

## Notes

January 14th, 2018

Dear Friends,

As we enter this new life season full of spiritual growth potential, we choose to give up to get more of God. You are invited to engage in this church-wide prayer and fasting week. Since 2014 we have called Ambassador to 3 separate weeks throughout the year, January, April and September.

Please take time out to join us for as many prayer gatherings as you can through the week. Typically we will meet in the upstairs prayer room at 6:30 pm - A brief devotional time followed by prayer.

Our theme is "Set your minds on things above." This guide will take you through the book of Colossians that unpacks some wonderful truths about God and our relating to him and to others. Use this guide as a journal to note the thoughts that God is bringing to you.

We choose to pray and fast for the Lord. Many people in the Bible took up this discipline, including Jesus himself. His words to Satan when tempted to turn stones into bread reveal the high value God places on spiritual food through his Words: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4 (quoting Deuteronomy 8:3)

Humbly at your feet we bow, O LORD,

Pastor Scott



## How will I fast and pray into 2018?

Write down the highlights from your week of fasting. Take time to thank God for what he has done this past week. Share this with a friend.

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What has been the most significant breakthrough you have sensed from the Lord this week?

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How could you continue in prayer and fasting this year? Establish a pattern. Could you fast one or two meals a week. One day a week? Share this with someone.

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We are called to dwell richly in the Word of God. (Colossians 3:16.) If you don't have one, seek out a Bible reading plan to follow this year. Check out Bible.com or youversion.com. Reading plans are available at the back. Buddy up with someone to hold you gracefully accountable

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## Fasting in the Bible

### Old Testament

Moses fasted 40 days on behalf of Israel's sin: Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10.

David fasted and mourned the death of Saul: 2 Sam.1:12. David fasted and mourned the death of Abner: 2 Sam 3:35.

David fasted and mourned the death of his child: 2 Sam 12:16.

Elijah fasted 40 days after fleeing from Jezebel: 1 Kings 19:7-18.

Ahab fasted and humbled himself before God: 1 Kings 21:27-29.

Darius fasted in concern for Daniel: Daniel 6:18-24.

Daniel fasted on behalf of Judah's sin while reading Jeremiah's prophecy: Daniel 9:1-19.

Daniel fasted regarding a mysterious vision from God: Daniel 10:3-13.

Esther fasted on behalf of her people: Esther 4:13-16.

Ezra fasted and wept for the sins of the returning remnant: Ezra 10:6-17.

Nehemiah fasted and mourned over the broken walls of Jerusalem: Nehemiah 1:4-2:10.

The people of Nineveh fasted after hearing the message of Jonah: Jonah 3.

### New Testament

Anna fasted for the redemption of Jerusalem through the coming Messiah: Luke 2:37.

Jesus fasted 40 days before his temptation and the beginning of his ministry: Matthew 4:1-11.

The disciples of John the Baptist fasted: Matthew 9:14-15.

The elders in Antioch fasted before sending off Paul and Barnabas: Acts 13:1-5.

Cornelius fasted and sought God's plan of salvation: Acts 10:30.

Paul fasted three days after his Damascus Road encounter: Acts 9:9. Paul fasted 14 days while at sea on a sinking ship: Acts 27:33-34.

# Four kinds of Fasting

The noun translated "fast" or "a fasting" is *tsom* in the Hebrew and *nesteia* in the Greek language. It means the voluntary abstinence from food. The literal Hebrew translation would be "not to eat." The literal Greek means "no food."

## 1. Normal fast.

In a normal fast, a person goes without food for a predetermined amount of time—1 day, 3 days, 1 week or longer. Drinking water and Tea.

## 2. Partial fast.

This fast allows certain foods, or is on a schedule that includes limited eating, possibly one meal or two meals a day, or only eating vegetables for several days. Daniel and John the Baptist followed this sort of fast.

## 3. Juice fast.

This is the same as a 'normal' fast, except the one fasting drinks fruit juice.

