

PRAYER — AND — FASTING

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Prayer and Fasting Guide

Prayer and Fasting Guide

New Life Christian Church

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Introduction

Fasting in the biblical sense is choosing not to partake of food because your spiritual hunger is so deep, your determination in intercession so intense, or your spiritual warfare so demanding that you have temporarily set aside even fleshly needs to give yourself to prayer and meditation.

--Wesley L. Duewel, missionary

Welcome to the New Life Christian Church Prayer and Fasting Guide! For six weeks, we will journey together to walk more intimately with God. This guide is designed to encourage us along the way.

Nervous? You aren't alone. The great preacher, D.L. Moody noted, "If you say, 'I will fast when God lays it on my heart,' you never will." Even though a spiritual giant, Moody admitted that his heart was too indifferent to take up the yoke of fasting. Prayer and fasting are disciplines. They are disciplines so critical for soul-nurturing that some believe the demons work overtime to keep us occupied with less important distractions.

If you have never fasted before for spiritual purposes, rest assured-- you are not alone! Find strength in numbers! Your fears are shared. Your struggles are shared. You are not isolated in your trepidations! And, when we cross the finish line together in six weeks, our joys will be multiplied together!

Although fasting and prayer is described throughout the Bible, it is not a popular practice among many Christians in the West. In Jesus' day, it was not unusual to know Jews who fasted twice a week. However, in Western Christianity, fasting is often a lost source of spiritual strength.

"Fasting is completely out of step with the way the West approaches Christianity (and religion as a whole), and, because the world has so penetrated the church, this may well be the primary reason why fasting is so unfamiliar to Western Christians in the twenty-first century."

--Guy Richard, Professor, Reformed Theological Seminary

A Chinese missionary, after visiting several large churches in America, once noted, "It is amazing how much Christians in the West are able to

accomplish without the power of God.” Wherever powerful movements of God are commonplace, as in India, Africa and China, prayer and fasting is a regular practice. Ying Kai has become a friend and mentor for New Life. Ying and Grace Kai started hundreds of thousands of churches that have led millions of people to Christ in China and around the world. Before agreeing to disciple anyone, Ying requires his disciples to start every day with two hours of prayer. Prayer and fasting, he would say, prepare the soul for God’s power.

Shodankeh Johnson’s disciple-making ministry is leading tens of thousands to Christ in Sierra Leone. Shodankeh has written:

“Two vital acts connect us directly with God – Prayer and Fasting. We can think of fasting as a brush that removes obstacles in our path to God and prayer as our line of communication with him. If fasting clears the way to communication with God, prayer is the key to the door of his heart.”

--Shodankeh Johnson, Renew Network

Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave his life serving Christ faithfully in Nazi Germany. How did Bonhoeffer remain courageous in the Christian counter-culture?

...if we give free rein to the desires of the flesh... we shall find it hard to train for the service of Christ. When the flesh is satisfied it is hard to pray with cheerfulness or to devote oneself to a life of service which calls for much self-renunciation.”

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

Seasons of prayer and fasting honor God, help us to hear His voice more clearly and to follow more powerfully. With God’s grace and strength, we are going to take this journey of prayer and fasting together.

PRAYER

“Simply put, prayer is communicating with God. Real prayer is expressing our devotion to our heavenly Father, inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him.”

--Bill Bright, Evangelist and Founder of Cru

What is Prayer

All kinds of people pray in all kinds of places in the Bible. Joseph prayed in slavery and in prison. David prayed in the pasture and in the palace. Isaiah prayed with a glimpse into the heavenly throne room – even though he was a man of unclean lips. Joshua prayed before the fall of Jericho but forgot to pray before his failure at Ai. Paul prayed in the temple and on the open sea. Jesus prayed so powerfully; His model will teach generations until He returns.

Biblical prayer can be summarized by one word: conversation. Prayer is conversation with the Creator. Prayer is two-way communication with the Eternal Holy God of the Universe. Prayer can be audible or silent, private or public, formal or informal. Ultimately, prayer is a follower of Christ fellowshipping with the Father.

