST BE]

- My fasting plan

- What I hope to gain

- Ways that I am personally praying

Day 1: [Monday] Jesus come, lead us on

Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! (Psalm 43:3, ESV)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would make it clear that every ministry at The Bridge is a work of His Spirit.
 - Sunday Gatherings – pray for visible evidence of the Spirit’s work
 - Preaching – pray that it would be empowered by the Spirit to see life change
 - Worship – pray that people would be led by the Spirit to passionately love Jesus
 - Tech – pray that our message and songs would reach into new territory
 - Bridge Kids – pray that our kids would be formed in the gospel
 - Youth – pray that our kids would be empowered to live for Jesus out in culture
 - Missional Community – pray that spiritual formation would happen
 - Serve Teams – pray that people would serve out of the strength God supplies
 - Growth Track (First & Next Step) – pray that people would grow
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would lead us; and that His will and direction for our church would be evident every step of the way.
- Pray that in all we do, God would be glorified and would bring fame to His name in St. Francois County
- Pray that God would give all our pastors and elders a God-given vision for our church, and that He would revitalize each leader and his or her family spiritually, physically, and mentally.

- Pray that both gatherings would be thriving and growing disciples that transform their communities for Christ.

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day one?

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DAY 2 [Tuesday]: Jesus, forgive our sins

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah (Psalm 32:5, ESV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would humble our hearts and help us submit to His plans.
- Pray for godly sorrow that leads to repentance, which results in a spiritually healthy congregation.
- Pray that we would embrace the forgiveness of Christ and in turn extend the same forgiveness to others who wounded us.
- Pray for boldness in confronting sin and for wisdom on how to do it with grace and love that leads to restoration.
- Pray that the Lord would sweep our “house” clean of any impurities and welcome His Holy Spirit to come in a fresh new way.
- Pray for a foundation in the Word of God to be laid and for willing submission to Biblical principles in God’s people.

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day two?

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Day 3 [Wednesday]: Jesus, give us your wisdom

make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. (Psalm 145:12, ESV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:5, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for godly wisdom as we seek what is next for The Bridge as we aim to be spirit-empowered witnesses of Jesus locally, regionally, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)
- Pray for attentiveness to the Holy Spirit's voice in all the elder/leadership meetings.
- Pray for practical insights as the elders consider key questions and congregational concerns (e.g: finances, staffing, missions, church plants, property, leadership etc).
- Pray for God's guidance through the communication process so there is no confusion or turmoil over any next steps that are identified through prayer and fasting

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day three?

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Day 4 [Thursday]: Jesus, protect us

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:10-13, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for spiritual protection around our congregation; that God would protect us from deception, temptation, and plans of the enemy that would wound people along the way.
- Pray that God would cause confusion in the camp of the enemy and that He would crush any works of Satan that will lead to confusion or chaos in our church.
- Pray that our church experiences a powerful move of God that will leave each one transformed by His presence and impassioned for His Kingdom.

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day four?

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Day 5 [Friday]: Jesus, bless us

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God will draw to Himself families and singles in our region that are far from God.
- Pray that The Bridge continues to be a beacon of hope in our region, bringing generations to faith in Christ.
- Pray that God would lead us in determining the best strategy to reach, engage, and mentor Millennials.
- Pray for the supernatural works of Jesus to be manifested so that the surrounding community would be transformed by the Gospel
- Pray that our generosity would increasingly grow so that we can press the gospel into our local context, region, and to the ends of the earth.

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day five?

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Day 6 [Saturday]: Jesus, give us rest

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS:

- Pray that the peace of Christ’s salvation will invade our hearts, minds, and steady our souls.
- Pray that we will be able to rest and enjoy our families, friends, and neighbors.
- Pray that we are can look back and thank God for all that He has done in our own lives with joy-filled hearts.
- Pray that we can look back and thank God for all that He has done in and through the ministry of The Bridge Community Church.
- Pray that we can each rest in the future promises of Christ’s return.

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day six?

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Day 7 [Sunday]: Jesus, grant us faith

And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:22-24, ESV)

PRAYER POINTS:

- Pray that God will grant us bold and courageous faith for the future of The Bridge
- Pray that any discouragement would be overcome with hope
- Pray that we will receive the plans He has for us and take willing next steps of faith
- Pray that we will act in faith towards any personal direction the Lord has guided us individually or as a family unit over the period of the fast
- Pray for our annual member meeting and vision night at 5pm tonight.

What are some thoughts and reflections God impressed on your heart during day seven?

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