

Notes

January 6th, 2019

Dear Church family,

I can't forget this one statement of AW Tozer that has stuck with me over the years; "We have as much of God as we want." Are you satisfied with how much of God you now have? I'm not. I invite you to engage in this church-wide prayer and fasting week. The Lord will bless you richly as you give up food to spend more time with him.

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, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday.

Our theme is "Knowing God." This guide will take you through a study prepared at Bible.com called "Knowing God: Prayer & Fasting." Each day a study will focus our attention on a facet of better knowing the God we follow.

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). Let's seek after God this week and discover how great he is!

Humbly we come, pastor Scott

Why should I fast?

God wants his disciples to fast.

Matthew 6:16-17

“And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face.

Jesus said “when you fast” in the context of also saying “when you pray” and “when you give”. Jesus himself fasted 40 days and nights.

The early church fasted.

Acts 13:3 (also Acts 14:23)

“Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

Matthew 9:15

“the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast.”

Fasting demonstrates humility before God.

Psalms 35:13

“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer kept returning to my bosom.

Fasting for Righteous Behaviour

Isaiah 58:6-7

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house?

We fast to align ourselves with God's will to be a father to the fatherless and the orphans and widows. Isaiah 58:3-4 details the false motivations for fasting in seeking self-pleasure and avoiding the welfare of others.

Notes

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.

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

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.

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

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?

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

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?

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.

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:

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 12th

Philippians 3:3-14

“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.” - Philippians 3:10-11 (NIV)

REFLECT

1. According to Paul in verses 5-7 what were the things he considered as “valuable” before but realized them to be “worthless?”
2. Aside from the list of things he mentioned in verses 5-7, what does he say in verse 8 twice which he likewise considers “rubbish?”
3. The word “know” means to know experientially. What 3 areas did Paul identify through which he wanted to experientially know Christ in verse 10?

RESPOND

1. As you reflect on what Paul considered to be worthless come up with your own list of worthless background, accomplishments or ambitions when compared to the value of knowing Jesus better. How does clinging on to those worthless things hinder you from having more of God?
2. Paul mentions in verse 14 that he is dead set in pursuing a goal for which God has called him. Do you have a similar goal? If not, what heavenly goal does God want you to adopt in your own life. Ask the Lord to reveal to you. Share to your accountability leader.

“Until you have given up yourself to Him, you will not have a real self.” - C.S. Lewis

Ephesians 1:15-21 Ephesians 2:1-7 Romans 8:11

“And I pray that you... may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” - Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV)

REFLECT

1. Having listed down each of the spiritual blessings mentioned in Ephesians 1:3-14, what is the main prayer of the Apostle Paul in our passage today which he mentions in verses 17 and 18a (NASB)?
2. Paul enumerates 3 things that a believer will realize in verses 18b-19 as a result of knowing God better. What are those?
3. In verses 19-21, how did Paul describe the great power that is available for us if only we will know God better? [He explains this power more in Eph. 2:1-7, Romans 8:11, and Eph. 3:16-19].

RESPOND

1. From the example of Paul in verses 17-18, how should we pray for ourselves and also for others? Why is this type of prayer important?
2. How will knowing God and realizing His “hope”, His “riches”, and His great “power” for you (vv. 18-19) help you through all the challenges in your life? How can they help you in your present problems?

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” - Psalm 42:1-2a (NIV)

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 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

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 10th

Ephesians 1:3-14

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." - Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)

REFLECT

1. The passage enumerates the spiritual blessings of being in Christ. List down the blessings from each of the 3 persons of the Trinity. How are each of those blessings true in your own life?
2. The phrase "in Christ" and "in Him" are repeated 9x in verses 3-13. What is the importance of this in connection with the spiritual blessings mentioned? What does it mean to be "in Christ?" Is it possible to know God apart from Christ?
3. According to verse 13 how were you "included in Christ" (NIV)? Enumerate the 3 steps in the process based on this verse.

