

PRAYER & FASTING

JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 3, 2024

Join us as we Pray and Fast.

Let's begin 2024 together in an amazingly powerful way. **Sunday, January 28 through Saturday, February 3**, we are coming together as a church for a time of prayer and fasting. We would like to honor God by turning toward him, humbling our heart and refocusing our heart to worship him and him alone.

What does it mean to Pray and Fast?

Prayer is communication with God. It's a two-way conversation in which you talk to God and He talks to you. Fasting is a spiritual discipline in which one goes without food for a specific period of time. Fasting, when accompanied by prayer, connects us to our Heavenly Father in a place of humility and consecration unto him. It's as if we say, "I am choosing to focus less on me and the things of this earth, and more on you, God." By doing so, we draw near to God and as a result, we recognize with a heightened sense, that God has in turn drawn near to us. (James 4:8)

Fasting Types

There are several types of fasting. Ask the Lord which type He would have you participate in. He will honor your best sacrifice.

Complete Fast

This type of fast involves drinking only water or sometimes juice, but abstaining from all food, for a period of time.

Partial Fast

This type of fast comes in a variety of different fashions. It may look like one of the following for you:

Elimination of certain foods: This type of fast is described in the book of Daniel. For three weeks Daniel abstained only from "delicacies" like meat. (Daniel 10:3).

Giving up one meal a day for a time: For the duration of your fast, you could choose one meal to abstain from. Instead of eating during that time, you could set aside time to worship God and seek Him in prayer.

Restricting the time of day that you eat: You could choose to refrain from eating during a part of the day. For instance, from 6:00am to 3:00pm or from sun-up to sundown. Or you could do a 24-hour fast, for instance from, dinner the first day to dinner the second day.

For more practical information about how to do a Biblical Fast, see this great resource created by cru.org.

[How to Do a Biblical Fast](#)

Our goal for this time of Prayer and Fasting

The Bible contains the greatest love story ever told. It begins with God, for God is love.

Love is not just something that God does; love is something God “is.” God’s love is not just a feeling, but a choice to unselfishly extend Himself on behalf of another. In fact, the Bible defines love this way in 1 John 3:16 (NIV), *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”* With a deep desire to love us, God came to earth as a man and made a way. Love makes a way for relationship! And Jesus in the prayer He prayed to the Father on the night He was betrayed shared his deepest desire for each of us: *“that the love you have loved me with may be in them.”* (John 17:26 CSB) What a gift!

This week as we set aside time to pray and fast, we’d like to invite you to think about God’s love, and the relationship that He’s invited us into. It’s God’s desire that we could say, just like John in 1 John 4:16 (NLT), *“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.”*

And this is our prayer for you during the next seven days:

“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints 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 3:17-19 NIV)

Daily Prayer and Fasting Focus

What better way to experience our amazing God during this time of prayer and fasting than to intentionally spend time focusing on God’s love story, as revealed by the Word of God.

Each day during our 7-day fast, we invite you to read the Daily Prayer and Fasting Focus and meditate on God’s Word. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you things about God, His love, and you, His child.

Take a Moment to Meditate on God’s Word

Biblical meditation is the act of thinking about, considering and dwelling on Scripture. Throughout this guide you will find helpful tips for practicing the spiritual discipline of meditating on God’s Word. We encourage you to try the tips that are presented and pray that God would deepen your revelation of Him and His love for you.

Sunday, January 28

God is relational. In love, He designed us to enjoy a relationship with Him.

God is first and foremost relational. He lives in community and is who He is because of it. For all of eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have existed in relationship with each other, with love flowing between all three members of the Godhead. Amidst this relational harmony, God desired to create mankind so that we too could know Him and enjoy this kind of intimate relationship with Him.

Then God (Elohiym – Hebrew word that describes God as being one and many at the same time) said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” ...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:26-27 NIV)

When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you set in place, what is a human being that you remember him, a son of man that you look after him? You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor. (Psalm 8:2-5 CSB)

Response:

Think about all that you’ve read today. Consider: “What does this teach me about God?” and “What does this teach me about myself?” Take time to talk to God in prayer about all of these things.

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

Meditation is something that is done in partnership with the Holy Spirit. Before reading the verses, pause and ask Him to speak to you. You can pray like David: *“Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wonderful things from Your instruction [Word].”* (Psalm 119:18 CSB).

Monday, January 29

God has always loved us. His love is eternal.

God's love, like God Himself, is eternal. The Scriptures make it clear that as He existed from all eternity, there was already in His nature from all eternity the attribute of love. God didn't become loving at the time of creation, for He has always been a God of love. And the object of his love and affections? It has always been us.

Long ago the LORD said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself. (Jeremiah 31:3 NLT)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts,^[a] God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you. (Psalm 139:13-18 NIV)

Response:

Choose one of the verses that you read. Consider: "How might the truth that is presented here impact my life? What does it mean for me?" Then make a commitment in prayer to receive God's love in ways that have been revealed to you today.

