



# **fellowship of purpose** CHURCH

Taking New Territory

## **Fasting Guide**

October 27 - November 16

See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Deuteronomy 1:21



Dear Brethren,

We are so glad you have decided to participate in an extended time of prayer, fasting and personal devotion. There really is no better way to reset our spiritual compass and bring about refreshment in every area of our lives than through prayer and fasting.

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. This guide will introduce you to fasting and provide you with practical ways to help you navigate through your personal twenty-one-day journey.

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 expand you as you seek Him first!

*“Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free  
And break every yoke?” Isaiah 58:6*

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## WHY WE FAST

As you prepare for the next twenty-one days of fasting, it can be tempting to start focusing on what foods you are going to avoid or the logistics of altering your habits for a few weeks. But keep in mind, fasting is about more than just abstaining from certain foods for a specific period of time. Fasting, coupled with prayer, is first and foremost a profoundly spiritual endeavor which seeks to draw us closer to God that we may hear His voice. Old and New Testament saints from Esther to the Apostle Paul fasted as a way to express their need for God's guidance and help in their lives (Esther 4:16; 2 Cor. 6:4-10). Jesus himself fasted for forty days as he was being tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-9). The bible depicts fasting as a way for the saints to express their longing for God to intervene in their often desperate circumstances. For them, hearing from God was more important than any physical or natural need that they had and so they were willing to humble themselves in this way so that the Holy Spirit could speak and guide their lives.

Given that fasting is born out of a need to hear from God, before you begin your fast, ask yourself why you are fasting. What are you seeking from God? Is it spiritual renewal? Is it guidance for important decisions that need to be made, or wisdom for the resolution of a problem? Is it for healing? Or perhaps it's for grace to handle certain aspects of your life? Clarifying in your own mind what you are seeking through the fast will help you be more strategic and specific in your prayer time. We encourage you to write down important targets and areas that you are seeking breakthrough for in the space below.

During this fast, I am praying and believing God for:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

# FASTING GUIDELINES

As you prepare to fast, it is important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. While this section provides some general information about different types of fast, as well as some suggestions on how to create your own fasting plan, 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 the mind before getting started:

## 1. 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 personal challenge to you, 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 simply to do without food. The goal is to draw nearer to God, so that we can get direction and wisdom for our lives, so be sure to also focus on taking your spiritual walk to the next level. During your fast you should be praying more, worshiping more, reading your word more, meditating more...Start where you are ---both physically and spiritually--but don't stay there!

## 2. Choose A Fast

Pray about the type of fast that you should embark on before you begin. A fast should be challenging, both physically and spiritually, but considerations and precautions should be made for health and medical factors, age, and other individual limitations. Please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking medication, have a chronic disease, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

In addition to settling on the type of food abstinence you will undertake, begin to think about the new spiritual commitments you will make during your fast. Ask yourself how much additional time each day will you devote to prayer? How can you increase your worship or meditation time? Making these commitments ahead of time will help you prepare for the fast and keep you on target during the fast.

### ***Different Types of Fasts***

As you consider the following types of fasts, keep these two points in mind:

(a) There is nothing inherently more spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. Remember this is your personal journey. Your goal is to challenge yourself, not compete with someone else or to go beyond your personal physical limitations. Remember to seek God in prayer about the fast that you should undergo.

(b) Don't get bogged down in the grey areas of any particular fast. For example, don't fret over whether a starchy potato should be included in your Daniel fast, or whether you can substitute orange juice for an orange. We will not list specific ingredients you "should" or "should not" include in your plan, so as to not get legalistic about it. Just make your individual food and preparation determinations prior to beginning your fast and be consistent once you've determined the specifics for your individual fast. Follow the leading of the Spirit!



- **The Daniel Fast**

The concept of a Daniel fast is anchored in scripture and is also a healthy choice for a fast. In Daniel Chapter 1 as well as Daniel Chapter 10, the Prophet Daniel abstains from eating the King's "choice" foods such as meat, and instead eats vegetables and fruit and drinks only water. "I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over." (Daniel 10:3)

Thus, the Daniel consist of consuming only vegetables and fruits and abstaining from other foods such as bread, meat, sweets, soda, coffee alcohol.

- **The Liquid Fast**

- Water Only. A Water only fast is just that: no foods of any kind and only water to drink. We know that Jesus and other New Testament saints participated in water-only fasts for periods of time (Matthew 4). We highly recommend consulting your physician before considering a water-only fast, and for doing so for only brief periods of time.
- Vegetable and Fruits. This Liquid fast consists of consuming only freshly squeezed or blended fruit and vegetable juices, with no added sugars, instead of solid food. This is simply a modification of the Daniel fast and is a great way to challenge yourself if you have gotten comfortable with the Daniel fast in its original form.

