



21
DAYS

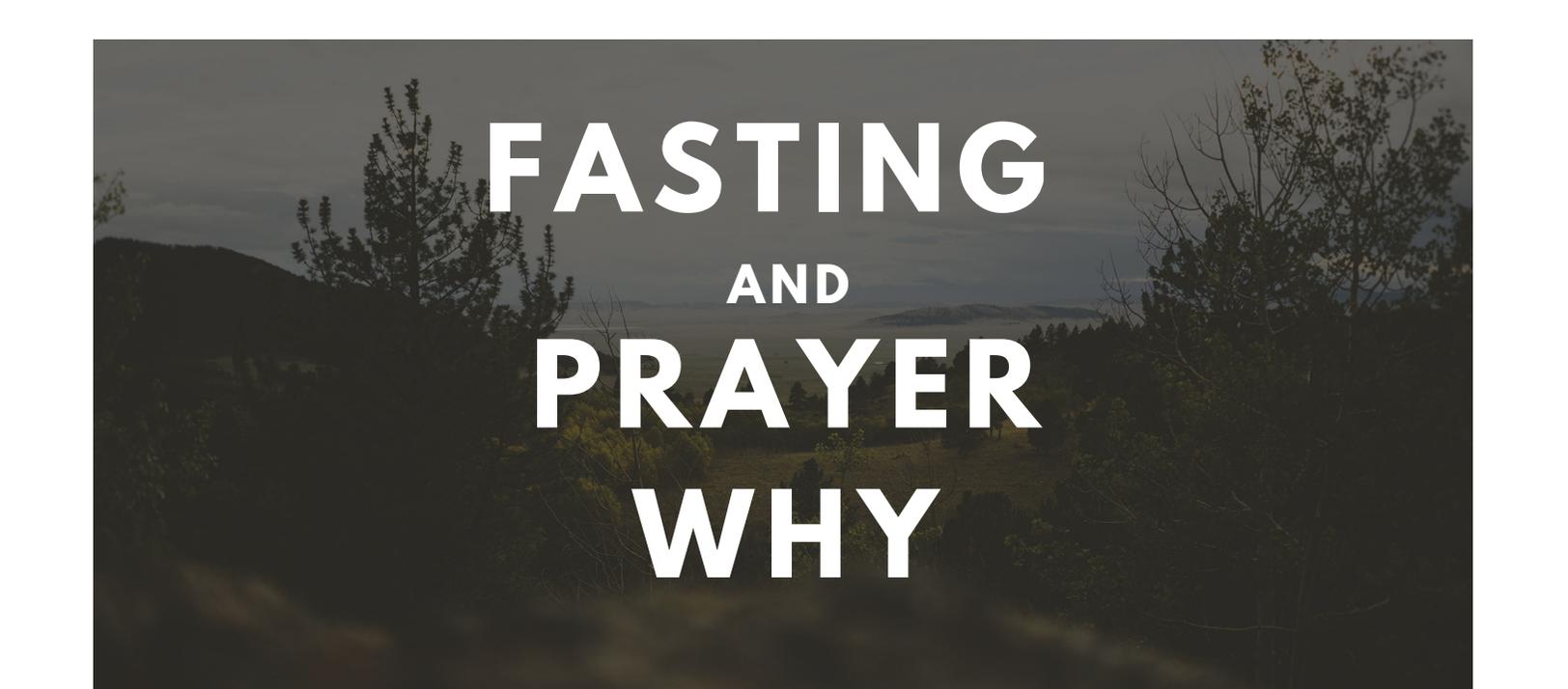
**PRAYER &
FASTING**

MARCH 14TH -APRIL 4TH

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
KIRKSVILLE**

2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land”



FASTING AND PRAYER WHY

Fasting is one way that we can actively humble ourselves and devote our energy to prayerfully seeking God's face. When we fast, we deprive ourselves of the immediate gratification that comes from responding to our appetites. Instead, we point ourselves to a greater need, a hunger, and thirst for God.

Fasting and praying acknowledge the truth of Jesus' declaration: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Fasting puts us in touch with this reality. Psalm 42:1-2 says, "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"

Fasting is not a way for us to impress God or manipulate him. It is a way for us to turn from our physical appetites and recognize our greater hunger and need for God. As you refrain from eating (or some other time-consuming activity such as TV or computer time), be sure to devote that time to prayer.



