



PRAYER+ FASTING

Join us throughout the month of January as our entire Grace Woodlands church family focuses on Prayer & Fasting.

The goal of fasting is to draw nearer to God.

Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose; it hits the reset button of our soul and renews us from the inside out. It also enables us to celebrate the goodness and mercy of God and prepares our hearts for all the good things God desires to bring into our lives. We fast to experience breakthrough, overcome spiritual and physical struggles, and deepen our relationship with God.

Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and, most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

FILL OUT THESE SECTIONS AND PLACE IT SOMEWHERE VISIBLE DURING YOUR FAST:

I COMMIT TO FAST...

DURING THE FAST, I AM PRAYING IN FAITH FOR...

WHY DO WE FAST?

We fast to experience breakthrough, overcome spiritual and physical struggles, and deepen our relationship with God.



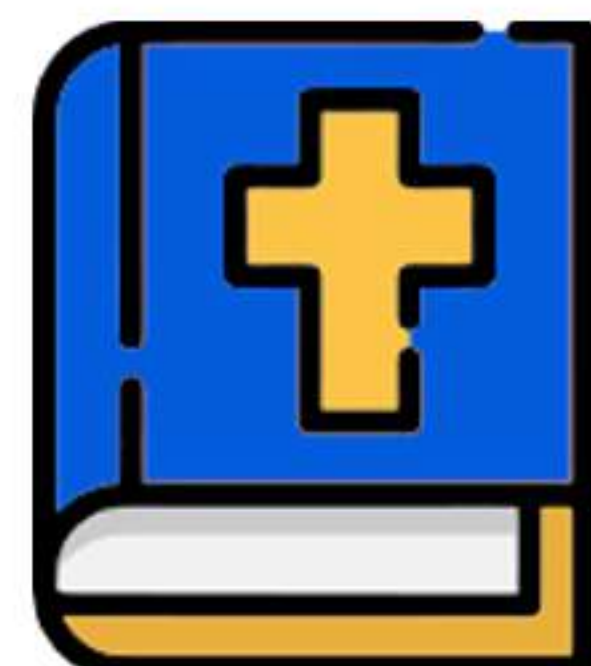
PRAYER

BREAKTHROUGH COMES THROUGH PRAYER



WORSHIP

WORSHIP SHIFTS OUR FOCUS OFF OF OURSELVES AND ONTO GOD



GOD'S WORD

HEAR FROM GOD BY READING HIS WORD EVERYDAY



ATTEND CHURCH

GATHER WITH OTHER BELIEVERS



VOLUNTEER

GIVE YOUR TIME TO SERVE OTHERS



PRAYER+ FASTING

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The observance of a fast varies with each participant. The basic fast is observed by (1) frequent prayer during the day(s) of the fast, and (2) only receiving water as physical intake for the space of the fast.

The following guidelines should only be perceived as assistance and counsel for those who wish to participate but who, for various reasons, cannot observe a complete fast. Let no one feel constrained to fast by reason of guilt feelings, nor may anyone seek, on the other hand, a couch of ease for their flesh by fasting less than they understand to be their personal, God-directed, Holy Spirit-prompted duty and ability. Within those parameters, these guidelines may help to pursue a fast in what one leader called the "Spirit of Fasting," i.e. abiding in the idea of the fast, even if the ideal was sometimes difficult to reach.

Practical considerations ought to be kept in view when fasting. Because we are not trying to convince God of our worthiness, but rather are simply observing a biblically-taught discipline, it is not unspiritual to recognize there will be functional realities at a physical level that ought to be understood.

1. Do not fast if there are medical or dietary reasons which prohibit it.
2. Always drink plenty of water while fasting, for it washes out physical impurities released into your system by the fast. (A squeeze of lemon in the water is helpful to this end).
3. Some whose regimen cannot seem to tolerate a complete fast find that taking fruit juices help them in the "spirit of the fast."
4. Those who for any reason are unable to participate at all, in their going without food, often find the "spirit of the fast" is sustained by their disciplined giving of regular times of prayer beyond their usual pattern of devotion or intercession.
5. People, whose work is of such heavy energy expenditure that a total fast is outside reason, often find that a measuring back of their food intake, as a kind of "offering," becomes a contemporary example of Daniel's "partial fast." Daniel 10:3 describes the prophet's taking "no pleasant food" for an extended period of fasting, while he still served his role of duty in government offices. This voluntary reduction of intake, denying the flesh delicacies while still answering to basic need for energy, is a fast which might be applicable to some.

Practical wisdom recommends that a fast be concluded with a light meal, to assist the body in resuming its digestive duties, in this case, soup or light breakfast without meat would be wise.

God clearly says that there are fasts that He wills--that He intends to be observed with spiritual understanding.

