

Prayer & Fasting Guide

September 10-16, 2017

Every September 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 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: Thankful

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you...

Romans 1:8a

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers

Ephesians 1:14

This week we will look to the prayers of the Apostle Paul in his letters as a tool to equip us as we pray for Gateway over this upcoming season. Not only are these great prayers because Paul penned them but more significantly we know that the Holy Spirit inspired them. Let them be springboards to powerful Spirit led prayers that will change history.

We begin with gratitude. Let's specifically thank the Lord for our Gateway family. What an incredible family we have been called to do life and mission together with. I am thankful for you!

Join us tonight at 7pm for a Prayer Meeting from 7-8pm

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

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

Bible Reading Plan

- John 2, Isaiah 8-9 & Psalm 39

Monday: Wisdom

*“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in
the knowledge of him...”*

Ephesians 1:17

*“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray
for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of
His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...”*

Colossians 1:9

Strategies, plans and goals are all good things. They help us move forward and put feet to the things we want to see come to pass. Ultimately, especially when it comes to God's church, we acknowledge that our best plans cannot accomplish what God desires to do in and through us. So with faith and surrender let's ask today for the wisdom and knowledge that we need to be who He wants us to be. Once you have asked keep your ears open as He answers our prayers with things beyond our own imagination or thoughts

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Middle School and Youth Ministry
- Worship Team

Bible Reading Plan

- John 3 & Isaiah 10-12

Tuesday: Unity

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

In a world of increasing independence and loneliness the church stands out with a unique offer. Through Christ people of every stratum of society can live in peace as our hearts are changed and God's love flows through us. Let's pray in 2 ways today:

First, that Gateway would know greater levels of unity than ever before. That the works of the evil one to bring discord and destruction would be broken and a new work of the Spirit would be released.

Secondly, let us pray for the churches across our city that preach the truth about Jesus. May we live in the fullness of brotherhood and effectively reach our city as partners in the gospel.

Join us today for a Prayer Meeting at 12noon or 7pm

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Life Groups
- Ministry to Young Adults

Bible Reading Plan

- John 4 & Isaiah 13-14

Wednesday: Power

“...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being...”

Ephesians 3:16

“...being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy...”

Colossians 1:11

One key to a time of prayer and fasting is seeking fresh strength to continue in the plans and purposes of God. Continued effort and the routines of life will leave us fatigued and worn unless we regularly come to the unending supply of God's strength and power given to us through the Holy Spirit. Take time today to ask for the gift that the Father loves to give. As you pray thank Him for fulfilling His promise and be prepared to see how the Lord will answer in specific ways. Whatever you are facing know that He will see you through, not in your strength, but in His.

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Operation Solid Lives/Discipleship
- Missions

Bible Reading Plan

- John 5 & Isaiah 15-17

Thursday: Love

“...that you, being rooted and grounded in love...”

Ephesians 3:17

“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment...”

Philippians 1:9

.I want us to believe right. I want us to have great theology. I want us to do good works. But we could do all of these things and still totally be missing the mark. How? Without love, the scriptures make clear, these things are merely noise and talk. Love is the motivator and sustainer that keeps all that we believe and do in the right context. Love keeps it about people rather than projects, about true needs rather than surface change.

Pray today that our love would increase to overflowing. Believe that our love would move us to action that would change our families, our church, our city and beyond. Reflect on the love of God that truly demonstrates love for the unlovable. A love that perseveres. A love that compels.

Join us today for a Prayer Meeting at 12noon or 7pm

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Administration & Maintenance
- Church Council

Bible Reading Plan

- John 6 & Isaiah 18-19

Friday: Righteousness

*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely,
and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful;
he will surely do it.
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24*

I love the way Paul prays. There is always hope. There is always a reminder of the power of the gospel. Rather than praying for sanctification (holiness worked out in our actions) in the light of our failures and missteps the focus is brought back to God's ability to do the work in us. His faithfulness in calling us and saving us also means He will enable us to live for Him in our everyday lives.

Pray today with faith in the grace and faithfulness of God for yourself and Gateway to live transformed lives that will shine brightly for Him and His glory.

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

- Pastor Matt & Deanna
- Hospitality Team

Bible Reading Plan

- John 7, Isaiah 20-21 & Psalm 32

Saturday: Hope

“...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...”

Ephesians 1:18

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Romans 15:13

As we conclude our week of prayer we turn our focus to the future. The future we have together as He builds His church according to His good promises. The future that looks bright as He completes the good work that He started. The future that only gets better as we remember our eternal home that is being prepared for us.

Pray today that we would continue to be a people of hope and faith. The kind of hope that enables us to live with optimism and a sense of anticipation for the future. The best is yet to come.

Daily Ministry Prayer Focus

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

Bible Reading Plan

- John 8 & Isaiah 22-23

Notes