

21  
Days of Prayer

**WINTER 2022**

# A CALL TO PRAYER

If ever there was a time for the church to be in prayer...it is now.

Paul said to the church of Ephesus and to us today,

*Be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

EPHESIANS 6:18 NIV

There is nothing that alerts our senses to what the Spirit of the Lord is saying and doing like prayer. There is no activity under heaven that we can engage in that unites our hearts and focuses us on the mission, His mission, like prayer. And it is to this end that we have set aside the next 21 days. To hear from God. To worship Him. And to get our marching orders for this next season at Legacy. I hope you will make plans to join us in person as often as possible at the church from 6:30-7:30am. If you cannot, simply open this booklet and read the devotion on the appropriate day. This will keep us united in our focus and in our prayers.

I am confident that God is preparing to do a great work through the church for such a time as this. And it will be a praying church, poised for action, that will make the greatest difference in Jesus' Name.

We look forward to spending these days with you...in prayer.

Pastors Gary and Patty

Monday through Friday – 6:30 to 7:30am

Saturday – 7:00 to 8:00am

## A WORD ABOUT PRAYER

You may have heard it said that "Prayer changes things." While that may be true, I submit to you that the greatest truth about prayer is that "Prayer changes me." As children of God, and due to the death of His Son on the Cross, paying the penalty for our sins, we are divinely related to Him. And with any relationship, clear, consistent and intentional communication is key. It is how you get to know – really know, the other person. That is even more the case when you consider your relationship with the One who created you.

As I enter regularly into prayer with my holy Father, I get to know Him better. And, when combined with reading His Word, I begin to learn more about His character; what is most important to Him. I begin to see people and circumstances through His eyes and more from His perspective.

Even Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity prioritized His time in prayer with God the Father. In the gospels, which are the biographies of Jesus' life on earth, we learn that He rose early to pray (Mark 1:35). Jesus was in constant communication with His Father through prayer and He taught the importance of getting alone with God to pray (Matthew 6:6) and of being honest with God in your prayers (Matthew 6:7-8). Jesus encourages us to continually pray (Matthew 7:7-11). I believe it is safe to conclude that Jesus prioritized prayer.

Oswald Chambers writes that "prayer is the way that the life of God in us is nourished." Let these next 21 days provide nourishment for your soul and sweet fellowship as you enter into the presence of your Heavenly Father through prayer.

# A WORD ABOUT FASTING

What is Christian fasting? Biblically, fasting is abstaining from food, drink, sleep, or anything meaningful on a personal level to focus on a period of spiritual growth. Specifically, we humbly deny something of the flesh to fine tune our ability to hear God and respond to his promptings.

Although fasting in Scripture is generally demonstrated as fasting from food (Ezra 8:21, Nehemiah 1:4, Esther 4:3), there are a number of other ways one may fast. In fact, anything you temporarily give up in order to better focus on God can be considered a fast. Fasting should be limited to a set time, especially when fasting from food. It is not intended to punish our flesh, but to elevate our focus on God.

**Here are ways one might fast:**

- **One Meal Fast** – A decision to skip a meal and spend that time focusing on God
- **The Daniel Fast** – Consuming only vegetables and water
- **A Partial Fast** – Consuming liquids only
- **Complete Food Fast** – Water only (ONLY do this with doctor supervision or consultation. Extended periods of time without eating can be harmful to the body.)
- **Technology Fast** – Abstaining from social media, TV, gaming, etc. to focus your attention on God.

For more on fasting, see the **Prayer Tool: How to Fast** on page 55.

## DAY 1 – JANUARY 10, 2022

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

EPHESIANS 2:10 NIV

### I'M STUCK WITH ME

It has been quoted and misquoted in one form or another for the past 2000 years. But every variation says essentially the same thing. No, matter where you are, there you are. My version simply says, I'm stuck with me. Over the years, location, circumstances, situations, or anything else thrown into the mix, never changed or altered the undeniable certainty that wherever I was, I was there. Plainly put, I have to deal with me.

Now, I'm not always thrilled with that. There are days I don't like me. There are days that I would rather be with someone other than me. There are days I wonder what God was thinking when he made me. There are days I wonder why He made me the way He did. But, on every one of those days He reminds me that He made me and continues to make me according to His amazing and unique plan and purpose for my life. He reminds me that He is the potter, and I am the clay. He reminds me that He made exactly what He wanted to make. He reminds me that I am His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He prepared in advance for me to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

So, it seems to me that maybe I'm not such a bad person to be stuck with. I can be who God has designed me to be. I can live in the fullness of which He made me and is making me to be. I can live every day wherever I am with purpose and hope. I can do what He has equipped me to do wherever on His earth I might be. After all, I'm stuck with me, so I'm going to make the most of it. I'm going to be the best version of me that I can be.

You might want to ask yourself who are you stuck with? And then you're going to have to decide how you're going to live with you. Because, wherever you are, there you are.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Father God, I ask for your wisdom, strength, and courage to be who you made me to be, and to do what you have called me to do.

SUBMITTED BY RON BAUER

## DAY 2 – JANUARY 11, 2022

*He also said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or under a bed? Isn't it to be put on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be brought to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen." And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear. By the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and more will be added to you. For whoever has, more will be given to him, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."*

MARK 4:21-24 CSB

This past fall our Mom's Connection Group began a journey through the Gospels. I marvel at how God never fails to unveil new revelations from familiar passages when we sit in his presence. That is what he did for me as I read these opening verses. To offer a little backstory, the verses preceding this text record Jesus' familiar parable about the four types of soil the word of God is planted into. He is talking about four heart conditions. In The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble she defines these as: The Simple, The Shallow, The Selfish, and The Soft. After describing these heart conditions, he moves right into teaching the above text. (You may want to read it again.)

When the Holy Spirit reveals a truth to us from the Word of God, we receive a gift of Eternal Light. Now, the question is, what do we do with that Light? Do we merely receive the light of his Word, thank him, set it down and hurry on our way? Or do we elevate it so that it illuminates every part of our life, providing light to those who draw near?

