



**WEEK OF
PRAYER &
FASTING
GUIDE**

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The season of Lent is a 40-day journey beginning with Ash Wednesday and culminating with Easter Sunday. This season is marked by repentance, humility, fasting & self-examination. These 40 days of Lent are an invitation to make our hearts ready through repentance as we anticipate Good Friday and Easter.

Joel 2:12-13 “Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love

During the first week of Lent, we want to respond as a church to the heart of God through prayer, worship, repentance, and consecration. Our daily prayers will be marked by the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6 and a Psalm meditation. Engage these prayers individually and on behalf of the church.

PRAYER MOVEMENTS

DAY 1

Morning: Psalm 6

Night: The Father's Character: Matthew 6:9

- Remember God's Holy Attributes
- Meditate on God's Providence, power and presence
- Ask for greater Awe and Fear of God for yourself, the Church, and the world

DAY 2

Morning: Psalm 32

Night: The Father's Kingdom: Matthew 6:10

- Remember Your Future Hope, and God's Eternal Plan
- Meditate on Jesus and the goodness of His Kingly rule
- Ask for Jesus Kingdom to come to Earth to revive and renew

DAY 3

Morning: Psalm 38

Night: The Father's Provision: Matthew 6:11

- Remember God's faithful and abundant provision
- Meditate on God, who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine
- Ask for daily provision for yourself, the Church, and the world

DAY 4

Morning: Psalm 51

Night: The Father's Forgiveness: Matthew 6:12

- Remember the debt and depth of your sin
- Meditate on the cross of Christ and forgiveness of Your sin
- Ask God for the grace to forgive others as you have been forgiven

DAY 5

Morning: Psalm 130

Night: The Father's Protection and Guidance: Matthew 6:13

- Remember you live under the Rule and Protection of God
- Meditate on the power of God to keep and preserve His own
- Ask God for grace to resist, persevere, and overcome temptation

SMALL GROUP PRAYER

As you begin prayer with each other, here are some helpful tips:

- Be brief, a few sentences at a time, one topic at a time
 - Use everyday language
 - Use spontaneity, not just circle order
- Build on the prayers of others, like a communal conversation with the Father
- As scripture comes to mind, pray it out, this is often the leading of the Holy Spirit
 - Be clear with enunciation and volume
- Pray along silently, agreeing with others that are praying; be in the moment listening
 - Don't rush to fill silence
- Everyone has freedom to pray out loud or not, but all should attempt to step out
- Resist ending each prayer "in Jesus name", culturally this cues us to end a prayer
- When prayer time is closing, the leader will close "in the name of Jesus"

LISTENING PRAYER

We believe God speaks to his people. Prayer is not a one-way conversation; God will talk to us. The invitation from God is to quiet our minds and hearts to listen to what He might be saying. Take a few minutes and walk through these listening exercises.

1. “Fixing your eyes on Jesus”

Imagine Jesus sitting in front of you. The Scriptures are clear that He is *“for us, not against us.”* Be confident in His love for you, and talking like you would to a friend...what would you say to him?

Take at least 2 minutes and say those things to Him out loud

Now, like you would with a friend...listen for what He has to say back to you.

2. Listening to God through the Word

Open your Bible to Psalm 16 (any Psalm will do)

Read the chapter, out loud, twice. And as you're reading notice what words or phrases stand out to you. It may be that a unique thought or a picture, or even a person, comes to mind.

Assume this is God speaking to you, and turn those “highlighted” words or thoughts, or pictures, into your own prayers to God.

THE HEART OF FASTING

"Fasting is indeed feasting"- Dallas Willard

Fasting is for Jesus to awake our heart and raise awareness of its need and thirst for Him.

1. Returning to your first love

Jesus longs for our whole heart to be His. He wants us to rejoice and long for Him far more than He wants our sacrifices. Repenting without delighting in Jesus is religion, not love.

"Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning..." Joel 2:12

"Come, let us return to the Lord..." Hosea 6:1-3

2. Feasting on Jesus

Delighting on Jesus, digesting the word of God, the beauty of God, in the presence of God is the food we have that those around us don't see or understand. We don't live on bread alone, but in Jesus and His very word.

"But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about..."
John 4:32-34

"In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures forever more." Psalm 16:11

3. Receptivity to God's Voice

We need to have our ears peeled to the word of God and voice of the Holy Spirit. When we pray it should look like a conversation. Talking to God and listening.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing..."
John 15:1-5

4. Deepening our Dependence on Jesus and Accepting Our Limitations

We're called to repent of sin and boast in our weaknesses. This is where God's power rests.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness..." 2 Cor. 12:9-10

*"Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits at the feet of scoffers;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree
Planted by streams of water,
that yields fruit in its season,
and its leaf does wither.
In all he does he prospers.
The wicked are not so,
But are like chaff that the wind drives away."
Psalm 1:1-4*

5. Interceding

We want to be a House of Prayer. The gathered church, through the prayers of the church, looking out to the nations, the lost, and injustices. We want to stand spiritually before the throne of grace, not just for people in the room, but to change the world around us. We believe in a resurrected King who has all authority, and sits at the right hand of God, who has all resources available to Him, who reigns over His enemies and fills everything. We are asking, seeking, and knocking on the door of Jesus the King, of a kingdom that has no end. He is Christ Crucified and Christ Resurrected. He lives and moves, works and never sleeps. So let the prayers of the saints rise like incense inviting God to shape history, right injustice, demonstrate power, bring salvation, through the gathered, interceding, unified church!