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

Meditate on Scripture by reading a specific verse repeatedly. Each time you read, ponder different aspects of the verse. You may even find that you begin to memorize the verse from the repetition, which makes it easier to meditate on it throughout the day.

Tuesday, January 30

God, in love, paid a great price to bring us to Himself.

Originally made for perfect relationship with God, sin entered the world through the disobedience of mankind in the Garden of Eden and brought separation between God and every human being, including us, from that point on. Separated by sin, God couldn't stand the thought of living without us. In love, he set in motion the plan that He had designed from the beginning to solve this problem: the crucifixion of His son, Jesus Christ. His death removed the barrier between us and God, restoring us to a place of loving relationship with God.

Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10 CSB)

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:13 NIV)

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

Don't let your meditation end when your quiet time is over. God tells us to meditate on His Word day and night. (Joshua 1:8) Consider writing down the verse and placing it somewhere visible so that you may return to the truth throughout the day.

Response:

David writes in Psalm 143:5, "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all you have done; I reflect on the work of your hands." Take time today to reflect in prayer on all God did to bring you into relationship with Him.

Wednesday, January 31

God lovingly made a way for us to relate to him as members of His family. He loves us and delights in us as His children.

You and I, as a part of God's plan from the very beginning, were chosen by Him to be a part of His family. It's always been His heart's desire. Therefore, in love He chose you. Galatians 4:4-7 tells us how he did it: *"God sent his Son, born of a woman...to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship...and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."* If you are a born-again believer in Christ Jesus, you are a child of God whom He greatly delights in and an heir to all that belongs to the Father.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1 NIV)

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (Ephesians 1:4-5 NIV)

Response:

As you wait on the Lord and reflect on these verses, ask the Holy Spirit to hold these words in your mind, allowing you to contemplate them throughout the day. And then pray a simple prayer of commitment: *"Lord, I will believe your truth, and with your help, apply it to my life."*

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

Meditation requires a measure of discipline to sit quietly before God. So, don't be in a rush. David encouraged himself in Psalm 62:5, *"For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him."* Great reward comes as you seek Him.

Thursday, February 1

God loves us with a faithful love. We can trust Him as He relates to us.

When people make promises, they sometimes end up broken. Not so with God. When God makes promises, he is trustworthy to keep those promises. He will keep them without fail. As we read the Bible, we see God's faithfulness to keep His covenant of love with His people, even to a thousand generations. (Deuteronomy 7:9). And this comes at great cost to Him, the life of His Son Jesus. Because we can see evidence of God's trustworthiness, we know that we can trust His faithful love towards us, just as He promised.

The faithful love of the Lord never ends His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT)

The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out:

"Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. (Exodus 34:6-7 NLT)

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

When choosing Scripture to meditate on, start "small". Choose a short phrase, a word, or a concept from the verses you read and think about it in depth. Ask yourself, "What do these words from God say?" and "What do they mean?"

Response:

What word or phrase stood out to you in these verses? Take time to talk to God in prayer about what you've seen. Thank Him for the way you've been encouraged, challenged or motivated by the truth about His love.

Friday, February 2

God loves us with a relentless, loyal love.

The entire Bible tells the story of the relentless, loyal love of God. The ultimate example of God's loyal love was to send Jesus Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. His love covers all our sins and reconciles us to Him. In the Bible, our loving God is seen as the Father who patiently waits for His lost child and welcomes home his prodigal son with joy. Since the beginning of time, undeserving sinners, prone to wandering, have been the objects of His grace, ever-renewing mercy, and relentless love.

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8 NIV)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35, 38-39 NIV)

Response:

Because God's Word is the truth, you can rely upon it. Pray in agreement with today's truth and personalize it.

"God, you love me with a relentless and loyal love."

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

Find a quiet place to sit with the Lord. Take time to be silent. Prepare to receive His communication as He expresses Himself to you in the verses you read. You'll be amazed at what you can hear when you position yourself to listen.

Saturday, February 3

God invites us know the love He has for us and to live in it. We love because He loved us first.

God takes great delight when we choose to live in relationship with Him, knowing and believing His love. It's what we were made for. You can live the abundant life in full when you let God's love permeate you and flow out from you. Jesus shared God's desire for our new life with Him when he said, *"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* (John 13:34 NLT). And with the love of God in you, you are equipped to perpetually share love with those around you.

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:9-11 NIV)

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:12 NIV)

A Moment for Meditation

Try this:

Read the selected verses slowly and thoughtfully. Then read them softly out loud. If you hear what you are reading, you will find that the material is more easily impressed on your mind and imagination.

Response:

As you have been encouraged by God's truth, make a commitment to Him in prayer to live in His love. Ask God to help you grow as you learn to share His love with those around you.