After asking the question, Jesus drew them close and asked them to catch something of eternal, and life-defining importance: Whatever amount of my Word you use, live out, allow to transform your actions, your thoughts, your motives, and goals...is the amount I will increasingly measure out to you. In other words, I will continue to lead you into a deeper understanding of my Truth. I will continue to shine a light on your next steps. I will continue to make myself known to you. I will continue to show you things others cannot see. The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant. (Psalm 25:14)

Wow, what a promise! But the question remains, "How much of His Word am I allowing to transform me?" Whoever has, more will be given. If we don't lean in to listen and obey, even what he has revealed will fade away and be forgotten.

My challenge for us as we enter this new year comes from James 1:22 Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. If we don't use the light he has given, we are deceiving ourselves by spending time in the Word. We are not allowing it to change us, but become like the one who receives a lamp, turns it off and puts it away in the closet before heading out the door for the day. We enter a dark world, groping around in the darkness. We will continue to experience the same frustration, anxiety, insecurity, and greed as a busted-up world walking without Christ. However, the one who becomes a doer of the Word, or as Jesus said, "Uses the light he has given", that life will be like a lighthouse on a hill, growing brighter. It will flood the darkness around us with hope, joy and

peace. This individual will be a bright gift to the world, leading the lost to healing and wholeness.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Oh Jesus, I ask you to give me a genuine desire for more of you. I long for a heart to listen and respond to the Light you freely offer. When I spend time in your Word this year, please use the Light of your Truth to ignite areas of darkness within me. May I repent (hate and turn away) from the sin that devours and run in the illumined pathways of your ever-increasing love, joy, and peace. As I walk in obedience to your Word, fill me with Light until my life spills over with light onto a desperately dark world around me. In Your Powerful Name I ask, Amen.

SUBMITTED BY PATTY MORENO

## DAY 3 – JANUARY 12, 2022

*But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

ISAIAH 40:31 NLT

This verse has become my mantra over the last few months. To make a long story short, I had hip surgery last November to repair my torn labrum. I was fully healed and ready to go into my senior year, running my cross-country season in the best shape I had been in. After the first race, I was brought to the ground in horrible pain. Pain that brought me to tears during almost every race.

It was a long season, one that tested my mental toughness, faith, and strength. I read this verse and was filled with peace. I learned that I needed to put my trust and hope in the Lord in every circumstance. I prayed during every single race. I don't think I could have endured the season of pain and waiting without God. I learned I could put my hope in Him. I learned that He would give me more strength than I could have imagined.

It has taken time, but He has healed me. He healed me and grew my faith through a journey I didn't know I could endure. When we put our faith and trust in the Lord daily, in every circumstance, He equips us with His strength. He gives us the energy to run, walk, and thrive in any circumstances before us.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Today, let's pray for renewed hope and strength. Pray for revival in our situations and circumstances. Pray for hope in situations, even when they seem like dead-ends.

SUBMITTED BY LANEY ROBINSON

## DAY 4 – JANUARY 13, 2022

*He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 ASV

God provides illustrations of important spiritual truths throughout the physical world around us. Take for example the marvel of the human body. Every cell in our body is designed to use oxygen as a primary source of energy. That oxygen is essential for each cell to survive and function properly, and its delivery is dependent on three key elements: a heart that pumps, adequate blood volume, and enough pressure in the vessels to drive the oxygen-rich blood into every single cell. If even one of these elements fails, our cells become deprived of oxygen, and are unable to function properly. This physiologic reality illustrates a spiritual reality in that our spiritual health is also dependent upon three elements: a “heart,” blood “volume,” and enough “pressure.”

John records an interaction between Jesus and the Jewish leader Nicodemus who comes to Jesus honestly seeking the truth. Jesus reveals “Truly, truly I say to you unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3 ESV). Just as we had no part in our physical birth, we have no part in our spiritual birth – it is completely a gift from our merciful God. Our part in all this is to surrender and believe. This is essential for salvation and is the “heart” of our spiritual health.

Once we have received salvation, we enter a process of sanctification, in which God continually guides us into living a life ever more reflective of His Son, Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of this in his letters to believers, revealing that God accomplishes sanctification in us as we engage regularly in prayer (Philippians 4:4-9) and time in His Word (2 Timothy 2:15 and 3:16-17). These activities contribute to the “volume” of our spiritual life blood.

Finally, God uses the tribulations of life to mold into us perseverance, character, and a hope that does not disappoint (Romans 5:3-5). It is the “pressure” of life’s trial that God uses to propel the precious truth into every part of our eternal being.

So, with salvation as the “heart” of it all, prayer and time in God’s Word filling up the “volume,” and the “pressure” of life’s trials, we experience the fullness of life in Christ. If even one of these elements is lacking, we compromise our spiritual health.

**Prayer and Reflection:** God, I admit that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness. Without your mercy, I would have no hope. Thank you, God, for sending your Son to die in my place, to pay the penalty for my sins. With the assurance of my salvation, thank you, God, for continuing your work of sanctification in me until the day of Your return.

SUBMITTED BY JANALEE ISAACSON

## DAY 5 – JANUARY 14, 2022

*So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”*

JOHN 11:20-27 ESV

Martha seems to catch a lot of grief in many Christian circles. She is described as a loved friend of Jesus, yet it’s unfortunate that we primarily remember her by a moment when her heart was off. I want to highlight the rest of her story.

We first meet Martha when she gets upset that her sister is not helping prepare dinner for Jesus. Jesus rebukes her in front of everyone for not recognizing the most important thing – Jesus’ presence, not the hustle of hospitality. I’m not sure how Martha walked away from this interaction. Was she embarrassed? Angry? Frustrated? She could have been resentful toward Jesus or even outright rejected Him. Many did when Jesus told them what they didn’t want to hear.

What we do know about Martha is what happens a bit later in her story. Her brother Lazarus is sick. She sends word for Jesus to come, but Jesus waits two days before heading toward Bethany. When He arrives, Lazarus has already died. Martha was hurting, yet her first response was to go to Jesus (unlike Mary who chose to stay in the house). She comes to Jesus with her feelings, but she also comes with her faith in His power and goodness. She then proclaims Jesus as the Christ and Son of God, a claim that few had fully put together at this time.

