

PRAYER AND FASTING GUIDE

JANUARY 8-14, 2017

Every January we set aside a week to fast and pray. Why? We truly believe that it is God who builds the church. Before we set into a new season of plans and ministry we want to ensure that we are hearing from the Lord and doing what He has called us to do. Prayer is a time of preparing our hearts. We lay aside things that distract and make time to reconnect with God's purposes and heart. We are in an exciting season and we want to approach it in a way that would enable us to be established to bear long term fruit.

God makes it clear in His Word that prayer with fasting is an important practice for all believers. Jesus models it (Matthew 4:2), Jesus assumed His followers would fast (Matthew 9:14-15) and the early church fasted (Acts 13:2). In response to fasting God did great things. The idea is not that we twist God's arm, but that we receive all that He has given to His people. As we pray and fast we look forward to break-through and a fresh release of God's Spirit.

This guide contains practical information on fasting and a day-by-day theme based on the Lord's Prayer. I hope it will be a jumping off point for your prayers and that the scriptures included would be used by the Holy Spirit to direct us in unity and faith.

Blessings and Love,

Pastor Matt

“Prayer is stressed over and over again in the New Testament as a vital pre-requisite for the release and experience of God’s power”
–Phillip Hughes

FASTING - PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

Fasting is simply choosing to deny ourselves of good things for a specific period of time in favor of better things –namely time seeking the Lord in prayer. We don’t fast to impress the Lord or to earn His love or acceptance (we already have that). During times of fasting we remind ourselves of our total dependence on Jesus and willingly let go of other things so that we can focus more totally on Him. Here are just a few thoughts to help you participate this week:

- Decide what and how long you will fast
 - Total Fast –With or without water.
 - Partial Fast –Abstaining from certain types of foods and/or limiting quantity of food. Like Daniel’s fast in Daniel 10:3 where he fasted delicacies, meat and wine. For example, you may choose to fast certain meals like lunch or to just drink fruit and vegetable juices.
 - Special Fast –Fasting things other than food like TV, Internet or Facebook.
- Fast Safely
 - Especially if you are choosing to fast significant amounts of food, ensure you are healthy and consider consulting a physician if you are unsure.
 - Pregnant women, diabetics and those with poor health or eating disorders should not fast.

- Fasting can be a healthy practice that is beneficial to your body. Limiting physical activity and ensuring adequate rest is important.
- Slowly reintroduce foods after fasting.

- Take time to Pray
 - Fasting is more than doing without. It is a season of reallocating priorities to focus on prayer and seeking the Lord
 - Take part in prayer meetings and schedule specific times to pray.
- Avoid Religious Displays and Beliefs
 - In Matthew 6 Jesus encourages fasting as a practice done before the Lord not for appearing more holy before people.
 - Fast as a confident child of God not a fearful slave trying to gain something from God.
- Grace
 - Fasting is difficult. Rely on the strength the Lord graciously gives to those who ask.
 - If you slip up, take it to the Lord in prayer and continue with the rest of your fast.
- Expect Results
 - This time of focused attention on prayer will accomplish much in your life and church.

SPECIFIC PRAYERS

Use the space below to record some areas of focus as you pray this week. Pray each day as the Lord leads in these areas and keep your ears open as He speaks to you. Keep your eyes open also to see as He brings answers to the things you are believing for.

Prayers for my Gateway family

Prayers for my city and world

Prayers for my life and family

MY FASTING PLAN

At the beginning of the week prayerfully consider how you will participate in fasting and prayer this week. What will you fast? When will you pray? Commit your plans to the Lord and ask Him for His grace to enable you through the week.

SUNDAY - WORSHIP

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

We begin our week with a focus on the worship of our great God and King. Take time today to praise God, to thank Him, to consider His character and nature. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you in a greater way and then pray and praise what He reveals back to Him. In a week of prayer and fasting it is vital for us to take the focus off of ourselves and our deeds and place our full attention and affections on God alone.