## 4. Soul fast.

To fast also from items that clutter our souls, completely unrelated to food: novels, entertainment (television, movies, Facebook, social media)

**Lord, how would you like me to fast this week?**

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**What will be my set times for prayer and reading God's Word?**

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## Questions to ask of a Bible passage:

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
  1. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
  2. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
  3. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
  4. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

## Fasting Resources

<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html> (Bill Bright)

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/fasting-for-beginners>  
(David Mathis)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6jvnfdUQhI>  
(Video by Derek Prince)

<https://bible.org/question/what-does-bible-say-about-fasting> (Fasting in the NT)

**Reflecting on your week**

Take some time before coming to worship gathering at 10:30 am and look back over how God has spoken to you this week. What stands out? What will you set fresh goals for this year?

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Is there a word of encouragement or discernment you would like to share with our church family. You'll have opportunity to do this in the service.

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Join us tonight at 6 pm as we break our fast with a potluck supper and the Lord's supper.

**1. Set your objective and commit to a type of fast.**

- Choose the type of fast God wants you to undertake: water only, water and juices, what kinds of juices, how often?
- Determine how much time and when you will daily devote to prayer and God's Word.

**2. Be Expectant**

Be reminded that the Lord listens to a prayer from the heart. Be true and contrite as we expect to hear direction from our God.

**3. Prepare yourself spiritually.**

The very foundation of fasting is humbling ourselves in repentance. Unconfessed sin hinders your prayers. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. Make things right as the Holy Spirit leads.

**4. Prepare yourself physically.**

Fasting requires physical precautions. If you are taking medication, or have a physical condition consult your doctor first before beginning the fast.

**5. Lessen physical activities.**

Limit your physical and social activity during this period. Conserve your energy and devote more time to prayer and reading the Bible.

**6. Be in faith.**

Be strong and focused in prayer as you dedicate more time in fellowship with the Father. Expect God to answers. Maintain a thankful heart throughout the fast and after. Be clear about your faith goals believing God to meet them.

**Some key items I bring before you Father:**

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## Helpful Hints

**Drink plenty of water.** (Drinking at least half of your body weight in ounces of water per day is a good rule of thumb whether you are fasting or not.)

**It is wise to abstain from strong stimulants** such as caffeinated and sugary drinks during a fast, including the artificial sweeteners found in diet drinks. Also, avoid soy protein drinks, which have been known to cause health problems during a fast.

**If you are on a juice fast, drink raw fruit juices such as apple, grape, and pineapple**, which are excellent sources of necessary natural sugar to stabilize blood sugar and keep energy levels up. Orange and grapefruit juice are also good, but they are not recommended for arthritis or allergy sufferers. Monitor juice acidity carefully as it can cause canker sores (mouth ulcers). Raw vegetable juices such as carrot, celery, beet, or green vegetable combinations are excellent as well. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices can be made in a juice extractor or purchased ready-made (be sure to buy juices without any added sugars). Some of the benefits of drinking raw juice versus bottled are that it does not stimulate digestion (hunger) and it maintains all of its enzymes and nutritional value.

**Expect some physical discomforts because of the detoxification process**, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains or dizziness. Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches, but it is a part of the detoxification process.

“Fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, to sacrifice ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.”

— Andrew Murray

## Day 6 Saturday, January 20th

### Ministry Encouragers

Read **Colossians 4:7-18**. As Paul concludes his letter he lists out his ministry partners by name. And he adds adjectives to describe who they are. What does he say about these people?

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Who are the ministry partners around you? The ones that you encourage and you get encouraged by?

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Praying for our nation and leaders:

That Canada will be a country that honours and serves God  
That Canada will be a nation which demonstrates righteousness, justice, compassion and generosity

That the Holy Spirit will bring a spirit of individual and national repentance across our land, starting with Christians.

That individuals and leaders will seek and demonstrate forgiveness

That Canada will be a nation of diverse people accepting, forgiving, sharing and working together for a better Canada

Prayer: Pray specifically for our Mayor Drew Dilkens and councillors, for our provincial leaders, Kathleen Wynne, our federal leaders, Justin Trudeau. Pray for our missionaries: Bruno, Kathleen Soucy in Latin America, Conrad and Fiona Kwok in Thailand.