I think this story exemplifies a depth and maturity about Martha’s faith, particularly in times of trial. She doesn’t come in demanding or guilting Jesus. She stands on the truth that despite what happens, Jesus is still good. She puts her trust in Jesus. She recognizes that in the midst of sorrow, Jesus is ultimate. He is our hope.

Martha’s story could have had an entirely different ending, but she allowed Jesus’ words to mold her into a person who proclaimed truth and stood on faith.

**Prayer and Reflection:** God, when my heart is not right, let me humbly accept correction. May I listen to and obey your Holy Spirit. When I am faced with trials, I pray that I run to you, having faith in your truth and power.

SUBMITTED BY HEATHER SHENOY

## DAY 6 – JANUARY 15, 2022

*In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.*

PROVERBS 16:9 NIV

A New Year means a chance to turn the page on 2021 and start new rhythms or new habits. I always look forward to 21 Days of Prayer as it provides an opportunity to start a new habit or a fresh start in my walk with the Lord.

After going through one of the biggest disappointments in recent years in my life, not finishing Ironman Coeur d’Alene, I needed a fresh start. To be honest, my training and focus had become a more consistent habit than my time in the Word. I did both, but oftentimes, my training came first. So, in July I took the chance for a fresh start, my time in the Word would come before anything else. This allowed space for healing and to wait on what the Lord had planned next for me. I also learned it becomes easier to let go of disappointment in your life when you look ahead to what is next. I’m learning that sometimes in the waiting is where the Lord reveals His plan for our lives.

Over these past few months, I found myself searching for answers, wondering what I am supposed to learn through this experience that has felt like a great sense of loss. One lesson I have learned is that my timing and God’s timing rarely line up. During devotional times this summer, I was studying in the book of Isaiah, and the words in this verse jumped off the page:

*But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

While I've taken time to rest, I have focused on waiting on the Lord. For me, this looks like being intentional about my time in His Word, slowing down long enough to be still and listen. I don't get this right every day, but I've learned to allow myself some grace to miss a day, rather than rush to catch up, and I just move on to the next day. It is something I learned during my IM training that is helpful in my time in the Word. Don't beat yourself up if you miss a day. Life happens. Just keep looking ahead and try again tomorrow. I treat my time in the Word like a workout and never regret it once I am done. I always feel better and more confident as I approach the day ahead.

I hope my story will help you find encouragement to just go with what you feel the Lord calling you to do. His timing may not make sense in the moment, but don't rush it! Simply be patient and see what adventure God has for you.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Heavenly Father, give me peace and clarity in Your timing, not my own. May I remove the distractions that swirl around me, long enough to praise Your name! I pray for ears to hear what You want to speak into my life in this New Year. Touch my eyes and ears to see and hear the needs of those you have brought into my life. Touch my lips to have the courage to speak the love, joy, hope, peace, kindness, gentleness, and self-control that comes from your Holy Spirit. Let me be your hands and feet. In Your Precious Name I pray, Amen

SUBMITTED BY STEPHEN ROBINSON

## DAY 7 – JANUARY 16, 2022

*Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."*

MARK 2:5 NLT

Seeing their faith. This miracle wasn't necessarily about the faith of the paralyzed man. Maybe he had given up and thought his friends were wasting their time. It was about the faith of his friends. He had friends who stopped at nothing to get him to Jesus.

About 10 years ago, my husband was diagnosed with clinical depression. It was a very difficult time in our lives. As he sank deeper into his depression, I was sucked down with him. We became completely isolated. I didn't know how to cope with the changes in my husband, our family, and our lives. I remember feeling completely alone and isolated. I felt like there was a huge fog around me that no one could see through, and I could not seem to break through. My friends tried to stay in touch, but I felt so trapped that I withdrew even further.

It took me more than a year to break through that fog. When I did, friends who had stayed in touch, in spite of my withdrawal, encouraged me to join a book study. Even though I didn't want to do it, I knew I needed to join this group. It became a lifeline for me. The more I was around other women and in God's Word, the more alive I felt. They encouraged me, they prayed for me. They pointed me to Jesus. Little by little I was lifted out of the mire of depression and isolation. When that book study ended, I joined another, and another. I had rediscovered the value of being in God's word and being around others who continually pointed me to Jesus. I developed a regular quiet time each morning to make sure I started the day with God's Word. I recognized the need for help and learned to reach out to friends when I felt overwhelmed.

Fast forward to July 2020. I was hit with a health crisis of my own. I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. Armed with a daily routine of reading God's word and a network of friends, who prayed for me daily, I literally



floated through treatments and surgeries. I don't know how to explain it. Jesus, and the prayers of my friends, carried me high up above the crisis and chaos of cancer. It was a tough year, full of ups and downs, but looking back, all I see is the goodness of God.

10 years ago, I tried to handle everything by myself and was dragged down into isolation and suffering. Last year, I leaned on my friends and was lifted up above the storm as they pointed me to Jesus, again and again.

That is why community is so important! The enemy wants us to feel alone, isolated, defeated. I want to challenge you to lean into those around you. Share your struggles, big and small. Be vulnerable. Alone, small challenges seem huge. Together, huge challenges become small. Friends who point us to Jesus are vital to our spiritual health. And when we are healthy spiritually, we are able to handle the chaos of life. Whether it's getting through a rough day, or dealing with a major crisis, we need each other.

I also want to challenge you to be a friend like the ones the paralyzed man had. Chances are, God is putting someone on your heart right now. Do everything in your power to get your friends to Jesus. Don't allow fear, embarrassment, or risk of rejection to stand in the way. You don't have to do anything spectacular or amazing. It doesn't have to take a lot of time. Send a text when you are thinking of them. When they come to mind, pray for them right then and there. If you read a scripture that reminds you of your friend, share it with them. Don't give up. Keep reaching out. It wasn't easy for the paralyzed man's friends to get him to Jesus. I didn't make it easy for my friends to help me years ago. They may feel like they didn't help me much during that time, but they didn't give up. They made a huge impact on my life. They kept pointing me to Jesus.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Father, thank you for the loving community of Legacy Church. I pray that we become friends who can lean on each other, be there for each other, and continually point each other to Jesus.

