

# 2024 PRAYER & *Fasting*



*Abundant Life  
Fasting & Prayer  
Guide*

# Instructions

We will be setting aside all of the Friday's in January for Prayer and Fasting as a church body. We are encouraging our church body to fast until 3pm if you are able from food or something that has the ability to feed your body. We are hoping to use this time to draw near to the LORD. During this time you can seek the LORD for your own life, your family, your church, our region. We are anticipating a deeper hunger and passion for the LORD to result from our time focused on Him.

Each Friday night we will have the church open from 5pm-9pm. You are welcome to come to our sanctuary where we will have light worship music playing and a time to seek God. You can come for 30 minutes or an hour or stay for the whole time, this is up to you. We will have a member of our elder team present each of the hours.

## **Instructions:**

*Prayer* - Spend time listening to praise and worship music. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking to know God more.

*Fasting* - We are encouraging our church family to fast until 3pm on Fridays. This could include fasting from food, media, social media, etc.

**Note:** As with any fast, please consult your physician prior to engaging in the fast. If you are currently taking medication or have other health issues, we advise you to use wisdom throughout this fast.

## Why do we fast?

Fasting is:

1. Strategically making space for God in your life.
2. Acknowledging our weakness.
3. Stepping into the heart of God and withdrawing from your normal everyday life.

4. During this time, you should limit entertainment (television, media, music and internet) because of its ability to distract.
5. Pulling yourself away from the normalcy of life and consciously spending more time with God than you do in your normal routine.
6. Your body talking to God for you. It is humbling yourself while expressing your hungry heart to God and it is a time when God will draw nearer to you!
7. Examining your heart to see if there is anything standing in the way of God responding. Do you believe God can use a fast to grow you? If you have any doubts, meditate on Mark 9:24 and ask God to help you overcome your unbelief. What might be holding you back from the LORD today?

## *6 Ways to Get the Most out of Fasting*

1. Consider gathering together with other believers for special times of prayer. We will be doing this every Friday in January at the church from 5pm-9pm. Separate yourself from non-believing influences. Deliberately separate yourself from ungodly influences because your spirit is open during this time. Limit your time spent on computers, watching television, excessive email, secular music, and other forms of entertainment. **THIS IS GOD'S TIME!**
2. Confess your sins. As you fast, repent. God will allow you to see yourself and begin to bring up and reveal your actions and attitudes that are not pleasing in His sight and the unrighteousness that is keeping you from being in right standing with God - see 1 John 1:9.
3. Spend extra time in God's Word. Read the Bible now more than ever. Commit to reading the Bible often.
4. Confess the Word. Speak the Word of God over your family, over your health, and over your finances.
5. Worship. Listen to worship music and teaching of God's Word. Feed your spirit only the Word of God. Be passionate about worship during your time of fasting. Set aside time to praise and worship God and dwell in His Presence.

# Notes about Fasting

The New Testament nowhere commands followers of Jesus Christ to fast. In fact, even in the Old Testament, the Jews were only commanded to fast on one day out of the year, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27, 29, 32). However, Jesus sometimes fasted (Matthew 4:2), and He assumed that His followers would also fast on occasion (Matthew 6:16–18; Mark 2:20). So, if fasting is something that Christians do, what is the proper way to fast? What does the Bible say about how to fast?

The Bible mentions different types of fasting. There is limiting yourself to a certain type of food (Daniel 1:8–14). There is fasting from food entirely (Daniel 10:2–3). There is fasting from food and water (Luke 4:2; Acts 9:9). There is also “fasting” from a certain activity (Exodus 19:15; 1 Corinthians 7:5). With the different types of fasting in mind, how to fast depends greatly on what type of fasting you are doing.

Always ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) in regards to how and for how long He wants you to fast. Setting a time frame seems to be the biblical approach (Esther 4:16). Also, fasting should have a clear purpose. People in the Bible fasted and prayed because they wanted something specific to happen. They either wanted God to change them, to change their circumstances, or to reveal something to them. Ultimately, fasting is far more about focus than food. Fasting is taking your focus off of the things of this world in order to focus more on the things of God. Fasting can thus be a means of growing closer to God.

A note of caution concerning fasting: those with medical conditions, especially conditions involving dietary restrictions (diabetes, for example), should consult a doctor before fasting. Remember, there is no biblical command that followers of Jesus Christ must fast. Therefore, it is not wrong to take a medical condition into account when determining how to fast.

Also, it is good to examine your motives for fasting. Fasting is not about manipulating God. Fasting will not cause God to do something that is outside of His will. Fasting is about changing yourself to be in agreement with God's plan and to be prepared to carry out your role in His plan. When you are deciding how to fast, it is crucially important to remember what fasting is all about—changing yourself, not changing God.