As fasting purges the physical body of impurities it also purifies the spiritual man rooting out what has been tolerated that is in opposition to the way of the Lord casting down everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

GOD CALLING US TO SEASONS OF FASTING IS CLEARLY SEEN IN THE WORD:

By the direct teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ:

His example - **Matthew 4:2**

His explanation - **Matthew 6:16**

His exhortation - **Mark 2:20**

By the practice of the Early Church:

Acts 13:2, 14:23

1 Corinthians 7:5

2 Corinthians 6:5, 11:27

I. WHAT DOES IT DO?

It accomplishes something that allows for liberty from spiritual bondage and oppression, v. 6 Jesus taught this! (Mark 9:29--Concerning the authority of the words, and fasting, significant is the note from Dr. Morison, quoted in the Expositors' Greek Testament, Vol. 1 p. 404 "The authorization for omitting and fasting [because of absence in some ancient manuscripts] is not sufficient. But even if it were overwhelmingly, fasting would, in its essence, be implied.") See also Daniel 10:3, 12, 13.

II. WHAT DOES ONE EXPERIENCE THROUGH FASTING?

A. PRACTICALLY

Fasting is not a mystical, ascetic exercise of piety. It is a normal and powerful participation point in seeing the release of God's purposes and benevolent intent toward mankind.

1. Food made available to the needy, v7
2. Genuine service and concern for those without, v7b
3. Life/Health-giving ministry begins to flow from you, v8
4. Personal answers to prayer begins to be released, v9
5. A removal of the spirit enlightened perspective on life, v9b
6. A Holy Spirit-enlightened perspective on life, v10
7. Holy Spirit-directed, fruitful living ensues, v11

B. SPIRITUALLY

**NOTICE THE PARALLEL BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
MAKING JESUS REAL AND A SPIRITUAL FAST - ISAIAH 58:6**

1. Loose bonds of wickedness
2. Undo heavy burdens
3. Oppressed go free
4. Break every yoke

III. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THE FAST IN LIGHT OF LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES

Each has a "NOW" application for us corporately and individually

At a time of transition in national government - **2 Samuel 1:12 (David)**

At a time God's people faced deadly satanic attack - **Esther 4:16 (Esther)**

At a time when a great project was being undertaken - **Ezra 8:21**
(*Entering a new season where we are as a church*)

At a time prophetic promise was due to be actuated - **Daniel 9:3**

IV. THE RESULTS

BUILD THE OLD WASTE PLACES

Because of sin...brokenness has come...when enough time passes....those places look normal
....a waste place....rather than the beauty of what once was.

RAISE UP THE FOUNDATIONS OF MANY GENERATIONS

Foundations become covered over by the debris of the ruins and can't even be seen. For things to be rebuilt, the foundations have to be uncovered.

CALLED THE REPAIRER OF THE BREACH

A hole....penetration has come....an enemy, a usurper, an intruder now has access....there needs to be repairs made that the purpose of the wall might be realized.

THE RESTORER OF STREETS TO DWELL IN

Early church leader, Jerome renders this..turning your paths into rest. The roads in the long desolations would be ruined. Thorns, and brambles, and trees would have grown upon them; and having been long neglected, they would be impassable.

The obstructions to life's pathways are cleared out and where they are overgrown by what would hinder travel are cleared....unimpeded and repaired....

The advantages of a free connection from one dwelling and one city to another, throughout the land, would be again enjoyed.

The means by which you travel to your home dwelling....coming home....the place you belong....your dwelling place....home is the place of dreams realized and hopes fulfilled.



DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

1. New Vision for 2025Isaiah 43:18-19; Jeremiah 29:11
2. Focus.....Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 6:33
3. Increased FaithProverbs 3:5-6; Luke 1:37
4. Strength and Perseverance.....Isaiah 40:31; Zechariah 4:6
5. Wisdom and Discernment.....James 1:5
6. RevivalIsaiah 44:3; Acts 2:42-47
7. Pastors In Our NationActs 20:28
8. Ministry Leaders (Church and Nonprofit).....Romans 12:4-5
9. Children and Grandchildren.....Proverbs 17:6
10. Parents.....Isaiah 54:13
11. Schools.....Matthew 19:14
12. Teachers, Administrators, and School BoardsProverbs 22:6
13. Montgomery County.....1 Timothy 2:1-2
14. Texas1 Peter 2:17
15. Elected Officials.....Proverbs:29:2; Romans 13:1
16. United States of America2 Chronicles 7:14
17. First Responders.....Deuteronomy 31:6
18. Military and Veterans.....Psalm 144:1
19. Fullness of the Holy Spirit.....Ephesians 3:14-16
20. The LostLuke 19:10
21. Prodigals.....Luke 15:8-10
22. Freedom from Sin, Guilt, Shame, and Condemnation.....Galatians 5:1
23. Victory over Addiction, Anxiety, and Depression.....1 Corinthians 10:13; James 4:7
24. The Suffering & Afflicted.....John 16:33
25. Harvest and LaborersMatthew 9:36-38
26. Israel.....Genesis 12:3
27. Persecuted Church.....Matthew 5:10-12
28. Grace International's Pastors & Missionaries.....Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 1:16
29. Pastors Steve & Becky Riggle.....Jeremiah 3:15; Proverbs 29:18
30. Grace Woodlands Church Acts 2:47
31. The Nations.....Psalm 22:28; Psalm 33:12