**Choose one of the Psalms of the day 19,49,79,109 or 139 to read at noon. Pray the Psalm back to the LORD bringing your heart and words to expression.**

Prayers: Life decisions, Ambassador's fruit in 2018.

Join us for prayer at 6:30 pm.

**Christ-Centered Homes & Work**

Everything is sourced in Jesus. Paul gets very practical now in the home and at work or school. Read **Colossians 3:18-4:6**. What are marks of roles in the home? What are your strengths and growth areas? Be vulnerable, ask your family.

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How can we be more intentional about doing our labours heartily as to the LORD? **See 3:23**

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What does Paul emphasize about prayer in Colossians **4:2-3**? And in 4:5 about speaking with outsiders?

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**E100 Bible reading  
Matthew 3:13-4:17**



How does Satan come after you?

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**Choose one of the Psalms of the day 19,49,79,109 or 139 to read at noon. Pray the Psalm back to the LORD bringing your heart and words to expression.**

Prayers: Use the Lord's prayer.  
Join us for prayer at 6:30 pm.

**Fast and pray in order to humble yourself and purify your worship.** In fasting we are not trying to get something from God, but seeking to realign our hearts' affections with His. In fasting we can more readily say, "We love you, Lord, more than anything in the world." Lust of any kind is perverted worship, but fasting enables us to cleanse the sanctuary of our hearts from every other rival.

**Do the fast with someone else.** Two are better than one! We encourage parents and kids to consider fasting together. Several generations fasting together has a powerful impact.

**Have a clear target as your prayer focus.** Without a vision (a clear, prophetic prayer goal), the people perish. Write down your vision, so you can run with it (Hab. 2:2).

**Take time to pray and read the Word.** This may seem obvious, but busyness and distractions can keep you from devotions. Reading books will encourage you, too. *Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting* by Derek Prince, *Fast Forward* by Lou Engle, and *God's Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis are just some of the books about fasting that are available.

**Expect to hear God's voice** in the Word, dreams, visions, and revelations. Daniel prepared himself to receive revelation through fasting (Dan. 10:1-2). There is a fasting reward (Mt. 6:18).

**Prepare for opposition.** On the day of your fast you can bet that donuts will be at the office. Your spouse (or your mom) will suddenly be inspired to cook your favorite meals. Press through. Many times you may feel more tension build at home. Satan tempted Jesus on the fast, and we must expect the same. Discouragement may come but recognize the source and take your stand on the victory of Christ. <http://www.ihopkc.org/about/fasting->

## During a Fast

### Put yourself on a schedule.

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside a good amount of time each day to be alone with the LORD. Listen for his leading. The more time you spend with him the more meaningful your fast will be.

- Praise and worship
- Confession and repentance of sin
- Read and meditate on God's Word, on knees?
- Pray for his vision for your life and empowerment to do his will.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for your family, church, world's needs, etc.
- Take spiritual prayer walks
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television, computer games, internet entertainment surfing, movies, parties or other distractions that may dampen your spiritual focus.

### Attend Prayer meetings.

Make an effort to be out to our prayer gatherings from 6:30–7:30 PM each night of the week.

### Have the Right Motive.

Remember that your motive in fasting is to glorify God, to listen to him and be more intimate with him and to bring your burdens to him. When your motives are right, God will honour your seeking heart and bless your time with him in a special way.

## Day 4 Thursday, January 18th

### Set your minds on things above

Read **Colossians 3:1-17**. If you are a Christian as described in the opening two chapters then you are dead to self and alive to Christ- hidden with him. Our minds are being renewed and redirected to God. In **3:5** we are called to put to death earthly things that we have fallen into. Identify what needs repenting and then how will you grow forward in accountability?