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face..." 2 Chron 7:14-16

6. Mission

Prayer with fasting is to move to kingdom work, demonstrate and active justice. This is God's heart for us in active fasting.

*"Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?"*

Isaiah 58:6-8

In "Practicing The Power", Dr. Sam Storms gives us some heartfelt guidelines for fasting.

"Fasting is one way we pursue God. Pursuit is an artifact of love, drawing deeply on God's presence and gazing on His beauty. Fasting is not about denying yourself, it is about satisfying yourself in Jesus. Fasting is not a hunger strike, or health dieting, or manipulation of God's power. Fasting is not physical pain but spiritual pleasure. Fasting is not physical pain but spiritual pleasure. Fasting is a stance against self-gratification in a consumer-oriented world." -Sam Storms

- Fasting is motivated by deep desire, not suppression of desire but the pursuit of it. Fasting is feasting on Christ.
- Fasting is not an act of willpower but a show of dependence and an appeal for grace from God.
- Fasting is not a statement that food or other things are bad but that Jesus is better and God is enough.
- Fasting is motivated by the desire to glorify God—our reward is not the applause of man but more of Christ and answering of prayers.

“Fasting opens our spiritual ears to discern God’s voice and sensitizes our hearts to enjoy God’s presence.

“Fasting is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare.

Practice

In closing, our heart is to humbly sound the alarm to add prayer and fasting. If you've already connected to the idea, here are some practical ways to fast. Simply put, it is less about what you leave out and more about the time you put towards communion with Jesus in place of what you're fasting from. Repentance and rejoicing are two passions that go hand in hand. Repentance is changing your mind, your ways, your practices so that Jesus can intersect and change your heart. Within repentance, though, we always want to rejoice in Jesus. Rejoicing is reflection on Jesus, treasuring and cherishing Him above all, until the heart is satisfied and let's go of all that it things it needs outside of Jesus.

Subtractions: social media, entertainment, attitudes, pride, shopping, busyness, mindsets, food and drink.

Additions: Meditation, prayer, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, celebration.

St. Augustine said that God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them, and not only our hands but also our hearts, minds, and attention are clogged with addiction.

Lasting, Tim Keller says extraordinary prayers is united, persistent, and kingdom-centered. In this season we want to join together under Jesus, praying through Him and His accomplished work...united, persistent, and kingdom-centered.

"And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God. God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!"

Ephesians 3:14-21 (Message)

AN HOUR OF ENJOYING GOD

*“You make known to me the path of life;
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

Psalm 16:11

This hour is intentionally dedicated to bringing our whole self to God and enjoying who He is, what He’s done and how He’s at work in us and through us. Find a place and a time that you can be most “present” (e.g., walking, a quiet space in your home, etc.). Use this as more of a suggested format than homework to complete, and follow the Spirit into enjoying God!

- **Noticing (10 minutes)**

Replay the last 24 hours of your life ... Where did you experience God’s grace? How did He help you? Did you hear His voice or sense His nearness? Thank Him out loud for those things.

On the flip side ... What was hard? Where did you feel like you were on your own? Even have a sense of His absence? Talk to Him out loud about those things.

- **God enjoys you (15 minutes)**

Meditate on one or a few of these verses ... Psalm 63:3, Zephaniah 3:17, Matthew 3:16,17, John 15:9, Ephesians 3:17-19 ... Let God’s joy in you fill your heart.

- **Express longings (10 minutes)**

In Mark 10:36, 51, Jesus asked the same question two times – to James and John and then to Bartimaeus ... “What do you want me to do for you?” Allow Him to ask you this same question and talk to Him out loud about your desires. (They don’t all have to be “spiritual.”)

- **Intercede (10 minutes)**

Ask yourself this question ... “Who needs Jesus today?” Pray for whoever come to mind.

- **Worship (15 minutes)**

Read Psalm 148-150 slowly. Pause if any words or phrases strike your heart in any way, and turn that into your own words as a prayer. Thank God for who He is and what He's done.

THE EXAMEN

How to Pray the Examen

1. Place yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for God's great love for you.
2. Pray for the grace to understand how God is acting in your life.
3. Review your day — recall specific moments and your feelings at the time.
4. Reflect on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?
5. Look toward tomorrow — think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God's plan. Be specific, and conclude with the "Our Father."

PSALM 130

Scan the QR code below for a playlist of songs from Verses; all of Psalm 130 in 4 songs. Use these songs to meditate, memorize and motivate you.