How to Pray

If given the chance to ask Jesus one question, what would you ask? For everyone who has ever been intimidated by prayer, how comforting to know what when given their chance for a question, the disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). What follows has never been equaled: simple, profound, comprehensive, and universally reproducible. No churchy words. No preachy agenda.

Jesus directly describes God-honoring prayer in Matthew 6.

Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who

sees in secret will reward you. When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words.
--Matthew 6:5-7 (CSB)

What moves the heart of God? Childlike faith and childlike prayer. "Abba, Father! You are holy. Do Your will. Help me, please."

As we enjoy talking to good friends throughout a day, as we look forward to time with those we love as much as we can, so it is with our conversations with our Heavenly Father. Revelation 3:20 pictures Jesus standing outside the door of our hearts, making this appeal: "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.*"

Powerful prayer begins by seeing God clearly, eagerly looking forward to hearing your voice.

How do we know God hears us when we pray? He said so!

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.
--2 Chronicles 7:14-16 (CSB)

Prayer Principles

Here are five principles of prayer that we find in scripture:

1. Pray by Faith

Oh, Lord God! You yourself made the heavens and the earth by your great power and with your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you!
--Jeremiah 32:17 (CSB)

2. Pray Big

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
--Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

3. **Pray for Others**

*Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
--Galatians 6:2 (CSB)*

4. **Do Not Worry**

*Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
--Philippians 4:6-7 (CSB)*

5. **Pray With Passion**

*During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission."
--Hebrews 5:7 (NIV)*

Prayer Topics

Abraham Lincoln once remarked that God must love common people – He made so many of them. Prayer is not brain surgery. Keep it simple. It is amazing how easy it is to pray for 30 or 60 minutes when focused on a few basic themes.

In our focused six-week of prayer and fasting, New Life seeks God's blessing and honor as we unify in prayer. Would you join us in the following prayer topics – and remember to Pray Big?

- Friends, Neighbors, Co-workers that don't know Christ
- Our Church
- Churches Around the World
- Persecuted Followers of Christ
- New Life Christian Church Staff
- nZone Staff
- New Life Volunteer Leaders and Teams
- Our Local Community
- Local, State and Federal Government leaders
- Boldness in Starting Spiritual Conversations
- Disciple Making Opportunities
- The Poor and the Sick

- Widows and Orphans
- Our Enemies
- The Nation of Israel

Prayer Guides

“... it is difficult for us to concentrate on anything which is neither sensible (like potatoes) nor abstract (like numbers). What is concrete but immaterial can be kept in view only by painful effort.” --C.S. Lewis

If you struggle maintaining focus in prayer, welcome to the human race! For this reason, many through the centuries have found it helpful to follow some type of prayer guide. Since our thoughts often run to distractions (“squirrel!”), focus in prayer is exactly what the soul thirsts for.

We offer the following prayer guides for your consideration. Try one. Try each. See what works best to keep your prayers focused.

Prayer Guide 1: The ACTS Model

This method serves as an outline for prayer so we can organize our thoughts and requests. The acronym ACTS stands for *adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication*.

A – ADORATION

Begin your prayer time by expressing your love and adoration for God. Adoration is different than thanksgiving because adoration is praising God for who He is and thanksgiving is thanking God for what He’s done. God is worthy of our praise and adoration.

C – CONFESSION

God already knows about our sins. When we confess our sins, we are admitting to God that we need Jesus and we are asking for His forgiveness. We should also ask God to reveal to us sins that we aren’t confessing to Him.

T – THANKSGIVING

The Bible tells us we are to be thankful in everything. We need to acknowledge that all good and perfect gifts come from him and be grateful for what he’s doing in our life.

S – SUBMISSION

Submitting our requests to God should be done humbly, realizing that He may have a better plan. We also submit ourselves and our wills to God during this time, asking Him what He would want from us.

Prayer Guide 2: The Lord's Prayer

In the Lord's prayer, Jesus gave us a pattern or model for prayer. He was teaching his disciples how to pray. We don't necessarily have to pray Jesus' words verbatim. We can use the model prayer of Jesus just at his early disciples did – to guide us in "how" pray.

*"This, then, is how you should pray:
'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'
--Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)*

1. Praise

God's name must be honored. Begin your prayer with praising God for who he is. God is holy, mighty, everlasting, faithful, true, just, merciful, redemptive, comforting, our refuge, our defender and the light of the world.

