

# Prayer & Fasting

**“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”**

**Colossians 4:2**

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Welcome to Prayer & Fasting.

This guide serves as an introduction to what prayer & fasting is, how to begin and some helpful tips along the way.

Our desire is that every member of the church gets involved in prayer & fasting for themselves, their families, their City Groups and church leaders.

As we press forward in serving the Kingdom of God and seeing lives transformed, the deeper our foundations in need to be.

The early church had a simple solution to digging these deep foundations; **prayer & fasting.**

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# Prayer

# What is Prayer?

The greatest person who ever lived was a person of prayer. When we read the gospels, we encounter Jesus in prayer time and time again. Jesus modelled a life of prayer in his relationship with the Father. In its simplest form, prayer is *communication* with God. But why the big deal?

Pete Greig, in his book “How To Pray” remarks,

“The priority of prayer is found in one way or another on almost every page of the Bible and in every chapter of church history. It does not belong to some other time in history, nor to some other type of person more spiritual or disciplined or experienced than you and me. Prayer is nothing at all unless it is a matter of vast and all-consuming importance for each one of us.”

## The Lord's Prayer

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, his response is recorded in what is known as ‘The Lord's Prayer’. It was Jesus' direct teaching to the disciples on prayer and offers us an important starting point in prayer.

It is as follows:

*“Father, may your name be revered as holy,  
May your kingdom come,  
on earth as it is in heaven,  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our sins,  
aAnd lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.”*

Prayer has, and will continue to be the source of life for all of us who call Jesus lord.

So often, however, our challenge with prayer is not *what* it is, but *how* to do it.

And so to that we turn.







# 4 Simple Steps:

Prayer is not meant to be prescriptive, but these 4 steps are a good starting point to begin praying.

## 1. Pause

Find a quiet place for yourself that can be a regular place to pray. Start by pausing (passively or actively) at the start of a prayer time to still our souls and focus on the God. By doing this, even just for a few minutes each day, we recenter ourselves on Christ's eternal presence, which enables us to pray from a much deeper place.

## 2. Rejoice

Remind yourself that who God is; "a loving Father who greets us with a smile and not a scowl, who sees our hearts and interprets our scribbled prayers." But he is also "in heaven" and "hallowed" — sovereign, awesome, and mysterious, which means that we can trust him." Try reading a Psalm of your choice to help with this reminder.

## 3. Ask

Begin to 'partner' with God through 'petition and perserverance'. The Apostle Paul reminded the church in Ephesus to pray "with all kinds of prayers and requests." Ask God for the needs of your families, friends, city and Church, and ask them in Jesus' name. (cf Eph 6:18; Jn 14:13)

## 4. Yield

The final step in the dance of prayer is surrender. It's a clenched fist slowly opening; We yield to God's presence "on earth as in heaven" through prayer and by listening to his Word, which is "our daily bread." We yield to God's holiness through confession and reconciliation, praying "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." And we yield to his power in spiritual warfare, asking our Father to "deliver us from evil." And so, in all these ways, it's by surrendering to God that we overcome, by emptying ourselves that we are filled, and by yielding our lives in prayer that our lives themselves become a prayer — the Lord's Prayer — in the end."



**Fasting**



**“More than any other  
Discipline, fasting reveals  
the things that control us.”**

**Richard Foster**  
Celebration of Discipline

# What is Fasting?

There is an ancient practice that the early church found great power in.

No, it wasn't the iPhone. It was the practice of *fasting*.

Whilst fasting has found recent popularity within the medical and health fields, biblical fasting goes beyond intermittent fasting or health cleanses. Fasting was and is one way of seeking and finding the actual kingdom of God present and active in our lives.

Simply put, fasting is the choice not to eat or drink for a specified period. Fasting is not the same as abstinence, which is the choice not to eat or drink specific items. Neither is fasting the same as dieting, which is the choice not to eat or drink various items for health reasons.

Fasting, as we see it in the biblical tradition, emerges not to impress God or earn favor, nor because there is anything wrong with food. Rather, it is done that we may consciously experience the direct sustenance of God to our body and our whole person. It is simply the voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function, for the sake of intense spiritual activity.

There are various reasons to fast, but the most basic premise of fasting is as a purposively chosen activity in which we learn to live by the power of God, in the character of God.

That sounds great (you might be thinking), but how do I start?

To that we turn.