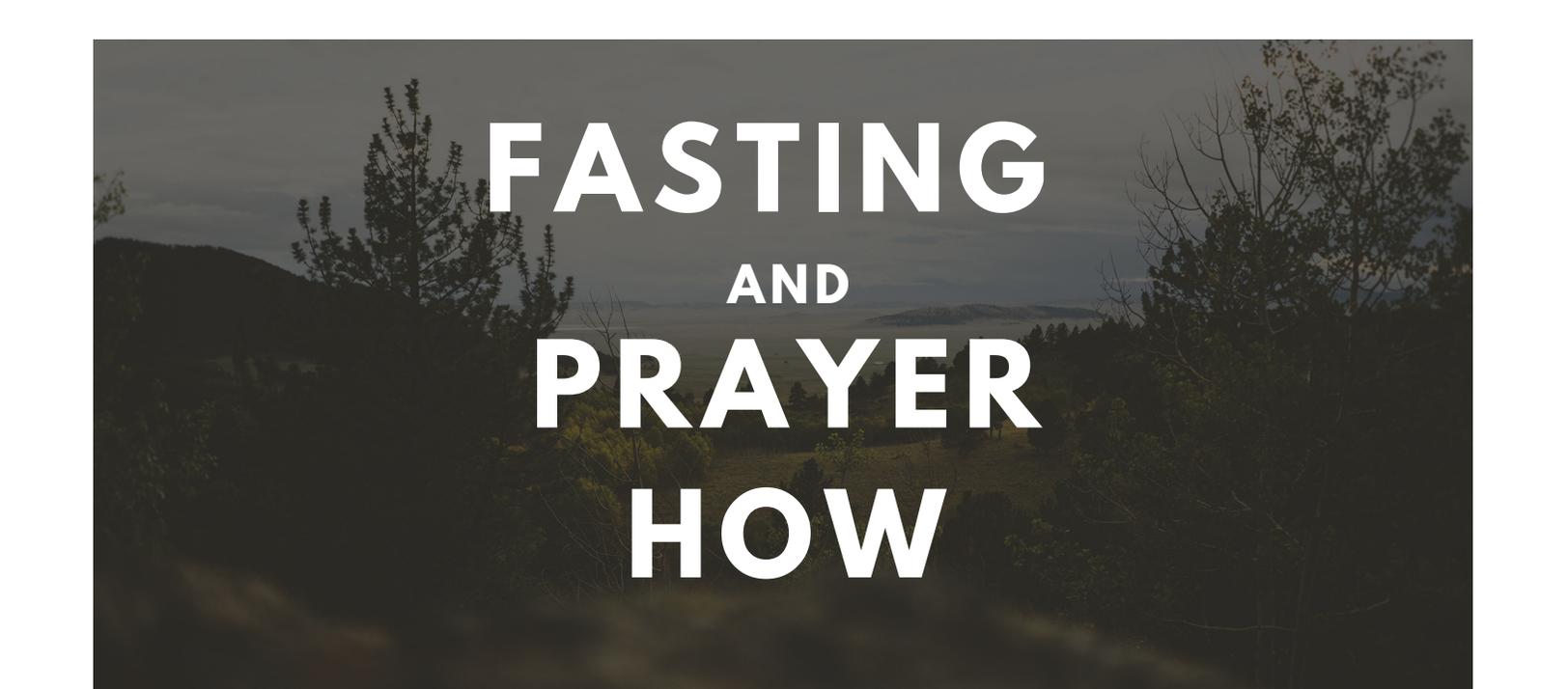
FASTING AND PRAYER HOW

As you consider **fasting**, we want to encourage you to listen to the Holy Spirit. Ask God to lead you in this time of seeking his face. Whether you choose to fast for one day, several days, or the entire 21 days, the point is to humble yourself in a new way and draw near to God. Here are three common ways to fast:

- **Selective Fast** | During a selective fast, you eliminate certain things from your diet. For example, eating only fruits and vegetables, what some might call a “Daniel fast.”
- **Partial Fast** | During a partial fast, you refrain from eating for a set period of time each day. You could choose to fast from a single meal or from sunup to sundown.
- **Complete Fast** | During a complete fast, you refrain from eating and only drink liquids for particular days or even for an extended period of time.

If fasting from food is not possible*, you may feel led by the Lord to fast from something else, such as social media, television, or certain times or activities on your cell phone.