2. For God's Will

Pray that God's kingdom will come and for his will to be done. Pray that your will be aligned with God's will.

3. For Our Needs

Let God know of your needs and the needs of your family. He is your heavenly father and he loves you. Note that praying for our needs is the third priority in the model prayer of Jesus – not the first.

4. For Forgiveness

We are sinful people, even though we try not to sin. Reflect for a few moments, and be specific, as you ask God to forgive you for your sins. Spend some time to reflect on those you need to forgive, and forgive them as you pray.

5. For Help in Temptation

Admit to God that you need his help not to sin. Take a few moments to think about your struggles. Then pray for God's strength to overcome temptations.

6. For Deliverance

Ask God for his deliverance from Satan's attacks. Pray God will provide a way out so you won't be overcome by the evil one.

Prayer Guide 3: Shodankeh's Prayer

Our friend Shodankeh Johnson, from Sierra Leone, is part of the Core Team of New Generations. New Generations is empowering ordinary people around the world to create chain reactions of disciples making disciples.

Shodankeh has observed that we generally make our plans and then ask God to bless them. By doing so, we are asking God to join us in what we're already doing. Isn't that backwards? Power in prayer comes when we begin with seeking to see where God is at work and then join Him! Fasting and prayer is a powerful way to clear our minds for God's leadership and our hearts for obedience.

Shodankeh has witnessed how prayer and fasting unleashed the movement and power of the Kingdom of God. This is how Shodankeh disciples people to focus their prayer times with God.

Dear God,

- *Guard my heart*
- *Give me greater love for you God*
- *Bless my family*
- *Create a disciple-making movement through me (specifically for disciples, their families, and their disciples)*
- *Allow us to reach unreached communities*

- *Grant us total protection*
- *Give us Your provision (and may our provision come from You)*
- *Increase our fruitfulness (workers, evangelists, etc.)*
- *Empower us with the Holy Spirit*
- *Bring healing (spiritual, emotional, physical)*

Prayer Guide 4: The Prayer Wheel

How many things do you spend 60 minutes doing every day? Some exercise 60 minutes a day. Others, can easily spend that much time watching sports, preparing meals, exercising, reading a book, playing video games, watching tv, or piddling on the computer.

If we spend 60 minutes a day on things that matter to us, wouldn't you find it valuable to spend 60 minutes talking and listening to the God who made you.

Praying for 60 minutes sounds daunting. Do you think you can maintain focus for 3-5 minutes? That's the theory behind much modern physical training. Instead of simply running for 60 minutes without a break, many trainers change exercises every 3-5 minutes.

The prayer wheel is designed with that same approach. Don't try to pray for an hour. Pray for 3-5 minutes with twelve varied focuses.

Most of us struggle to maintain focus for long period of time. Part of the genius of modern exercise theory is training in short segments. It may seem too good to be true, but you can do it! – it's called The Prayer Wheel.¹

¹ Everywhere to Everywhere (E2E), *The Prayer Wheel*,
<https://www.everywhere2everywhere.org/articles/how-to-pray-for-one-hour>



PRAISE

Is there a better way to start prayer than following Jesus's example, "Our Father, who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name"? Through the Psalmist, God entreats, *"Stop fighting, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth."* (Ps. 46:10). Start prayer by looking up. Praise God for who He is. Praise Him for how you see Him exalted in the creation, in the world, in your life. Praise Him like you are standing in the throne room of heaven!

WAITING

Psalm 62:1, *"I am at rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him."*

Our hurried souls are starved for spiritual rest. In prayer, imagine God inviting you to slow down the pace, quiet the noise, and simply listen to Him. Spiritual rest is an acquired taste. Waiting means emptying yourself of your agenda so you can listen to God, alone.

CONFESSION

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” Jesus prayed. Why confess if your sins are already forgiven by Christ? Confession means “saying the same thing as.” Confession is simply a time to say the same thing about your sins and weights that Jesus says. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you those sins that beset you and hurt others. Like David, pray, *“God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.... Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit.”* (Psalm 51:10,12)

READ THE WORD

Powerful prayer is a dialogue. Let God speak to you through Scripture. More than just a time to learn the Bible, this is the time to read while praying, “God, speak to me. What do you want me to hear from You?”

