

Day 19: March 7

PRAYER AND FASTING  
WHILE ON  
THE ROAD TO THE RESURRECTION



## **PURPOSE:**

To prepare the Mt. Pleasant Church Family for a 21-Day of Prayer and Fasting while journeying on the “Road to Resurrection” – Prayerfully this will be a sacred time to draw closer to God as we prepare to celebrate Christ’s resurrection.

## **THE JOURNEY:**

Our congregation-wide fast was scheduled to begin Ash Wednesday, February 18 and conclude on March 10. During these 21 days, you are invited to seek God’s presence with renewed intentionality. James 4:8a says, “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” You are also welcomed to attend a 15 Min Prayer Call each morning at 6:30 a.m. during this period which will be led by one of MPBC’s Ministers.

Dial-In: **1-848-220-3300** Conference ID: **1571206#**

## **INVITATION:**

Perhaps God is calling you to step beyond your comfort zone-to try something new or seek Him like never before. When we quiet ourselves, we position our hearts to hear His voice. There are treasures He longs to reveal, wisdom He desires to impart, and breakthroughs awaiting those who pursue Him.

Scripture reminds us in **Matthew 17:21**: “However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Some circumstances in our lives will only shift through dedicated prayer and fasting. Would you risk missing what God has specifically for you simply because you didn’t participate?

# PRAYER AND FASTING EMPOWERS THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER



The physical sense of our dependence upon God will drive us to pray depending on Him and Him alone. Fasting fuels prayer by ridding us of self-reliance and independence. It fuels prayer by heightening our sense of reliance and dependence upon God.

# WHAT IS PRAYER AND FASTING

PRAYER	FASTING
<p>Prayer is your means of communications with God. Your relationship and intimacy with God are strengthened and enhanced as you spend quality time praying with Him. Just as you cultivate earthly relationships by spending time together, you must also cultivate your heavenly relationship with the Lord by spending time in His presence and communicating with Him in prayer. Not just talking with Him but listening to Him.</p>	<p>Fasting is the discipline of abstaining from food (or pleasurable activity) for a given period of time in order to devote oneself more to prayer and the Word. Prayer is connecting with God; on the other hand, fasting is disconnecting ourselves from the world.</p>

## WHY PRAY AND FAST

Some things will only be changed because of prayer and fasting, not to mention faith in Jesus Christ. Prayer, combined with fasting, is an assertive discipline modeled throughout Scripture. If there is deep need in your life or the life of our church, we should not miss the opportunity to impact the outcome because we decided not to exercise the discipline of fasting and prayer.

## WHY PRAY AND FAST (Cont.)

Here are some reasons that patriarchs and others fasted in the Bible.

- **In repentance:** Through Samuel's exhortation to the House of Israel, they fasted and prayed and repented of their sins in worshipping strange gods. (1 Samuel 7:3-6)
- **When seeking forgiveness:** The children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and ashes as they stood in confession of their sins. (Nehemiah 9:1-3).
- **When afraid for their lives:** 2 Chronicles 20:3. "*And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.*"

## WHY PRAY AND FAST (Cont.)

- **When seeking clear direction:** At the missionary-sending church at Antioch while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit gave direction to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work of ministry. And it said after they fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (*Acts 13:2-3*)
- **When it was felt the whole assembly needed to get involved:** Joel 1:14 said, “Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.”

# IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND WHILE FASTING

Too often, the focus of fasting is on the lack of food. Instead, the purpose of fasting should be to take your eyes off the things of this world to focus completely on God. Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God, and to ourselves, that we are serious about our relationship with Him. Fasting helps us gain a new perspective and a renewed reliance upon God.