SUBMITTED BY MICHELLE CROYLE

## DAY 8 – JANUARY 17, 2022

*And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

MATTHEW 6:7-8 NIV

### LISTENING TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Prayer is simply talking with God. I love going for a walk and talking with God. Prayer is not always time to inform God about my day. God already knows what happened in your day. If one of my kids only came around to see me when he needed to ask for something, it would kind of be like, "Here comes Johnny. I wonder what he wants this time?"

I like to take time and listen to what God wants to tell me. I want to know the heart of God and what he has for me. That's hard if I'm doing all the talking and never take time to listen to God. So, take some time. Find a place where it is quiet to clear out your mind with all the busy stuff of life.

When you are in that space, confess your sin so your communication filter is clear, and then, just listen. God, what is it right now you want to tell me? Listen for that still small voice. Allow your heavenly Father to show you what he

wants to accomplish in your life.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Father God, forgive me for the times I have made prayer all about me and what I want you to do. Bring me in alignment with your will as I listen right now for what you want to tell me.

SUBMITTED BY DAVE ALTMAYER

## DAY 9 – JANUARY 18, 2022

*“For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*

ESTHER 4:14 ESV

### PERHAPS YOU WERE BORN FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Who comes to your mind when you think of someone who is called by God? Do you think of a prominent leader, like a pastor? Well, if your own name doesn’t come to mind, I’d like to argue that you should include yourself in that category of someone who is called for a specific purpose, one God can use to lead and influence others for His glory.

By definition a leader is someone who has the power to influence those around them.

We all have influence on someone. Even the most astute introverts have influence on coworkers, passers-by at the grocery store, family, or friends. More importantly, according to Ephesians 4:11-12, God calls us all to lead and influence those around us in love by doing His work and building up the church, the body of Christ.

The enemy may try to tell you that you are disqualified for this calling because of your past hurts, scars, or mistakes. But I’m here to tell you... that’s a lie. God doesn’t require perfection. It’s okay that you may have had a broken childhood, made some decisions you wish you could take back, or got so off track you’re not sure how to find your way back. The truth is, God only wants your heart and all the baggage that might come with it. According to Genesis 50, what the enemy tried to use to harm you, God uses for good. God uses those very same hurts, scars, and mistakes to strengthen you, to open your eyes, to increase your compassion for others who are going through the same things you have gone through. He makes you aware of things you would have never noticed prior to walking through the fire. He molds you into a person who can have a real impact on someone who is hurting.

In return, He can bring healing to your own heart. “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose”. (Romans 8:28).

Just in case you have never been told this before, **YOU ARE CALLED**. God created you for a very special purpose, one that requires your every trait, your unique personality, your sense of humor, your struggles, your strengths, your interests and dreams, your past hurts, and experiences. God knows them all and picked you because of them, not in spite of them.

According to Psalm 139, God created your inmost being, He knit you together in your mother’s womb. He knew every one of your days before one of them came to be. He knows everything about you, He even knows your thoughts before you speak a word. He knows everything you do. He knows all the good, bad, and the ugly about

you. Everything! And guess what? He cares intimately about every part. He loves you. He wants to grow closer to you. He wants to use you and He is calling you. He hasn't counted you out. Don't let anyone disqualify you. Grasp on to the truths of who you are in God and hold onto His calling, because He who started a good work in you will bring it to completion (Philippians 1:6).

**Prayer and Reflection:** Dear Lord, I am in awe of Your immense capacity to know me and love me more intimately than I have ever experienced here, on earth. I thank You for loving me as I am this very moment and for calling me closer to You and Your will every day. When I don't know where to turn or how to turn back from my mistakes, I thank You for giving me the Holy Spirit who helps me in my weaknesses. When I don't know what I should pray for, "the Spirit himself prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us in harmony with God's own will" (Romans 8:26). Please give me Your strength as I strive to show Your love to those in my path today.

SUBMITTED BY KERI HUGHES

## DAY 10 – JANUARY 19, 2022

*In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 NAS

*Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your request known to God. And the Peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6,7 NASRE

### EXPERIENCE GOD'S WILL: A THANKFUL LIFE

There are so many books written on the topic of How to know God's will for your life. Let me suggest that His will might be found in His love letter to you and me. In these verses, we find one of the keys to knowing the will of God: thankfulness in all things. Thankfulness produces one of the fruits of the Spirit: peace. I don't know about you, but in day-to-day activities and circumstances, such as a lost job, financial problems, family problems, broken relationships, I can easily fret and worry over what might happen and try to fix the problem. I might even pray and ask for God's help but miss what God desires for me to learn—that, without Him, I can do nothing. Only He can produce true peace and contentment. It is so easy to petition God for our needs and concerns when negative circumstances occur and miss the importance of thanking Him first. Thankfulness during negative circumstances acknowledges that it is God's problem and not mine. Wow does that ever change my perspective. Now, I can rest in the Sovereignty of God to accept what has happened or rest in His ability to change the problem I'm facing. The backpack of worry is removed, and I am able to experience the fruit of the Spirit, a peace that surpasses all comprehension.

Other passages to read: Colossians 2:6-7 3:15-17

**Prayer and Reflection:** What circumstances in my life are causing stress and worry? Is there a major event that occurred in the past that I have never thanked God for and continue to struggle over? Today, approach the King of Kings with a heart of thankfulness. It may not change what has happened, but it will change how you experience His presence in your life. God, forgive me when I carry problems you never wanted me to carry. I'm grateful for your ability to take care of me better than I can take care of myself. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for giving me peace in the

## DAY 11 – JANUARY 20, 2022

*I pray that Christ may make His home in your hearts through your faith; so that having your roots deep and your foundations strong, in love, you may become mighty to grasp the idea, as it is grasped by all God's people, of the breadth and length, the height and depth -- yes, to attain to a knowledge of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, so that you may be made complete in accordance with God's own standard of completeness.*

EPHESIANS 3:17-19 WEYMOUTH NEW TESTAMENT

Love. It marks the beginning of our journey when we accept that Christ died for us and we allow Him to enter our heart; it's the foundation of our walk; and it's the capstone of our journey to completeness. Here in Ephesians, we find that we need to get rooted and grounded in love just to set ourselves up to begin to understand the size and scope of God's love for us.