PETITION (ASK)

Paul says, *“Don’t worry about anything..., present your requests to God.”* Phil. 4:6. Remember, God is a loving Father. He wants to hear your burdens.

INTERCESSION

Are your prayers primarily focused on you? Ironic, isn’t it? If we are not careful, prayer can become another exercise in selfishness!

The Bible tells us to pray for our leaders and to pray for one another. The apostle Paul asks people to pray for him to be bold. Do you imagine Christ prayed more for Himself or for others?

PRAY THE WORD

What better words to use in prayer than the words God has already given? Take time prayers the Psalms. Pray the words of the prophets. Pray the thoughts of Jesus and the doxologies of Paul. Enter into the worship scenes of Revelation.

THANKSGIVING

Give thanks to the Lord for all goodness in your life. But, at the same time, remember to give thanks in ALL things. Paul tells us this in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, when he writes: “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

SINGING

Music is a gift of God. God hardwired the soul to be moved by music. From the earliest times, God gifted musicians to lead His people in worship. In Revelation, heaven is pictured as a place filled with music. Does anything offer the foretaste of heaven like worshiping with great music? **Psalm 100:2b**, ...*come before him with joyful songs.*

MEDITATE

Psalm 1 says that the blessed person delights in God's law and meditates on God's thoughts day and night. In Eastern religions, meditation means emptying the mind. Biblical meditation means filling the mind with God's thoughts. Ponder Scripture. Allow Biblical truth to weigh in the mind. Chew over God's thoughts. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

LISTEN

Have a pen and paper ready now. Ask God to speak. What one word do you hear? What phrase? What Scripture does He bring to mind? Write it all down.

It is easier to talk than to listen, isn't it? Be patient. Remember Jesus' promise: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*" (John 10:27)

PRAISE

The Psalmist writes that his feet had almost slipped. Spiritually, he was headed the wrong direction, "*Until I came into the sanctuary of God... but after time with God, he concludes, but as for me, the nearness of God is my good.*" (Psalm 73:17,28). You have just experienced the nearness of God. Praise Him for how you've experienced Him. Thank Him for what He has shown you. Then, leave ready to walk more closely with Him today.

FASTING

What is Fasting

By its very nature, fasting says, “something is not normal.” Eating is normal. Fasting is a response to something out of the norm.

For the varsity wrestler, fasting is what you do to make weight. If you need medical tests, fasting is what you do to prepare. If you are in a weight-loss program, fasting may be part of your cleansing. Hippocrates, the “father of medicine,” prescribed fasting, convinced it helped the body naturally recover from illnesses.

Biblically, fasting has a mixed history. While mentioned more than seventy times throughout Scriptures, fasting is only commanded once a year: the Day of Atonement. Feasts are easier to find in the Old Testament than fasts. When Jesus was on the earth, He and His disciples participated in sacred feasts and were criticized for not participating in ritual fasts.

By example, however, the Old Testament heroes show us that fasting is a discipline that expresses humility and dependence on God. Moses did not eat or drink anything while receiving the Law on Mount Sinai.

Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat food or drink water. He wrote the Ten Commandments, the words of the covenant, on the tablets.

--Exodus 34:28 (CSB)

In times of war, grief, repentance – in times of any intense spiritual focus the leaders of Israel might call the people to a period of fasting and praying.

Yet, while Jesus told His followers to fast, He also had much to say against the phony fasts of the religious elites of His day. So, before we fast, we want to be clear on our motivations and expectations.

Here are some practical definitions of fasting from Real World Church in Las Cruces, New Mexico.² Take a moment to reflect on each of these. Choose one of these definitions that is most meaningful and motivating for you to reflect on during the next six weeks.

- Fasting is turning my attention from the pleasures of this world so that I might more fully focus my attention on Christ and find my greatest pleasure in him.
- Fasting is sacrificing something I value to pursue something God values for and/or through me.
- Fasting is denying myself what I desire as a way of putting my desire for God first.
- Fasting is setting aside less important things to seek the most important.
- Fasting is the discipline of putting God's eternal purposes before my temporal desires.
- Fasting is reserving the time, energy, and resources normally given to an activity to pursue God and his will.
- Fasting is disconnecting with the world so I can make a deeper connection with God.