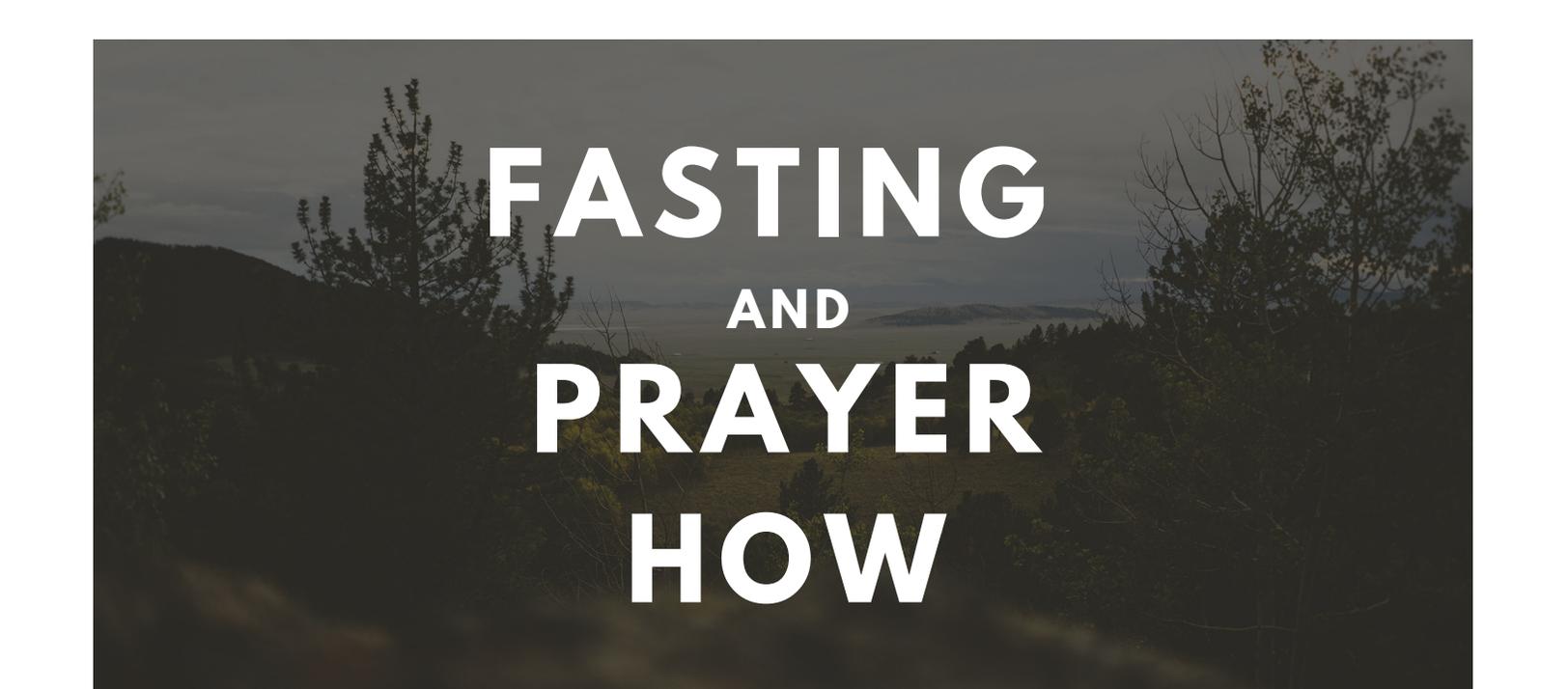
*Fasting is not always recommended with certain health conditions



FASTING AND PRAYER HOW

Praying is spiritual breathing, essential for our life in God. As we meditate on God's Word, we breathe in the promises and purposes of God. In prayer, we breathe out, responding to God's Word to us. Together, let's put our faith into action, trusting in the promises of God for us and our church. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you pray:

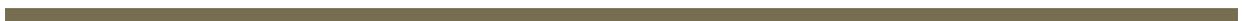
- **Time and Place** | Commit to a specific time each day to devote to prayer. Find a place where you can be free of distractions and be alone with God.
 - **Focus** | Use the prayer points and Scripture provided in our guide to focus and fuel your prayer time. Write the Scripture and prayer point on a card and carry it with you, post it on your social media, make it the screensaver on your phone—whatever you can think of to keep these prompts in front of you. Use them throughout the day and invite others to join you in praying.
 - **Write** | Take it a step further and journal your prayers each day, simply writing out your prayers to God. It's a great opportunity to hide God's Word in your heart, working to memorize verses as you meditate and pray.
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FASTING AND PRAYER HOW

- **Join Others** | Consider ways to pray with others during this season. Set up a Zoom call with friends or members of your small group. Pray together as a family.

