

Fasting Guide

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline taught in the Bible, which helps our spiritual growth. Jesus expected His followers to fast and in the early church in Acts, the Disciples often fasted before making any important decisions.

Fasting is voluntarily to reduce or eliminate food intake for a specific time and purpose, humbling ourselves before God and feasting on Him instead. It is not about twisting God's arm, or a formula for getting through to Him, or punishing our bodies, rather it's about taking our eyes off the things of this world and focusing on God instead, demonstrating that we are serious about our relationship with Him.

Although fasting in Scripture is mostly fasting from food, there are other ways to fast. Anything you can temporarily give up in order to focus better on God can be considered a fast.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FASTING FOOD

- **If you have any medical conditions or are on any medication that you think could be affected by fasting, you should consult your GP.**
- Set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord and His Word. Why not use the time with God that you would have spent preparing food and eating it?
- It is important to drink plenty of fluid. Fasting is going without food, not without drink.
- Be careful about how much strenuous activity or driving you undertake when going without food.



3 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING 10-12 September 2019



The joy of the Lord

Next week, we are looking forward to our three days of Prayer and Fasting. We want to make lots of time to hear what God has to say to us for the year ahead. At each prayer meeting, we will begin with worship followed by a short message on Tuesday and Wednesday at 7.30 pm and at 2 pm on Thursday.

We encourage you to use the reading guide overleaf each day to draw near to God and then join us for as many of the prayer and worship times as possible.

The joy of the Lord

Is it possible to be full of joy in our broken world? The Bible's answer to this is an emphatic **YES!** Despite all the problems Psalm 33 tells us that *'by the word of the Lord the heavens were made... and the earth is full of his unfailing love.'* In the week ahead we will be singing about joy, sharing the joy of the gospel, and looking forward to God's eternal joy.

I asked some of our leaders about joy. Here's what Sue says,

*'As you are all aware the Joy of the Lord is my strength (Neh 8:10) - with that in mind regarding the issues of our nation it has been brought to my mind that the nation needs to repent before the Lord - humble themselves and pray. Lack of forgiveness robs us of our JOY as does **not** giving thanks and praise or waiting on God. We have lots to give thanks to God and praise God for, recognising what God thinks of us in terms of our identity for starters (as a foundation block) so that we can celebrate the joy of the Lord. The JOY of John 15:11 - Jesus' JOY in us!'*

Here's what Diana says,

'The word that keeps coming back to me is 'foundations'. I think that solid foundations built on the right faith disciplines make a big difference to our stability and unwavering Joy.'

Join us this week as we celebrate the joy of the Lord.

Glen Cormack

Tuesday: Song of Joy Psalm 33

'Sing to him a new song; play skilfully and shout for joy.'

It's good for us to praise the Lord. God deserves our praise and we are blessed with joy when we praise him. Read or sing the psalm aloud with joy & thanksgiving and then take some time to write your own song of worship. What do you want to give thanks for today? God's word, His creation, His plans, & faithfulness? In the midst of the Brexit turmoil, sing to the Lord a new song!

Wednesday: Gospel Joy Philippians 1: 3-11

'I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel.'

There is something very special about gospel friendships. Working together with each other to share the good news of Jesus creates a deep bond between us which fills us with the joy of the Lord. I think this is one of the reasons Jesus sent his disciples out in twos and why we see this practice continue in the New Testament church. For example this letter is from *'Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus.'* Who are you partnering with in the gospel?

Thursday: Future Joy Hebrews 12: 1-13

'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross...'

Sometimes we are overwhelmed by the struggles and challenges of the life of faith. When we find ourselves struggling it is vital that we look to Jesus to sustain us for our onward journey. The joy of bringing us back to God our Father & returning to glory at the Father's right hand, enabled Jesus to endure the cross. Our future joy with the Father has been guaranteed, therefore let's accept the Lord's discipline and continue to fix our eyes on Him.