- **The Dedicated (Time) Fast**

A Dedicated fast is a biblical fast in which you choose not to eat for a specific amount of time during the day, such as from sun up to sun down (Judges 20:26). When embarking on this type of fast, consider your work and sleep schedule. The hours that you sleep should not be considered part of your fasting period.

- **The Total Fast**

A total fast is where nothing is consumed-- neither food or water—for a period of time. There are examples of this type of fast in the Bible. In the Old Testament, we see that Moses went on a 40-day total fast to get guidance from the Lord about his people. (Exodus 34:28). It was during this fast that God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses.

*A Note of Caution:* A complete lack of water for any period of time can be extremely harmful to the body, so we strongly discourage this type of fast and urge anyone considering it to please consult a physician before undertaking it.

### ***3. Other Considerations While Fasting***

- **Fasting While Nursing or Pregnant**

If you are a pregnant or nursing mother, your priority is the health and the development of the baby God has entrusted you with. Strict fasting while pregnant or nursing is not recommended. If you are in this incredible season of life but would like to participate in the twenty-one-day plan, consult your doctor for a modified plan.

- **Fasting and Eating Disorders**

If you have struggled with an eating disorder, this situation is a battle of the mind you can win through Christ (Philippians 4:13). Remember, fasting is a tool used to get closer to God, and it actually should keep us from being preoccupied with food. If your method of fasting is going to trigger your eating disorder or cause you to obsess about what you eat, you will need to change either your approach or your mindset. Consider consulting a medical professional for your eating disorder.

- **Fasting and the Importance of Consecration**

Fasting is about connecting with God in a deeper and more meaningful way. That often means disconnecting from the world and all of its many distractions. During



your fast, endeavor to tune out some of the regular distractions in your day as much as possible. For example, reduce your TV or recreational gaming/computer time, get off of social media, restrict your cell phone usage, etc. Replace that time with activities that will nourish you spiritually.

#### ***4. Let's Get Started!***

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 to your fast; otherwise you could get sick. For example, if you would like to go on a fruits and vegetables or juice fast, start-eliminating meat, white grains, and refined sugars from your diet the week before. Also start to cut back on dairy products and your caffeine intake. The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please do not break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will mostly likely get sick if you do that.

Here are some other ideas that can help make your fasting experience more pleasant and helpful:

- Don't over complicate this, pray throughout the day during your fast! Just talk to God. Have that place and time where you can seek him every day. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. If you find it a challenge to disconnect from the busyness of your day, engaging in worship music is a great way to prepare your heart for prayer.
- Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give into temptation. Choose well when selecting products, stick to raw food as much as you can, and limit artificial ingredients.

- Make it priority to attend church during your twenty-one-day fast. Being around other believers will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.
- If you mess up, don't get discouraged. Just get right back on track and keep going. God's mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23). He wants you to finish, and He will give you the grace and strength to do it.

*"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Matthew 6:16-18*

# **CORPORATE PRAYER TARGETS**

## **THE VISION OF FOP CHURCH**

- Lead people to SALVATION
- Lead people to GROW SPIRITUALLY
- Lead people into CONNECTION with the family of God
- Lead people into SERVICE for God

## **OUR LEADERS & COMMUNITY**

- Pastor Murray & Family
- Ministry Leaders & Workers
- Our Nation, Our President and our Government
- Galena Park ISD, Channelview ISD and Surrounding Areas
- Purpose Kids Early Childhood Learning Center
- Marriages & Singles

## **Spiritual Growth ... For YOU & Others**

- Restoration of Backsliders
- Unity Within the Body of Christ
- Increase of Faith in the Believers
- That We May Walk in Love
- Faithfulness in Financial Stewardship
- The Fullness of the Holy Spirit
- The Pulling Down of Strongholds
- Increase Passion to Pray
- Protect Our Children & Youth Amidst Demonic Attacks
- Greater Community Impact

# PERSONAL DEVOTION

Just like prayer and fasting, reading your bible is about connecting to God in a more powerful way. It is not about duty, but about relationship. When we engage God through reading His Word, we engage the very presence of God. His Word is living and active! As we read our Bible, we are drawing closer to God and positioning ourselves to hear from Him in particular ways.

Once again, as with prayer, choose the time and the place where you are going to read your bible and devotional every single day, and come prepared to hear what He wants to tell you.

Here are three quick things we'd like to share with you about how to get the most out of your devotional time with God.