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Paul lists Christ-like/ godly items to "put on" in **vv12-17**. As you read over and meditate, which 1 or 2 will you ask the LORD for today?

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Memorize Colossians 3:1-4 or the whole chapter.

### E100 Bible reading— Luke 3:1-20

What strikes you most about John the Baptist



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**Choose one of the Psalms of the day 18,48,78,108 or 138 to read at noon. Pray the Psalm back to the LORD bringing your heart and words to expression.**

Prayers: Bring Revival Lord! -Join us for 6:30 prayer

**Identifying threats to our faith in Christ**

Read through **Colossians 2:6-23**. You'll notice in **2:8** that a false teaching is threatening to replace or sideline Jesus as Saviour and leader. This threat exists today. First, review in **2:9-15** what Christ alone has done to secure our safety and salvation. Then, what philosophy or human tradition today competes for our trust in Christ alone?

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In **2:16-23** Paul brings additional warnings about human rules and paths of asceticism to grow spiritually. Certain Jewish observances that were required to grow. Old Testament dietary laws, festivals and special days are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Summarize what Paul is getting at.

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**E100 Bible reading— Luke 2:1-40**  
Record a key thought from this passage.



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**Choose one of the Psalms of the day 17,47,77,107 or 137 to read at noon. Pray the Psalm back to the LORD bringing your heart and words to expression.**

Prayers: asking for discernment -Join us for 6:30 prayer

**1. End your fast gradually.**

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and your digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial spiritual and physical effect will result in continued good health. You may start with fruits, fruit juice, salads, and soups, then gradually eat more solid foods.

Overall, the following four factors represent what we are trying to accomplish when breaking a fast.

- frequent meals to less frequent meals
- Small meals to larger meals
- Easy to digest to harder to digest
- Less variety to more variety

**2. Continue to pray.**

Don't let your prayer end on the day you finish your fast. Build from the momentum you gained during your fast. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Carry the newfound passion with you throughout the year.

**3. Expect greater intimacy with God.**

Pray for the items on your prayer list and other items as God the Spirit leads you. Lift up requests using a prayer list at the back for our church family, our city, government etc..

**4. Expect the joy of God's presence.**

Psalm 16:11 Let us bask in the fullness of joy in the Lord as we abide in his glorious presence.

## Day 1 Monday, January 15th

### How am I doing LORD in relationship with you?

Read and meditate on **Colossians 1**. Don't rush. This passage speaks of past reality of coming to faith in Christ and current reality of love for others and the fruit of the gospel. It also draws a strong picture of who Jesus is for us.

What are you thankful for as you meditate and reflect on your salvation in Christ?

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Is there something the LORD is calling you to repent of?

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How would you like **Col. 1:10** to come alive more in your life in 2018? Be specific.

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### E100 Bible reading—John 1:1-18

What one thing is standing out to you here?



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Choose one of the Psalms of the day 15,45,75,105 or 135 to read at noon. Pray the Psalm back to the LORD bringing your heart and words to expression.

Prayers—Use **Colossians 1:9-14** in your prayer time.

## Day 2 Tuesday, January 16th

### Focused on Jesus Christ

In Paul writing to the church at Colossae he is holding up Jesus as the all-sufficient leader and sustainer of everything. Take your time reading through and identifying what is said of Christ in **Colossians 1:15–29**.

1:14,16,19,22; 2:3,6,7,9,10,11,12,15; 3:20; 4:7,17 all highlight central themes of being “in Christ.” What stands out?

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Notice Paul's ministry labour to the Christians in Colossians **1:24-2:5**. What is so important to Paul in his ministry? What do you see happening or not happening at Ambassador that reflects this section of verses?

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### E100 Bible reading—Luke 1:1-80

Focus in on vv67-79 and the various aspects of salvation listed in Zechariah's prophecy.



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Choose one of the Psalms of the day 16,46,76,106 or 136 to read at noon. Pray the Psalm back to the LORD bringing your heart and words to expression.

Prayers - Who is on my heart today to pray for? Did something come to light that I need to repent of?