In all of this, our hope is for this experience to anchor us to our purpose as the people of God at First Baptist Church, declaring our dependence on him as we live out our lives.





FASTING AND PRAYER TIPS

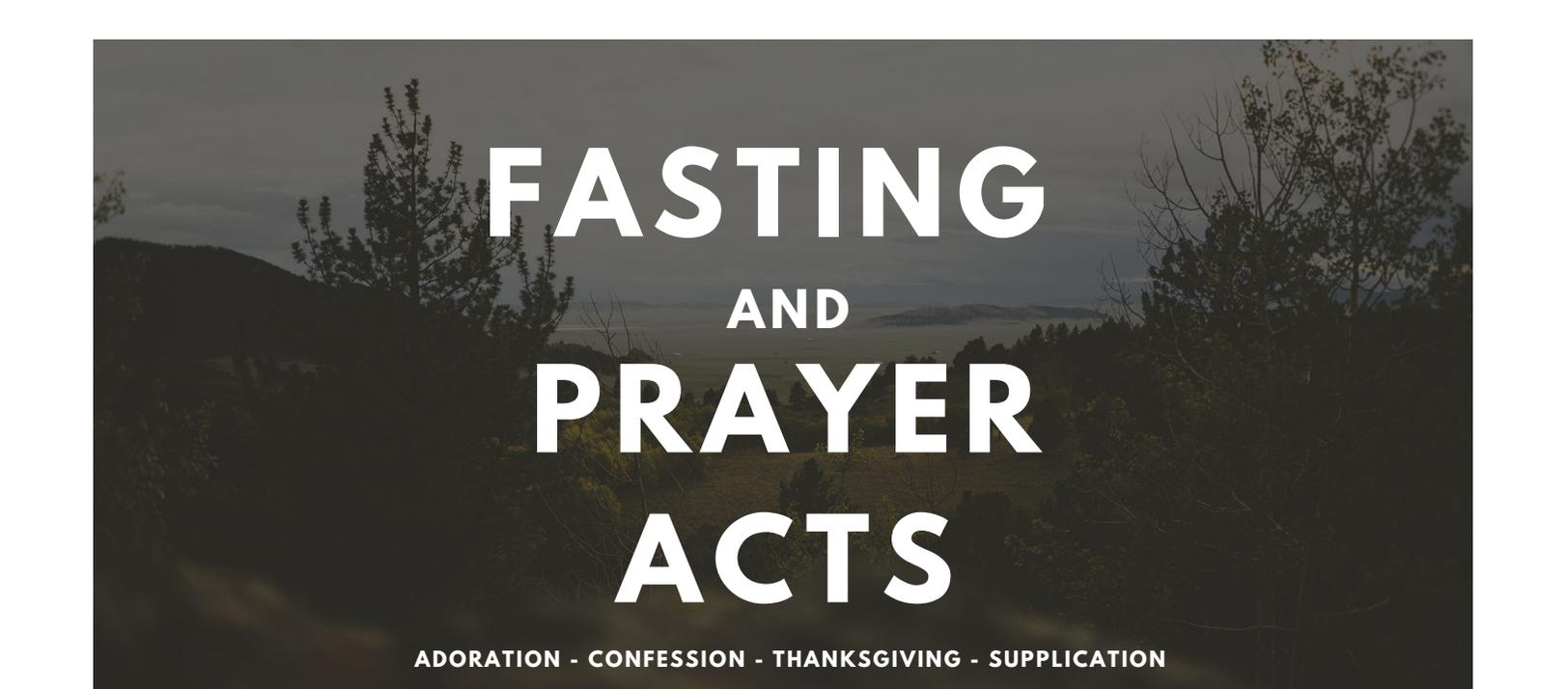
Many of us decide to start **fasting** and then encounter difficulties that can persuade us to give up. However, you can prepare for many of the hardest parts of fasting so that you can experience the many joys! Here are some other helpful suggestions:

1. **Drink** plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated. If you need to drink juices or other liquids, remember that keeping a strict fast is not the goal.
 2. Don't give up too quickly. Press through, and let your body feel the hunger.
 3. **Decide** ahead of time when you will break the fast, and **commit** to wait.
 4. Be careful to not fill up your time with activities that keep you from **praying**.
 5. Spend some extended time with your children in prayer at the beginning of the day. Talk to them about how **we need God** just like our bodies need food.
 6. Commit to meet with members of your small group or friends for a time of prayer during the lunch hour.
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FASTING AND PRAYER TIPS

7. Plan a date with your spouse, and use the time to pray together instead of eating dinner.
 8. Use your Bible reading to fuel and lead your prayer time.
 9. Journal what you believe God is saying to you during this time.
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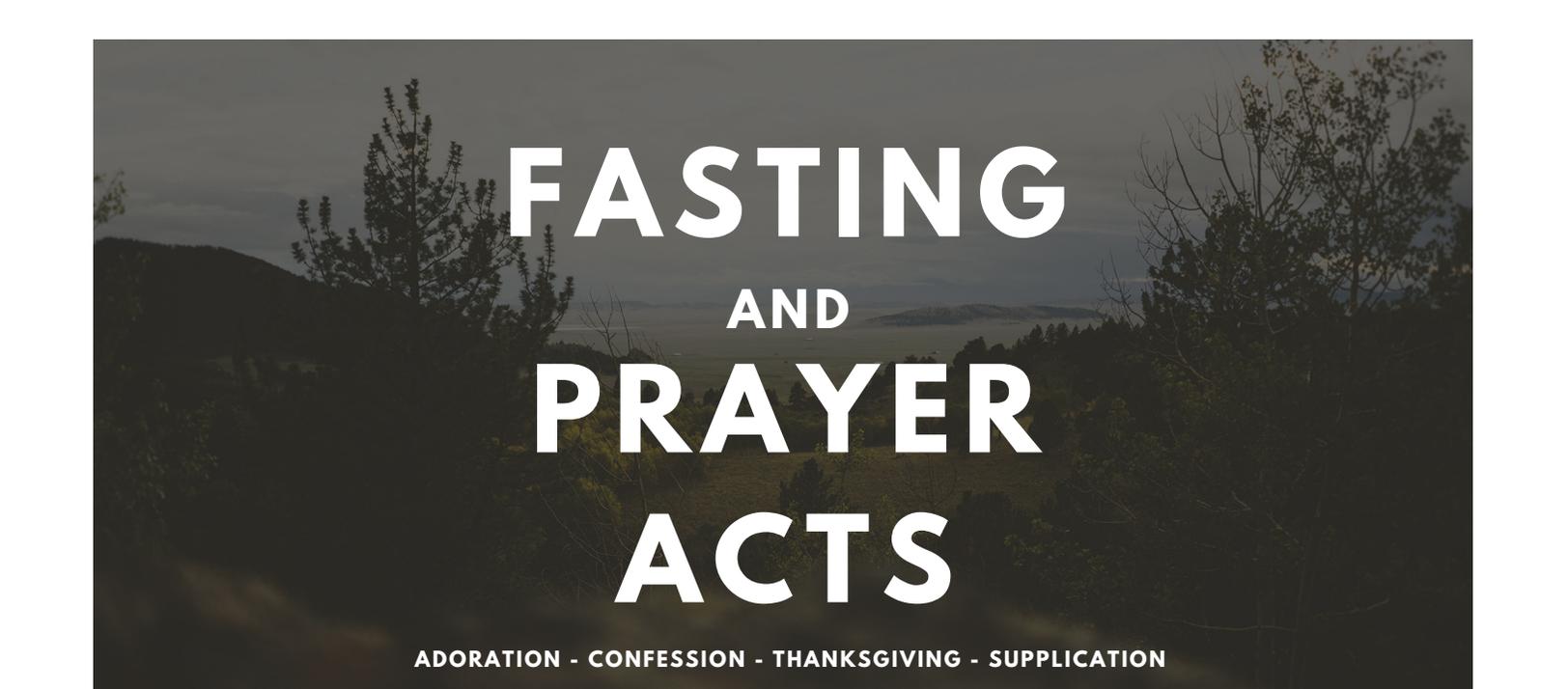
FASTING AND PRAYER ACTS

ADORATION - CONFESSION - THANKSGIVING - SUPPLICATION

We want to assist you in cultivating a prayer life that helps you draw near to God. One way of doing that is using the acronym, **ACTS**, which will aid you in developing a balanced prayer life. It's not a formula for praying but rather a guide to keep you focused on your relationship with God and communicating with him in a way that encourages intimacy.