Ask God to Lead You

Before beginning to fast, ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in how we are going to fast—in both attitude and action. Remember Isaiah 1:13 when God says, *“Stop bringing useless offerings. Your incense is detestable to me.”* God is clear: *“Your external religious activity without your heart wears Me out! Just stop!”*

So, before your fast, decide what you will give up and how long. But, remember that God is interested in your heart, not your sacrifice. Let the sacrifice express the heart. The goal of the fast is a heart for God, not merely external religious activity.

² Real Life Church, *An Introduction to Fasting*, <https://getreallife.org/in-god-we-trust-devotional/intro-to-fasting>

Jesus Fasted

After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, he left the Jordan River valley and went into the wilderness. For forty days, Jesus had nothing to eat and he was tempted by the devil as described in Luke chapter 4. The timing of the fasting and temptation of Jesus was profound. It prepared Him to select the team He would disciple to become the leaders of the church. Immediately following His fast, Jesus called his disciples and launched His ministry.

Towards the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus knew the painful transition that lay ahead. He knew His time on earth was drawing to an end. He knew His disciples would need to fast and pray to sustain their strength for the challenges ahead (see Mark 2:18-20). It's no different for us today - prayer and fasting are essential to being a disciple of Jesus.

Fasting Principles

While humans focus on the outward, God sees the heart. God's view of fasting is your heart, not your abstinence. Focus on substance, not form. The end of fasting is to love God more, to see the world through His eyes, and to be more prepared to obey. The temptation of fasting is to focus on your fast. The purpose of fasting is to draw near to God. This is why Jesus said:

Whenever you fast, don't be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting isn't obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
--Mathew 6:16-18 (CSB)

Fasting Ideas

The Bible connects fasting specifically to abstaining from food. The human need for food is so great, fasting from food is a natural way to refocus our hearts to the Creator instead of the created (food). However, **before fasting, be sure it is medically safe for you to fast from food. No one should feel ashamed if a medical condition prevents them from a food**

fast. If you are fasting from food, ensure you do so in a safe manner by staying hydrated with water and/or fruit juices.

We all have something that we can fast from, or give up, to shift our focus from our craving of the created to our spiritual need for the Creator. The big idea is that as we give up something, we replace that desire with time in the presence of God. If you choose to abstain from one of these during your fast, do so in a way that clearly replaces those items with prayer and demonstrates that you are sacrificing one thing for something that is better. For example, fasting from soda for one meal may not actually be sacrificial and may not allow additional time for prayer. Fasting from soda for a day, or a week, may be more analogous to fasting from an entire meal in terms of sacrifice but would still require you to spend time in prayer. The sacrifice in itself is not the point. We encourage you to seek God to lead you in the specifics of how you fast.

No one preparing to run a 10K race simply laces up the shoes and runs 10K. The runner goes into training, starting small, building up more distance over time. Like any discipline, fasting is a discipline that can be learned. Begin by fasting one meal a day. Then, fast for two meals. Then, an entire day.

When fasting for a day, some start with a sunrise to sunset fast. Others, fast their first 24 hour fast with a sunset to sunset fast. Then, try a fast which begins at the end of dinner, continues with fasting three meals the next day, and ends with breakfast the following morning.

If you are unable physically to abstain from meals, here are some other options to fast from:

- Social Media
- Non-essential phone use
- Television/Streaming services
- Video Games
- Coffee (ok, maybe that's asking too much)
- Sodas
- Sugar and Sweets

- Secular Music
- Recreational activities

If you choose to abstain from one of these during your fast, do so in a way that clearly replaces those items with prayer and demonstrates that you are sacrificing one thing for something that is better. For example, fasting from soda for one meal may not actually be sacrificial and may not allow additional time for prayer. Fasting from soda for a day, or a week, may be more analogous to fasting from an entire meal in terms of sacrifice but would still require you to spend time in prayer. The sacrifice in itself is not the point. We encourage you to seek God to lead you in the specifics of how you fast.