When I read the Bible, I can't help but think that its simplest message is also its greatest and most complex message. A simple "I love you" from the Lord is a message we will likely spend eternity trying to fully comprehend. Maybe it's because love is more than a concept, it's the very nature of God Himself. God doesn't just love us, God is love. When we gain an understanding of love, we gain an understanding of our Creator.

**Prayer and Reflection:** What better way to set ourselves up to make an impact on the world around us than to see our Creator as He is, that we should become more like Him. Holy Spirit, help us to see and know and feel Your love for us today. And make that love so consume and overwhelm us, that we can't contain it, but must let it flow out from us to those who cross our path.

SUBMITTED BY ANTHONY MADSEN

## DAY 12 – JANUARY 21, 2022

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4 ESV

Paul is calling us to a life of 'other-centeredness', the importance and priority of intentionally putting the needs of others ahead of our own. Imagine a culture where people actually thought about the well-being of others first. Imagine a body of believers who gave priority to passionately seek ways to meet the needs of the community, region and world it was created to serve.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13 ESV) Make no mistake, we look most like Jesus when we love and serve the needs of those around us. Paul encourages us, 'in humility, count others more significant than yourselves.' Life is not all about us. We were not born into this world, situated in this moment in time, for life to simply revolve around us, our needs, our pleasures and our desires.

Here's the challenge: Start today. Take this moment right now in prayer and ask the Lord who he wants you to prefer and/or serve today. Who is struggling? Who is in a difficult situation, needing hope or help? Once the Holy Spirit has helped you determine who that is, respond. Go and make a difference. And as you go, remember the words of Jesus who said, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40 ESV)

**Prayer and Reflection:** Jesus, help my life become a reflection of you to the world around me today. Help me be attentive to where you are working, and responsive to where you are leading. When all is shared that you want me to share, when all is accomplished that you asked me to do, may it reflect your heart alone. And in the end, may you receive all the honor and all the glory. In your strong name I pray...Amen.

SUBMITTED BY GARY MORENO

## DAY 13 – JANUARY 22, 2022

*He must become greater; I must become less.*

JOHN 3:30 NIV

If you have been present in a church for any amount of time, you have likely heard a variation of this phrase or a representation of this concept: I must decrease, so that God may increase. Most commonly, the discussion that follows concerns the part about becoming less. It may lead to questions like: How can I decrease? How can I humble myself? While these questions are not wrong, in and of themselves; they may not be the intended focus of this verse. By asking these questions, we turn the discussion toward ourselves. This is so easy to do; how can I find a solution to this problem?

In context, John the Baptist is explaining to onlookers "a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given to him from heaven" (v. 27). The focus is on the glory of heaven rather than the decreasing of oneself. John dedicated his entire life to prepare the way for Jesus and share Christ's goodness with the world. John absolutely decided on ways to make himself less, but was that his focus? No, Jesus was the focus. As a result of that focus, John says "the joy is mine, and it is now complete" (v. 29).

So how can we experience this same joy and completeness while shifting the focus away from ourselves? What if we spend more time reading His word? We will become less. What if we spend more time talking to Him in prayer? We will become less. What if we spend more time serving? We will become less. What if we prioritize attending church? We will become less. Rather than focusing on the ways we can humble and decrease ourselves, we need to focus on His increase and bringing Him to the forefront and center of our everyday lives. If we continue to make Him greater in our day-to-day choices, slowly but surely, there will be increasingly less room for me

**Prayer and Reflection:** Lord, thank you for your promises and goodness. Help me recognize your greatness in my everyday life and focus on increasing YOU. I pray for wisdom to turn the focus away from my own abilities and make myself less in order to make you more. Help me seize opportunities to strengthen your influence in my life until

there is no more room for me. Amen.

SUBMITTED BY KARISSA ALTMAYER

## DAY 14 – JANUARY 23, 2022

*This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

GALATIANS 5:16 NKJV

Every day should be a prayer walk.

True, there are times when we go into the closet for a special session with the Lord. But part of loving the Lord is to walk with a continual awareness of His presence —and His agenda. Most of us spend our lives working on our own agenda.

Just before Jesus left, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and partner with us. But that partnership was not to make the Holy Spirit our genie-servant. His purpose is to help us further His kingdom by sharing the gospel and making disciples.

David practiced this kind of prayer walking. He said: I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Psalm 16:8 NKJV

The apostle Paul followed this up with his instruction:

*This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

GALATIANS 5:16 NKJV

**Prayer and Reflection:** Dear Father, please train my heart to walk with a continual awareness of His presence with me. May my communion with you not be constrained to my 'prayer closet', but rather an experience of ongoing fellowship with you through the power of Your Spirit.

SUBMITTED BY GEORGE COLLINS

## DAY 15 – JANUARY 24, 2022

*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 NIV

This time of year, our awareness turns keenly toward New Year's Resolutions and making changes in the next twelve

months. For many, the sugary indulgences of the holidays (and the fact that we can't wear sweatpants to work) cause most of us to look a little closer at the foods we are putting in our bodies. Words like "Keto" and "green smoothie" are a part of regular conversation in January with hopes of finally getting healthy.

While good food is vital, our overall health is impacted by what our eyes and ears, minds and hearts absorb as well. How often do we look at everything else we consume on a daily basis?

Though we are counting our calories and eating ridiculous amounts of kale, we wonder why we still don't feel well. This isn't an accident. It seems like everywhere we turn we are met with a world that is loud, angry, inappropriate, or photoshopped. Fear and inadequacy make front page headlines. In shows and movies, the razor edge between entertainment and filth is all too real. Social media is constantly shouting that we aren't good enough. It's designed that way. These things are meant to captivate you. In other words, they are meant to hold you captive. I'm not sure about you, but the idea of being a prisoner isn't very appealing.