RESPOND

From the list of spiritual blessings you made in Reflect 1 compose a love letter to the Lord that expresses your gratitude and deep respect to Him.

"The private and personal blessings we enjoy - the blessings of immunity, safeguard, liberty and integrity - deserve the thanksgiving of a whole life." - Jeremy Taylor

Join us for prayer at 6:30 pm

Luke 24:13-48

"...Two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus... As they were talking and thinking about what had happened, Jesus came near and started walking along beside them. But they did not know who he was." - Luke 24:15-16 (CEV)

REFLECT

1. Verse 16 says that although Jesus Himself joined 2 of His own followers "they did not know who he was" (CEV). Later on in verse 31 "they knew who he was." What do you think prevented the disciples from initially recognizing Jesus? What was the implication when Jesus had to explain the Scriptures to them again in verse 27 before they would recognize Him?
2. In v. 19, how did Cleopas perceive Jesus to be up to this point? What important truth is missing in his description of Jesus?
3. What does his account of Jesus in verses 20-24 reveal about Cleopas? For what was he rebuked by Jesus in v. 25?

RESPOND

1. Jesus explained Moses and all the prophets (a reference to the Scriptures during those times) to the 2 disciples in v. 27. In verses 44-46, He also explained the Scriptures to the eleven and "those who were with them." How important is knowing and believing in the words of God in having a clear knowledge of who God is in your life?
2. What concrete steps will you do this year so that you will grow in the word of God?

"Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfold as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul." - J. I. Packer

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 7th

Exodus 33:7-23 Exodus 34:1-8 John 13:35 Romans 8:14

"Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend." - Exodus 33:11a

REFLECT

1. How does verse 11 describe how the Lord would speak to Moses? A sample conversation is portrayed in verses 12-23. How would you compare this to how you speak to God during your quiet times with Him? What do we learn about our own relationship with Jesus in John 15:15?

2. Name the 3 prayer requests of Moses in chapter 33:12-18. What do they reveal about the heart of Moses? And what was the purpose of the prayer request of Moses in verse 13?

RESPOND

1. As you spend time with the Lord starting this week journal what are the things that you personally discover about God just like Moses did after the Lord appeared to him in Exodus 34:5-8.

2. What do the Lord's words in Exodus 33:19, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion" reveal about God's character? How submissive are you to that truth even with regards to your own petitions to God?

3. Why did Moses want God's presence to go with them in verses 15-16? In the NT how are disciples distinguished from other people (e.g. John 13:35, Romans 8:14)? How true are those in your life?

"Some people pray just to pray and some people pray to know God." - Andrew Murray

Day 2 Tuesday, January 8th

2 Timothy 3:1-7 Galatians 5:16-18

"...Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." - 2 Timothy 3:7 (NASB)

REFLECT

1. How do you differentiate "learning" in verse 7 from "knowing the truth"? What danger does mere "learning" pose to today's "Christians"?

2. Will genuinely knowing God prevent you from developing those traits mentioned in vv. 1-6? Why or why not?

3. Verse 6 describes ungodliness among certain church people who are still in bondage to the flesh either as a victimizer or as a willing victim. They are "led on by various impulses" (NASB). What should you do to not be led by your impulses (Gal. 5:16-18)?

RESPOND

1. Go through the list of the ungodly traits and use the dictionary to get the definitions of unclear terms. Then ask the Lord to reveal to you manifestations of any of those traits in your life. Ask God's forgiveness.

2. Verse 5 (GWT) says, "They will appear to have a godly life but they will not let its power change them." Name an attitude (e.g. self-righteousness), a habit (e.g. absence of reflection on the message after the service), or any barrier (e.g. bad company) that prevents you from being changed by God's word? What steps will you take to correct the problem?

"The church is in trouble. Superficiality, immaturity and mediocrity has characterized the church. Carnality and compromise has robbed the church of the spiritual power and spiritual authority to make a difference in this world." - Edmund Chan

Join us for prayer at 6:30 pm.