7 Steps to Fasting

Here are some practical steps to fasting from meals from Bill Bright, Evangelist and Founder of Cru.³

Step 1: Set an Objective for Your Fast

Ask yourself the question: Why am I fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal? For healing? For major life decisions? Ask God to lead you in setting an objective.

Step 2: Commit to Your Fast

Pray about the kind of fast God wants you to undertake. In scripture, it wasn't a matter of if, but when, God's people would fast.

Step 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Spend time with God before you begin your fast to confess your sins and prepare your heart.

Step 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Don't rush into your fast. Prepare your body by eating smaller meals before starting a fast. Consult your physician before you begin a fast of meal(s) if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment.

³ Bright, Bill, *7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting and Prayer*,
<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/7-steps-to-fasting.html>

Step 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

Set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord during your fast. Be attentive for God's leading (be still and know that he is God). The more time you spend with God, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Step 6: Break Your Fast Gradually

If God leads you to fast for multiple days, how you break your fast is important for your physical well-being. Gradually return to regular eating with several small healthy snacks.

Step 7: Expect Results From Your Fast

Pray that God will give you fresh spiritual insights during your fast. Pray that your faith will be deepened and strengthened.

PRAYER AND FASTING GOALS

Personal Goals

Why are you fasting personally? First, ask God, “Lord, what do You want me to focus on?”

Be specific. Are you facing a difficult decision? Is someone you know far from God? Do you know a marriage in trouble? Do you or a loved one need healing? Are you financial challenged? What weights burden you? What sins or habits beset you?

Write down all these concerns, and ask the Holy Spirit during your fast to give you strength and perseverance as you share the gospel with them.

Church-wide Goals

Traditionally, many churches call the week of Palm Sunday through Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday, “Holy Week.” Whatever you may call it, this special season provides a powerful opportunity to seek God. Would you join the New Life body as we pray in unity for God to be honored in this season?

- We are praying for God to prepare our ears to hear His voice and our feet to be ready to follow in obedience.
- We pray for lost people to come home to God.
- We pray for harmony in our homes.
- We pray for our children to love the Lord with all their hearts and minds.
- We pray for the nZone to be a safe place for people to experience God.
- We pray for many to trust and obey Jesus in believers’ baptism.
- We pray for God to heal our sick.
- We pray for every New Lifer to start spiritual conversations every day.
- We pray that God would make us peacemakers where there is division.
- We pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up workers.
- We pray that God would do immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine through His power at work in us.
- We pray that God would ignite a movement of disciples who make disciples who start churches that start more churches.
- We pray for God to build His church, His way, for His honor.

Specific Fasting Goals

Here are some sample fasting goals for you to consider as you prepare for our six-week journey of praying and fasting.

- Week 1: Set aside a day (or two) to fast from one meal
- Week 2: Fast for two meals (for one day, or two days)
- Week 3: Fast for two meals (for one day, or two days)
- Week 4: Fast for one day (24 hours, e.g., sunrise-sunset)
- Week 5: Fast for one day (24 or 36 hours)
- Week 6: Fast for two days (either consecutive or separated)

Further Reading

Prayer and Fasting: Moving with the Spirit to Renew Our Minds, Bodies, and Churches

By David Roadcup and Michael Eagle

<https://renew.org/ebook/prayer-and-fasting-moving-with-the-spirit-to-renew-our-minds-bodies-and-churches/>

Prayer and Fasting – Group Discussion Guide

By Michael Eagle

<https://renew.org/ebook/prayer-and-fasting-group-discussion-guide/>

Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough

By Elmer Towns

<https://www.amazon.com/Fasting-Spiritual-Breakthrough-Practical-Biblical/dp/0764218395/>

DEVOTIONALS

How to Get the Most Out of Your Fast

Set aside time every day during your fast to pray and read your Bible. Spend some time reflecting on the six devotionals listed below.

As you read these verses, let God's word resonate within you. Stop and pause on the verses that particularly speak to you. Personalize what you are reading by thinking about how this scripture applies to your life right now. Take time to reflect and capture your thoughts on the questions provided below each scripture passage.

Be silent before God during your devotional time and listen. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation!