In order to live the rich lives of freedom we are called to in Christ, we aren't meant to focus only on our physical bodies. We are told to also pay attention to what is going into our hearts and minds, because it matters deeply.

If we spend our days gobbling down cheeseburgers and caramel mochas, our physical bodies will become sick and slow. If we spend our days drinking in social media and crass movies, our hearts will become hardened and unwell. If we spend our days marinating in the fear of our news feed, our minds will become anxious and unhealthy, too.

But there is good news! 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us we, as Christ-followers, are equipped with the weapons to defeat the attack on our minds and hearts. (Check out Ephesians 6:10-18 for the full list of armor). Because we have the Spirit of God in us, we are able to take every thought captive instead of becoming captives ourselves. Just because the media is calling doesn't mean we need to answer. If temptations and worries are already in your heart, you have the power to call them into silence and shift your focus on Christ. Praise God!

Today, as you read the labels on the food you are eating, I challenge you to "read the labels" on the media you consume as well. If the way you spend your time isn't building up your heart and mind or feeding your soul, think again. The secret to true health can only be found in the truth, goodness, and beauty of Christ.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Heavenly Father, we thank you for making us complex creatures who are designed in your image. Today, the world around us is shouting for our attention and makes it difficult to focus on what is true. Please prick our hearts today as we are drawn toward the things of this world that make us spiritually and mentally unhealthy. Teach us to take our thoughts captive and focus on you. Amen

SUBMITTED BY HOLLY KIMM

## DAY 16 – JANUARY 25, 2022

*I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

PSALM 16:8 NIV

2021 was one of the hardest years of my life. In January, I stood up and had a sharp pain go down my leg. After months of misdiagnosis, pain, and not being able to walk without crutches, I received two hip replacements. Although 2021 was tough, it was also a year of overwhelming growth. Prayer and focus were two areas of refinement in my

life this past year that deepened my relationship with the Lord.

First of all, I have always known God hears and answers prayers. What I had been missing, is a deep understanding of how intimately powerful prayer can be. My first realization of how intimate God is toward his children is when he began answering prayers in my life, differently than what I was asking for. I was praying for physical healing and God was maintaining my mental health, so I could persevere and manage my situation with a positive outlook. I could not explain why I wasn't simply curled up on the couch, day after day. God knew my mental health was more important for me than physical healing. The doctors were able to fix my body, but only God could protect my mind and give me peace through all my struggles.

This experience reminded me, when someone asks for your prayers, pray for them. This may seem obvious, but I can't tell you how many times I have said I would pray for someone, and I then forgot. For the first time in my life, I truly felt people's prayers over me. I was so excited when someone said they would pray for me, because I knew God heard their prayers and he was working in my life. He knew exactly what I was going through, and he was sustaining me physically and mentally through prayer.

In addition to prayer, learning to focus on God, and not my circumstance, carried me through this difficult year. The promise in Psalm 16:8 says if I keep my eyes on the Lord, I will not be shaken. The KJV translates this verse, "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." In *Experiencing God Day by Day* by Henry and Richard Blackaby, they explain what it means to set the Lord always before you:

"It means that you choose to relate everything you encounter to your trust in God. What you choose to focus on becomes the dominant influence in your life. You may be a Christian, but if your focus is always on your problems, your problems will determine the direction of your life. If your focus is on people, then people will determine what you think and do. In biblical times, the right hand was the most distinguished position, reserved for one's chief adviser and supporter. When you choose to focus on Christ, you invite Him to take the most important position in your life as Counselor and Defender. Every time you face a new experience, you should turn to Christ for His interpretation and strength. When people insult you and mistreat you, you should seek direction from your Counselor regarding the right response. When you face a crisis, you should receive strength from the One at your right hand. When you experience need, you should consult your Counselor before you react. When you face a fearful situation, you should take courage from the Advocate at your right hand. Everything you do is in the context of your relationship to Christ. What an incredible act of God's grace that Christ should stand beside you to guide you and counsel you and defend you! How could you ever become dismayed over your situation with Christ at your right hand? What confidence this should give you!"

I posted our opening verse around my house and wore it around my neck this past year. No matter what you are going through, you can be certain Christ is standing with you. The lyrics to one of my favorite worship songs remind us:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full, in his wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of your glory and grace.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for hearing and answering our prayers. Thank you for loving us so intimately that you know exactly what we need. Please help us to always pray first and to pray for others. Also thank you for always being by our side. Help us to focus on You and not earthly things. We love you. Amen

**Challenge:** Have you told anyone you would pray for them? Take a moment and pray for them today.

SUBMITTED BY LONDA MILLSAP



*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

ACTS 2:42-47 NIV

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As our 260 Journey Connect Group has been going through the book of Acts, I have been reminded of what the early church looked like and what was important to them. From these verses, they were devoted to the apostles' teaching, prayer, fellowship, the breaking of bread, sharing community, and making disciples.

To those in the early church, their commitment to Jesus was central to their lives, and it permeated and affected every part of their daily lives. This, at a time when they were being persecuted, both verbally and physically, for their faith. They were willing to give up everything for their Savior, including their lives.

My prayer is that Legacy Church can be as devoted, with the same level of commitment, as the early church was. Let's commit to being people who are faithful to reading, hearing, and applying the Word of God. Let's be a people of prayer. Tim Dilella states in The 260 Journey, "When I pray, three things happen: I go places I never would have gone, I meet people I never would have met, and I go through doors I never would have gone through." Prayer truly helps us to be more aligned with God's desires, so that He can use us for His kingdom purposes.

I pray, also, that we can be a people who are willing to sacrifice our time, talents, and money for the benefit of others, both inside and outside of Legacy Church. The early believers did this, and as a result, they had 'glad and sincere' hearts. They found fulfillment and purpose in meeting the needs of others. In our present day, with all the division and stress in almost every element of our society, the Lord is showing us one way to bless others and at the same time, to build ourselves up.