*For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty.
Zechariah 9:17*

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7 4

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Kidz Church (Elementary, Preschool, Toddlers)
- Seasons Freestore

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 8 & Job 5-6

MONDAY - GOD'S WILL AND WAYS

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

As we pray we aren't trying to get God to follow our lead, we seek to discover His will and His wisdom as we move forward together. The Word tells us that Jesus is in the business of building His church. We partner with Him as we follow His lead. At the same time the Scriptures are full of instances where God makes His will known to us. He desires to see many, actually everyone, come to salvation. He has released the church to bring the reality of the kingdom to the nations. He has equipped us with the Spirit and gifts to bring healing, restoration, reconciliation, hope and life to our world. God is building Gateway. Let's pray for our church and that God's kingdom would be expressed through our lives and that His will would be done.

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Middle School and Youth Ministry
- Worship Team

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 9 & Job 7-8

TUESDAY - PROVISION

Give us this day our daily bread.

God chooses to reveal Himself to us as our Father. He is a good dad, the best in fact. We are encouraged to bring our needs and desires to Him. He, rather than our pay checks, jobs, or talents, is our ultimate source of provision. As we pray today we pray with confidence that He is able and willing to provide for our needs as individuals and as a church family. The things that He is calling us to accomplish are beyond our natural ability and resources; thankfully we are filled with joyful expectation that He will provide all that we need with perfect wisdom.

My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Matt 7:11

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Life Groups
- Fringe/ Recovery Ministry

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 10 & Job 9-10

WEDNESDAY - REPENTANCE

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

As issues arise in our Christian walk we are called to regular patterns of confession, repentance, and receiving forgiveness. These moments provide us with fresh opportunities to embrace the grace and love of Jesus as we take hold of the forgiveness and cleansing He already purchased at Calvary. In moments of repentance we also allow our minds to be renewed and for our thinking to align with His thinking. Lies are overcome with truth, hurts are healed and unhealthy patterns are replaced with redeemed thinking.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Operation Solid Lives/Discipleship
- Missions

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 11 & Job 11-12

THURSDAY - SANCTIFICATION

Lead us not into temptation.

The moment you were saved a miracle happened. You were born again and become a new creation in Jesus. You received a new identity and a whole new way of living, really living. From that moment on God calls us into a journey of becoming more like Him, of our practice coming into line with what we possess - a new nature and new desires. As you pray today, agree with God's desire to make you and His church more like Jesus each and everyday. Pray that God would motivate us with a greater understanding of His grace and love. Pray for eyes to behold the beauty of Jesus and transformation of every part of us.

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
2 Corinthians 5:17*

*17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.
John 17:17-19*

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Administration & Maintenance
- Church Council

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 12 & Job 13-14

FRIDAY - PROTECTION

Deliver us from evil.

Beyond what our eyes can see there is a spiritual reality that is active and influential in our world. We need not fear as in Christ we have been given authority over the evil one and every spiritual force that may try to side track us or take us out. Today we go on the offensive and pray for our church and our families. Pray bold prayers based on who you are in Christ, not how you are feeling at this moment.

The enemy would love to diminish or destroy the work that God has given us in this city. Let's give him no ground and no position to operate. Take time to declare the truth of the Word over our leaders, our families, and those you do not yet know Jesus.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

John 17:15

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Pastor Matt & Deanna
- Hospitality Team

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 13 & Job 15-16

SATURDAY - MISSION

*19 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,
20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Matthew 28:19-20

As we conclude our week of prayer we turn our focus out towards the great mission we have been called into. Like Jesus, who was sent to this earth on a mission to seek and save the lost we have been sent to our neighbourhoods and this city to seek and save the lost that Jesus loves so dearly. We have been equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit to make our task possible.

Pray in two veins today. First for the church that we would embrace the mission and that we would walk in the power that has been made available. Secondly, pray for the lost that they would be saved.

Acts 1:8 You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Sound & Technical Team
- Women's Ministry
- Men's Breakfast

Bible Reading Plan

- Luke 14 & Job 17-19

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