## ***1. Read Consistently***

It is better to read a little every day than try and knock out two hours of Bible reading or devotions in one sitting. It is so important to digest the Word in absorbable chunks. Don't bite off more than you can chew, and certainly don't compare your "performance" with that of others. If you miss a few days, catch up at the next reading, but stay with it and don't give up.

***The key is to keep this simple and make it sustainable.***

## ***2. Read Prayerfully***

Talk to God as you're reading. Don't rush through it. If you come across something you don't understand, pause for a moment and ask God about it. Reading prayerfully is making space and time to talk to God and giving Him time and space to talk to you. Taking time to meditate on God's Word is just as important as reading it.

## ***3. Read Expectantly***

You are about to partake of the bread of life, so foster an attitude of expectancy. Believe that God is going to speak to you through His Word. With meditation on the ideas and thoughts recorded in your journal, be prepared to do something with what He shows you. A great, simple way to journal your devotionals are to use the SOAP Method.

#### 4. SOAP Method

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

The **SOAP** method is used like this:

- **S for Scripture.** Read prayerfully. Take notice of which scripture(s) catch your attention and mark it in your Bible. When you're done, reread the verse(s) you marked and look for one that particularly speaks to you. Write it in your journal.
- **O for Observation.** Focus on that scripture; tune in and listen to what God is saying to you through His Word. What is it about this scripture that specifically stands out? What does God want to reveal to you or teach you? Ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide and show you what God is saying.
- **A for Application.** Think of how this verse(s) applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Use your journal to write how the scripture applies to you today.
- **P for Prayer.** Wrap up your SOAP time in prayer. Talk to God about what you've just read. This can be as simple as thanking Him for revealing a truth from scripture, or it may be asking Him for greater insight or wisdom as to how it applies to your life. Remember, prayer is all about relationship. It's a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say.

That's it! SOAP. It's as simple or deep as you want it to be.

If you want to go deeper in your study, here are additional tips:

- Reread the daily passage in a different Bible translation or paraphrase.
- Utilize online resources, such as those available from [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com)
- Utilize a commentary, such as those by Matthew Henry or online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)
- Cross-reference your daily reading, using the footnotes in your study Bible.
- Research words in the original language using a Strong's Concordance.

Our prayer for you over the next twenty-one days is that your passion for God and His Word will be ignited, and that you will develop a hunger for His Presence that is greater than ever before!

***“Never be lacking in zeal,  
but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”***

Romans 12:11 NIV

## **BIBLE VERSES ON PRAYER & FASTING**

~ **MATTHEW 6:16 -18** – Move over when ye fast be not, as the hypocrite, of sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

~ **ACTS 14:23** – And when they ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

~ **ISAIAH 58:6** – [Is} not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

~ **NEHEMIAH 1:4** – And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned [certain] days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

~ **1 CORINTHIANS 7:5** – Defraud ye not one the other, except [it be} with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

~ **LUKE 11:9** – And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

~ **MATTHEW 4:4** – But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the month of God.

~ **ESTHER 4:16** – Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go into the king, which [is] not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

~ **JAMES 1:5** – If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

## **THE NEXT TWENTY-ONE DAY**

We want to encourage you to be just as intentional about the next twenty-one days... as the twenty-one days after that...and so on. Remember, keep the fire and zeal for God burning in your heart is what will keep your relationship with Him fresh and new. It will allow you to continue serving and obeying Him from a position of want to, and you will experience the joy of your salvation everyday- regardless of what life brings your way.

The principles you have practiced in these twenty-one days are very easy to sustain long term. Prayer, fasting and personal devotion are all quite simple to incorporate into your everyday life. Over these last twenty-one days, you've created space for God to fill. The best way to continue in these same practices is to keep that space open indefinitely. Don't allow it to close up! Protect that time and space with God and make it your priority each day.

Just like reading the Bible, praying, and attending church, fasting is also a lifestyle. We encourage you to establish a frequency and consistency of fasting in your life. Remember, this is not a legalistic thing. This is an "I get to experience God" thing. It is like going into heaven for a tune up, so we can keep our passion for God and enjoyment of Him at a high level. We encourage you to do the same. Figure out what works for you, commit to it, and make it a part of your life.

Don't settle for anything less than a life full of passion and spiritual zeal for God. Keep the fire for God burning in your heart and do whatever it takes to feed your spiritual hunger for God.

### **FELLOWSHIP OF PURPOSE CHURCH**

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*The tendency of fire is to go out;  
watch the fire on the altar of your heart.*

*Anyone who has tended a fireplace  
knows that it needs to be stirred up  
occasionally.*

*~ William Booth*