In the early church, the believers' authenticity and commitment to Jesus was evident to those who weren't believers yet, and as a result, many came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. What an example for us today.

**Prayer and Reflection:** Heavenly Father, we praise you for your Word, and for giving us examples in your Word to show us what pleases you. Help us to be a people who please you in our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. We desire to bring honor and glory to you through our devotion and commitment to you and to your kingdom purposes. Give us the strength and determination, even when times get difficult for us as Christians, to serve you wholeheartedly.

SUBMITTED BY STEVE FRIED

## DAY 18 – JANUARY 27, 2022

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

MATTHEW 7:7-11 ESV

If God already knows our wants and our needs, why should we pray? Often, He waits to be invited to act on our behalf. He wants us to want Him and His will for our lives. Prayer is a relationship, not simply a list of requests. We cannot coerce God to do our bidding, but in relationship with Him we give Him permission to work in our lives. Come before the Father with your whole heart, trust Him to hear you and respond. We pray because He is able, not necessarily because He will act in accord with our prayer. God does not promise to give us whatever we ask for, but He does promise to act in our best interest!

Honesty time. Far too often I don't ask God for things in my heart. I don't ever want to treat Him like he's my personal cosmic genie, and so unless I know it aligns to His will, I often won't even ask... especially if I benefit from the prayer request. However, this scripture illustrates the kind of open and honest relationship He desires with us. He does not want us to be timid when we come before Him. Children are not afraid of their loving parents. Nor should we be afraid to bring our requests to the Father. God is not tight-fisted; He does not begrudge giving His children the very best. He is a loving Father, the creator of kindness, who understands, cares, and comforts us.

We are told to ask of the Lord, seek the Lord's will, and then be active and constant in pursuit of our requests. Through our prayers, we are showing Him (and ourselves) that we trust Him and His promises. This deepens our relationship with Him and grows our confidence in Him.

**Prayer and Reflection:** What would you ask of the Father? Let go of fear of the answer and embrace the faith necessary to be honest about what's on your heart. Let the Holy Spirit guide your heart's desires and then declare them to the Lord. Be confident that the Father wants to hear from you; He wants to give you good gifts. Relationship with the Father is what we are seeking, and this begins with honest, vulnerable, heart-felt prayer.

SUBMITTED BY MATTHEW LAMBERT

## DAY 19 – JANUARY 28, 2022

*I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

GALATIANS 2:20A NIV

### LIVING IN EXPECTATION

Last year, I sensed God was calling me to do something greater for Him. It would require a career change, a move across the country and a huge step of faith. I spent months feeling like I couldn't do what he was calling me to do because I wasn't good enough, experienced enough or brave enough. In the midst of seeking God's will, I heard a song that helped me realize when you live a life for God, you need to be willing to move (figuratively and literally).

When you live a life allowing God to do what he desires, he will move and give you the strength and courage you need. This ultimately means you need to be open and ready to do his will. The song was "My Hands are Open" by Josh Baldwin: "I want to move so you can move. Come and do what only you can do. I want to live in expectation of your Kingdom breaking through."

As I began to live a life in expectation of what God could do through me rather than putting my hope in my own abilities, I gained the confidence to live according to his will. God doesn't call us to do things on our own. He calls us to do greater things because He is greater, and He lives in us!!!

**Prayer and Reflection:** Let's pray today for the courage to live out what God has called us to do. In whatever environment you are in, pray for boldness and begin to live in expectation of what the Lord wants to do in us and through you, to advance His Kingdom.

SUBMITTED BY AMANDA MILLSAP

## DAY 20 – JANUARY 29, 2022

*"Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the Lord, who had spoken to her. She said, "You are the God who sees me." She also said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?"*

GENESIS 16:13 NLT

*Hear me as I pray, O Lord. Be merciful and answer me! My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."*

PSALM 27:7-8 NLT

### THE GOD WHO SEES: A HEART-TO-HEART WITH GOD

I have always found the names of God to be fascinating to study as His names reveal more about His character to us. One name that struck a chord with me recently is the name of El-Roi. El-Roi is The God Who Sees. God sees everything that happens in our daily lives. In the midst of our struggles and difficulties, GOD SEES US. He doesn't just watch us struggle from afar, He draws near, comforts us, and gives us the strength to endure the trials of life. I may not know the season of life you are walking through, but El-Roi does, and He is with you. Life has not been easy for almost two years now, but He did not promise us an easy life (John 16:33). However, He did promise He would be with us (Isaiah 43:2, Matthew 28:20).

Another beautiful aspect of El-Roi is that because He sees us, He is inviting us to be with Him. Psalm 27:8 is one of those invitations where He says, "Come and talk with me." What an amazing and gracious God we serve! The One who created the universe wants to have a personal heart-to-heart conversation with us, because He sees us and hears our prayers. My prayer is that I would not be caught up with the distractions and business of life so I do not miss out on this invitation. May my response be like that of David, the Psalmist, who replied, "Lord, I am coming." Sometimes we may need to calm and settle our minds, to step into what our hearts truly long for: His presence. How will you respond to El-Roi's invitation today?

**Prayer and Reflection:** Ask for the Holy Spirit's help to set aside any distractions, and to step into His presence where we are strengthened and renewed. Take time to thank Him for seeing you and being near you during the current

situation you are walking through (health, finances, marriage, estranged relationships, and even blessings). Maybe you want (or even need) to feel His presence more strongly in your life. Ask that He draws near to you. It is no surprise to Him, but share what's on your heart, and take time to listen to Him. Allow Him to continue to work in your heart through whatever you are walking through and ask Him to show you how this circumstance might reveal who He is, to you and to those around you.

SUBMITTED BY RACHEL GILLETTE

## DAY 21 – JANUARY 30, 2022

*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but think with sober judgment, according to the measure of faith that God has assigned you.*

ROMANS 12:3 ESV

### I'M NOT WHO I THINK I AM

Walking through a shopping mall the other day, that I had never been in before, I know I grieved my heavenly Father by the thoughts I was having about who I am. I noticed that the mall was full of multicultural, multiethnic people. I was actually bothered a bit by how they were dressed, how they acted, and even how they talked. In all honesty, I was placing myself above them, like I had arrived at some elevated place in life.