## Fasting Non-Food?

When fasting, it has been asked if we can non-food items such as social media, television or internet. Whilst these are beneficial to abstain or detox from, we adhere to the concept of fasting as strictly food-based.

Fasting as taught by Jesus inherently involves food. There is reason for that, which we inevitably encounter once we begin fasting. With that being said, if you are unable to fast food directly, these might be a good alternative for those with medical needs as directed by a medical professional.

# How to Fast

When starting to fast, there are a few things to consider:

## 1. Focus

Focus on God throughout your fast. Remember that there is no power in itself but is the vessel to the true source of power; God. It is not the means, but a vehicle to the means. Instead of focusing on how hungry we are, focus on the power of God at work in your life. Focus on the true purpose of fasting. Fasting is not magic, but a way to offer our whole being intentionally to God.

## 2. Abstain

Remember that fasting is the choice not to eat or drink for a specified period of time. This might be half a day, a full day or more. This might seem hard but you can count on the Holy Spirit during this time. Be sure to plan your meals and schedule around your fast. \*Remember to consult your doctor if you are unsure if you should fast.\*

## 3. Seek

Once you have decided how long you are fasting for, dedicate the time you would normally eat to seeking God. This may look like prayer, journaling, silence & solitude or finding a place to be with God indoors or outdoors. Begin to speak to God and ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen, challenge and renew you.

## 4. Taste

Fasting truly is feasting. It was the source of strength that Jesus found in the wilderness (Luke 4) and the normal routine of the disciples and early church (Acts 13:2; 14:23). Begin to taste and see that the Lord is good, as David said. When you start to get hungry, try not think about your hunger, but begin to think about God and the power at work within you (Eph 3:20). Remember - fasting is not about getting something, but getting to someone, the person of Jesus.

**“But seek first his kingdom  
and his righteousness, and  
all these things will be given  
to you as well.”**

**The Gospel of Matthew**

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## **We invite you to prayer & fasting.**

Our hope is that you might encounter God during this time, for yourselves and for our community.

The following pages outline some helpful prayer points, including what to pray for on what days. It serves not to be prescriptive, but descriptive. We hope it serves you.

Let us believe that the Spirit that is at work within us, can do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine during this time (Eph 3:20), as we seek God together for the renewal of our City.

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# Day 1

Praying for our city, nation and world

# Monday

Prayer Focus:

Reno, The US & The World

Pray For:

- + Opportunities to extend God's compassion and kindness
- + The blessing of our schools and wisdom for teachers
- + Unity amongst churches
- + Organizations and businesses in your neighbourhood
- + Unity and reconciliation within families and communities
- + Peace for our City and nation
- + Freedom for the captives and oppressed
- + Safety and provision for victims of war
- + Provision for those experiencing poverty/hardship
- + Fear of the Lord and wisdom for world leaders
- + The global church, for comfort, courage and boldness in sharing the gospel

# Day 2

## Praying for our church

# Tuesday

## Prayer Focus:

Worship Experiences, Ministries, Courses

## Pray For:

- + Christ to be glorified in our gatherings
- + People who come into our gatherings to experience the love of Christ
- + Ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to open for the Gospel
- + Discernment for pastors & leaders and for them to hear from God
- + Families and communities to flourish in our Church
- + The Alpha Course to reach the lost
- + 'I Love My City' Outreach to impact those in need
- + Our courses to form people into Christ
- + Our Youth, Kids & Young Adults to experience Jesus in a new way
- + For God to bring increase so that our doors cannot contain it
- + Physical, emotional and spiritual health
- + For people to look more like Jesus every week

# Day 3

Praying for our community



# Wednesday

## Prayer Focus:

Neighbours, Schools, Community

## Pray For:

- + For specific needs of your neighbours
- + Our community to be impacted by the work of the Spirit
- + Christ to dwell in our homes, city groups and neighbourhoods
- + Authentic and transformational community to be formed
- + Us to live in unity with one another, to welcome one another with compassion
- + Us to have a likemindedness and common goal
- + Broken relationships to be mended and for reconciliation to take place where appropriate
- + Kindness and compassion, forgiving others as Christ forgave us
- + Our community to be marked by love, joy and peace
- + Selfless giving of time, finances, resources and energy to one another
- + Sacrificial acts as seen in the New Testament

**“And let the peace of  
Christ rule in your hearts,  
to which indeed you were  
called in one body.”**

**Colossians 3:15**