Adoration is simply focusing on who God is and expressing awe and worship. Sometimes this is the hardest thing for us to do, but it is a necessary part of praying, because it focuses us on who God is and gives us the opportunity to make much of him. When we pray, it is essential that we know who we are talking to.

Confession is our response to the uncovering of who we are and what we have done. When we step into the light of God's greatness, we recognize how we fall short of his glory. Confession is a great privilege, because it allows us to lay hold of the cleansing and forgiveness offered to us in Jesus. We may walk in filthy, but we can leave cleansed and forgiven.



FASTING AND PRAYER ACTS

ADORATION - CONFESSION - THANKSGIVING - SUPPLICATION

Thanksgiving is a humble response to the generosity of God, acknowledging that every good and perfect gift comes from him. In spite of who we are and what we have done, God has been and continues to do us good. Thanksgiving recognizes that all we are and all we have is because of him. Gratitude puts us in the right frame of mind to ask, because it leads us to consider what God has done and what he is able to do.

Supplication is just the practice of asking. Jesus told us to ask, but he also modeled for us an asking that was submissive and surrendered. He delights to give and bless. Asking glorifies him. Asking humbles us. Asking opens the door for greater faith and draws us deep into the arms of our good God whose faithfulness and love never end.



FASTING AND PRAYER WITH FAMILY

WOW - I'M SORRY - THANK YOU - HELP

Leading our kids to pray is one of the greatest privileges we have as parents. Think about the significance of giving your child a connection to the most powerful being in the world (and the universe!), the importance of knowing they can communicate with a God who loves them enough to pay attention to them, the impact of beginning to cultivate a relationship, we pray, that will grow for the rest of their lives.

First Baptist wants to partner with you to raise praying kids, and we think praying WITH God daily is an amazing way to do that. As you pray together as a family, use each of these markers to help your kids move through an age-appropriate ACTS-type acrostic to honor God, confess our sin, express our gratitude, and present our requests to him:



FASTING AND PRAYER WITH FAMILY

WOW - I'M SORRY - THANK YOU - HELP

- **Wow** - Praise God for the awesome works he has done and the perfect Father that he is.
- **I'm Sorry** - Confess our sin to God in this simple language, asking with faith that he will forgive us through Jesus.
- **Thank You** - Build a habit of gratitude in our families and kids by reminding ourselves of God's goodness to us in simple, everyday ways as well as life-changing gifts from above.
- **Help** - Lastly, come to God with what we want and need. Ask him for help according to his will and purposes.

As you pursue prayer together as a family, remember that our Father wants to hear from us. He wants us to be present with him. He's waiting to enjoy the prayers of your kids. And remember, our staff is ready and available to help with any questions you may have as you continue this journey of family discipleship.



FASTING AND PRAYER WITH KIDS

SWEETS AND TREATS - TOY TIME - DELAYED MEALTIME

Sometimes fasting with young kids can be a challenge or even unsafe depending on age and other health concerns. If that's the case, there are still some ways that you can teach your children about fasting!

- **Sweets and Treats** - This is one of our top recommendations because it foregoes something that kids love, but that doesn't completely ruin daily routines. Take a break from candy and dessert for a week, and instead, pray together as a family when you would normally enjoy that sweetness!
 - **Toy Time** - Guide your kids to pick one toy (or video game) that they will refrain from playing with or using for two weeks. Tell them that when they feel the urge to play with that particular item, instead, they should come to you, and together, you can sit still for a second and tell God that we love him even more than our things.
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FASTING AND PRAYER WITH KIDS

SWEETS AND TREATS - TOY TIME - DELAYED MEALTIME

- **Delayed Mealtime** - Instead of forcing our kids to miss a mealtime, what if you pushed lunch or dinner back an hour? When the hunger starts to set in, join together as a family and tell God that you need him even more than our bodies need food.

It won't be perfect, but your intentional effort to show our spiritual need through fasting can be an amazing experience for your family. Let's not underestimate what God can do in the lives of our kids when we recognize that need for God together. Please know that our First Kids team is ready and willing to help in any way we can as you pursue this aspect of family discipleship in your home.