That day as I left the mall, the Spirit of God began to ask me some heart wrenching questions. "Who do you think you are? Do you really think you're better than those people? Let me clearly remind you that without Me you are nothing. Without Me you can do nothing. Without Me you have nothing."

God's one-sided conversation continued into the next day. "You are who you are only because of My grace. You have what you have because I have chosen to bless you. You came into My world without anything, and you will leave My world without anything. If it weren't for Me you would be hopelessly lost and destitute. Do you want Me to go on?" My immediate response was, "Nope, got it."

That day was a day of sorrowful repentance and self-examination. It was a day of renewed thanksgiving to God, my Creator, for all He has graciously given me and continues to do in me.

Something else happened that day. I began a journey of discovering who I am, who I am not, and how God is at the center of it all. I am, in fact, on a journey of learning about the true me and everything that God's Word has to say about me.

Anyone want to join me?

**Prayer and Reflection:** Father God, show me who I truly am and who You are making me to be.

SUBMITTED BY RON BAUER

# PRAYER TOOL: HOW TO FAST

## What?

Fasting is the practice of giving up something we normally consume to focus on God. This prayer tool will show its significance in spiritual warfare.

## Why?

"Fasting is universal temperance, prayer is universal communication with God; the former defends from the outside, whereas the latter from within directs a fiery weapon against the enemies. The demons can sense a faster and man of prayer from a distance, and they run far away from him so as to avoid a painful blow."

ST. THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE

## Bible reference:

*"But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."*

MATTHEW 6:17-18

## A quick introduction to Fasting

The Biblical principle of fasting is a process of forgoing something (primarily food) in order that we might turn our gaze on to God in a more intense and focused way.

Fasting is referred to numerous times in both the Old and New Testaments as a practice of God's people. Jesus talks about it in the Sermon on the Mount alongside prayer and giving, and in doing so we could argue He endorses it as a prerequisite for the disciple: "When you fast..." (Matthew 6:16) presumes fasting will be a familiar practice in the life of the Jesus-follower, just as prayer and giving are.

While fasting implies abstaining from food, it more importantly means a feasting on God – an utter dependence upon the presence of God beyond the sustenance of food. In doing so we prove the words Jesus quoted during His own fast: "...man does not live by bread alone but by every word that precedes from the mouth of God..."

Prayer and fasting are the weapons we must pick up if we are to overcome the assignments of the enemy against our lives and be free to progress into deeper realms of the Spirit.

## Corporate fasting

While fasting is often a private matter between an individual and God, the Bible also refers to a number of corporate fasts.

These corporate fasts were often in times when the children of Israel were in a desperate situation. Realizing their need to repent of sins on behalf of the nation, they cried out to God in fasting and prayer for a breakthrough.

We also see this practice at certain key 'breakthrough moments' in the New Testament. Jesus told the disciples when confronting certain demonic activity that, 'this sort only comes out through prayer and fasting'.

In Acts 13, at a critical juncture in the life of the church regarding its launch into Gentile territory, we read of the apostles and prophets fasting and praying to God, seeking wisdom for what would become the explosion of the gospel breaking through the missional frontier.

There is a dimension to fasting which draws us into the spiritual realm and the front-edge of spiritual warfare. Significant shifts and major breakthroughs can come as a result of fasting and prayer and it has proven to be a primary tool, for thousands of years, in the advancement of the Kingdom.

Ironically, when we are weak in body, we are sometimes strongest in spirit, spiritually heightened and alert, and therefore primed for a breakthrough. Jesus Himself seems to have endured most of the satanic attacks against His life during His forty days of fasting in the wilderness. This should inspire and educate us in our Christian journey and maturing process – the Son of God, knowing He was about to face the temptations and torments of the enemy, utilized the weapon of fasting, and in so doing overcame the devil and his angels.

Only after this did Jesus' ministry fully begin. Maybe some of the breakthroughs we want to see in our own lives or the lives of our families, churches, and cities will only come after a season of fasting and prayer.

## Do it: How to Fast

The tips below are for a fast of food but ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you could fast. You might want to try the following instead:

- Social media
- Alcohol
- Talking
- Entertainment or sports
- Screens and devices

**'Walk before you can run':** a 'slow and steady' approach to progression in this discipline is particularly important. It might be an idea to start with a partial fast, like missing one meal a day for a week, or trying a 'Daniel fast' which involves giving up all delicacies and concentrating on vegetables.

**Build it up gradually:** move on in your fasting, trying one 24-hour period once a week for a few weeks. After success in this fasting, move onto a longer fast – try 3 days, or build a more consistent rhythm of the first 2 days of every month. It may be good to tie in with the church's calendar at Lent and aim for a longer, more intentional fast.

**Plan:** as you prepare to fast, try and plan your diary intentionally. It is good to try and not get too busy when you are fasting so that you can give some set time to prayer. Try not to fill up the time you would have been fasting with work and meetings, rather keep it free to intentionally seek God. You may also want to check that your medical conditions comply with your fasting. If you need to, check it out with your doctor.

**Monitor:** try to pay attention to the attitude of your heart. What is God revealing? What needs to change?

**Keep going:** when you start, you will begin to feel hunger pangs or discomfort: it's not real hunger – try to resist and allow the pains to trigger you instead to offer up prayers to God.

Soon the pangs will pass. Initially the body might suffer discomfort – this is due to the body ridding itself from toxins that have built up over the years because of bad eating habits. Don't be disturbed, rather thank God for the increased health and wellbeing as a result.

**Keep worshipping:** while outwardly you may be getting on with what you have to do, inwardly be singing in adoration in your heart to the Lord.

**Wisdom:** be aware of the weakness in your body and try not to do anything too strenuous that would put you and/or others at risk. Break your fast with a light meal, rather than heavily overeating.

## **Books on Fasting**

- Celebration of Discipline - Richard Foster
- Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting – Derek Prince

