



We aspire to be beacons of God's love and truth ...

A CALL TO FASTING AND PRAYER ON THURSDAYS: September 24 to December 17, 2020

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7: 14

The Invitation:

Join Pastor Stuart Spencer on Thursdays for a day of full or partial fasting. However or whenever you fast on Thursdays, be sure to participate in our Evening Prayer service at 7:00 p.m. If you are unable to fast for medical reasons, plan to make Thursday a special day of prayer for yourself, our church and our nation. **If there are medical or health reasons that prohibit you from fasting, please do not fast. If you're uncertain, consult your doctor before fasting.**

- Plan for a day of fasting and prayer on Saturday, September 26 called The Return. *The Return* is a movement, an appointed time and a specific day set apart for one purpose: the return to God by coming before His presence in humility, in sincerity in prayer, and repentance. See our Events page on our website for additional information.

Resources for Fasting:

- David Clayton, *Revival Starts Here: A Short Conversation on Prayer, Fasting, and Revival for Beginners Like Me*. A Disciple.org resource
- A Fasting Starter Kit from CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ): <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/fasting-starter-kit.html>
- Just Disciple: <https://justdisciple.com/fasting-tips/>

Getting Started Fasting:

Fasting is for this world, for stretching our hearts to get fresh air beyond the pain and trouble around us. And it is for the battle against the sin and weakness inside us. We express our discontent with our sinful selves and our longing for more of Christ.

Adapted from Desiring God.org

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/fasting-for-beginners>

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1. Start small.

Don't go from no fasting to attempting a weeklong fast. Start with one meal; maybe fast one meal a week for several weeks. Then try two meals, and work your way up to a daylong fast. *It's not recommended that you abstain from water during a fast of any length.*

2. Plan what you'll do instead of eating.

Fasting isn't merely an act of self-deprivation, but a spiritual discipline for seeking more of God's fullness. Which means we should have a plan for *what positive pursuit to undertake* in the time it normally takes to eat. One significant part of fasting is the time it creates for prayer and meditation on God's word or some act of love for others. Before diving headlong into a fast, craft a simple plan. Connect it to your purpose for the fast. Identify what that is and design a focus to replace the time you would have spent eating. *Without a purpose and plan, it's not Christian fasting; it's just going hungry.*

3. Consider how it will affect others.

Fasting is no license to be unloving. It would be sad to lack concern and care for others around us because of this expression of heightened focus on God. Love for God and for neighbor go together. If anything, others should even feel more loved and cared for when we're fasting.

Praying While Fasting and Seeking the Lord

- **Humility:** God despises a prideful and haughty spirit. To return to God, we must exhibit humility and our utter dependence on Christ. As you seek Him, pray for the Holy Spirit to expose any trace of pride in your heart. Allow the Spirit of God to deliver you and bestow a contrite heart in its place. **(See Zephaniah 2:3; James 4:6; Isaiah 2: 17)**
- **Turning from evil:** For God to heal our nation, we must turn from our evil ways. When we humble ourselves, pray, and repent of our personal, national, and corporate sins, we will experience revival, renewal and healing, which will usher in the favor of God to cleanse His church. We invite God to return to us as we return to Him.

(See Psalm 139: 23 – 24; Isaiah 11:4; Colossians 3:5; Revelation 3:16, I John 2: 15 – 17)

- **Repentance:** Repentance is a renewing of the mind that produces a 180-degree turn in our hearts and minds. It is not a one-time occurrence but a way of daily life for the disciple. What God requires for true and authentic repentance is an admission of sins we've committed, sorrow for the will of God we've ignored or violated, and the desire to produce the fruit of repentance: joy and freedom. Pray for the strength to repent of your wrongs and so that God would turn our nation with mercy.
(See Psalm 51: 10 – 13; Matthew 4: 17; Mark 7: 21 – 23; Psalm 85: 1 – 6)
- **Hope:** Many people do not seek the face of God because they feel an utter sense of hopelessness in their lives. Allow God to bring to your mind those whose eyes are blinded by a spirit of despair to find their hope in the only source for true, lasting hope—Jesus Christ. Pray for the salvation of many people—children, youth, young adults and adults of every age.
(See Romans 15: 13; John 14: 27; Jeremiah 29: 11; Matthew 11:28; Psalm 34:18)
- **Transformation:** The truest measure of repentance is a changed life—turning away from serving yourself and turning to God and bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22, 23). The goal is to see our lives transformed by the grace of God and for His people to follow with all their hearts. **(See Isaiah 40: 31; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Romans 12; 2; Ezekiel 36: 26)**