Go back to these devotionals several times during the week asking God to reveal to you what he wants you to hear and what next steps he wants you to take.

Take time each week to walk around your neighborhood and pray for your community. Pray for our upcoming Easter services and look for opportunities to invite a neighbor to attend with you.

Week 1 Prayer & Fasting Devotional
All Praise and Glory to God

On the twenty-fourth day of this month the Israelites assembled; they were fasting, wearing sackcloth, and had put dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors. While they stood in their places, they read from the book of the law of the *Lord* their God for a fourth of the day and spent another fourth of the day in confession and worship of the *Lord* their God. Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the raised platform built for the Levites and cried out loudly to the *Lord* their God. Then the Levites – Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah – said, “Stand up.

Blessed be the *Lord* your God from everlasting to everlasting.”

Blessed be your glorious name,
and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise.

You, *Lord*, are the only God.

You created the heavens,
the highest heavens with all their stars,
the earth and all that is on it,
the seas and all that is in them.

You give life to all of them,
and all the stars of heaven worship you.

--Nehemiah 9:1-6 (CSB)

What did you learn about God in this scripture reading?

What did you learn about humanity from this week's reading?

How would your life change if you put this passage into practice?

Who do you know that needs to hear what you've learned this week?

**Week 2 Prayer & Fasting Devotional
Acknowledging Our Sin**

In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by birth, who was made king over the Chaldean kingdom – in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books according to the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah that the number of years for the desolation of Jerusalem would be seventy. So I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek him by prayer and petitions, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed:

Ah, Lord – the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant with those who love him and keep his commands – we have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, and turned away from your commands and ordinances. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, leaders, ancestors, and all the people of the land.

Lord, righteousness belongs to you, but this day public shame belongs to us: the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and all Israel – those who are near and those who are far, in all the countries where you have banished them because of the disloyalty they have shown toward you. Lord, public shame belongs to us, our kings, our leaders, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you.

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the Lord our God by following his instructions that he set before us through his servants the prophets.

--Daniel 9:1-10 (CSB)

What did you learn about God in this scripture reading?

What did you learn about humanity from this week's reading?

How would your life change if you put this passage into practice?

Who do you know that needs to hear what you've learned this week?

Week 3 Prayer & Fasting Devotional Jesus' Temptation and Fasting

Then Jesus left the Jordan, full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over, he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

But Jesus answered him, "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone." So he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. The devil said to him, "I will give you their splendor and all this authority, because it has been given over to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. If you, then, will worship me, all will be yours."

And Jesus answered him, "It is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only." So he took him to Jerusalem, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written: He will give his angels orders concerning you, to protect you, and they will support you with their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

And Jesus answered him, "It is said: Do not test the Lord your God." After the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time. Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity. He was teaching in their synagogues, being praised by everyone.

--Luke 4: 1-15 (CSB)

What did you learn about God in this scripture reading?

What did you learn about humanity from this week's reading?

How would your life change if you put this passage into practice?

Who do you know that needs to hear what you've learned this week?

Week 4 Prayer & Fasting Devotional
Ambassadors in Christ
Ministers of Reconciliation

Therefore, since we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you may have a reply for those who take pride in outward appearance rather than in the heart. For if we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion, that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.

From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

--2 Corinthians 5:11-21

What did you learn about God in this scripture reading?

What did you learn about humanity from this week's reading?

How would your life change if you put this passage into practice?

Who do you know that needs to hear what you've learned this week?

Week 5 Prayer & Fasting Devotional
How Will They Know?

This is the message of faith that we proclaim: If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.
--Romans 10:8b-17

What did you learn about God in this scripture reading?

What did you learn about humanity from this week's reading?

How would your life change if you put this passage into practice?

Who do you know that needs to hear what you've learned this week?

**Week 6 Prayer & Fasting Devotional
Our Calling and Commission**

*As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. “**Follow me,**” he told them, “**and I will make you fish for people.**” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

--Matthew 4:18-20

The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

--Matthew 28:16-20

What did you learn about God in this scripture reading?

What did you learn about humanity from this week’s reading?

How would your life change if you put this passage into practice?

Who do you know that needs to hear what you've learned this week?



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