*In the presence of God  
we are continually  
renewed, rejuvenated  
and refreshed*

# BENEFITS OF PRAYER

## **Avenue to Obtain Directions for Life**

Jeremiah 42:2-3

## **God Promises to Hear and Answer**

Isaiah 65:24

## **God Promises to Answer and Bring Revelation**

Jeremiah 33:3

## **Alternative to Anxiety**

Philippians 4:4-7

## **Bring Rewards**

Matthew 6:6

## **Releases the Healing and Forgiveness of God**

2 Chronicles 7:14

## **Helps Overcome Temptation**

Luke 22:40

## **The Holy Spirit Aids in Prayer**

Romans 8:26-27

## **Brings Physical and Spiritual Healing**

James 5:16

## **Provides Power**

Matthew 7:7-8

# 10 Scriptures to Pray for Our Church

1. Pray that the church stays true to God's message – and we proclaim it whether or not it's convenient. (2 Timothy 4:2)
2. Pray that the church would be deeply committed to seeking God in prayer. (Colossians 4:2)
3. Pray that the church will boldly share Jesus – the ONLY way and ONLY hope! (Acts 4:12)
4. Pray that the church will worship, adore and praise God, in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)
5. Pray for the pastor and church leaders to follow Christ and serve humbly. Pray for protection of their witness and example. (1 Peter 5:2-3)
6. Pray for the church's dedication and perseverance to press believers onto maturity in discipleship. (Colossians 1:28-29)
7. Pray for more servants to join Jesus in His Kingdom work. (Matthew 9:37-38)
8. Pray that church leaders prepare and equip believers for service. (Ephesians 4:11-12)
9. Pray that the church clings to its first love. (Revelation 2:4-5)
10. Pray that the church will trust Jesus to grow the church, in His way and in His power. (Matthew 16:18)

# TIPS FOR A BETTER PRAYER LIFE

Pray at the beginning of your day - Psalm 63

Pray throughout your day - Luke 18:1

Pray at the end of your day - Matthew 14:23

Pray sincerely from your heart - Matthew 6:7

Pray privately - Matthew 6:6

Pray as a lifestyle - 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray, expecting an answer - Jeremiah 33:3

Pray the word of God - Hebrews 4:12

Pray with your whole heart - Jeremiah 29:13

Pray with faith - Mark 11:24

Pray for others - Ephesians 6:16

Pray and then obey - 1 John 3:22

Pray with a clean heart - 1 John 1:9

# TYPES OF FAST

TYPE OF FAST	WHAT IT INVOLVES	BIBLICAL EXAMPLES
Normal Fast	Abstaining from all forms of food while drinking only water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-2, Matt 4:2-3)</li> <li>▪ Abraham's servant while on his mission (Genesis 24:33)</li> </ul>
Absolute Fast or Total Fast	<p>Abstaining from both food and water completely.</p> <p><b>Important caution:</b> This type of fast requires extreme care and should only be practiced for a maximum of three days, as it can be physically dangerous if extended longer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Esther and the Jews before she approached the king (Esther 4:16)</li> <li>▪ Paul, after his encounter with Christ (Acts 9:9)</li> </ul>
Partial Fast	<p>Selectively abstaining from certain foods or following specific eating patterns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Daniel Fast:</b> Consuming only fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds. Water and juices allowed.</li> <li>▪ <b>Selective Restriction:</b> Abstaining from specific categories like meats, nuts, seeds, and water.</li> <li>▪ <b>Intermittent Fasting:</b> Restricting eating to certain time windows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daniel's refusal of royal food and wine (Daniel 1:12-15)</li> </ul>

# THINGS TO FAST FROM BESIDE FOOD

<b>Digital/Technology Fasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Social Media</b> – Abstaining from platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.</li><li>▪ <b>Screen Time</b> – Limiting or eliminating TV, video games, streaming services</li><li>▪ <b>Smartphone Usage</b> – Reducing phone time or setting specific no-phone hours</li><li>▪ <b>Digital News</b> – Taking a break from news consumption</li></ul>
<b>Consumption Fasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Shopping</b> – No non-essential purchases for a set period</li><li>▪ <b>Fast Fashion</b> – Avoiding clothing purchases</li><li>▪ <b>Amazon/Online Shopping</b> – Specifically cutting out impulse online buys</li><li>▪ <b>Dining Out</b> – Cooking at home instead of restaurant meals</li><li>▪ <b>Subscription Services</b> – Pausing or canceling recurring services</li></ul>
<b>Food and Beverage Related</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Meat</b> – Practicing vegetarianism temporarily</li><li>▪ <b>Caffeine</b> – Giving up coffee, tea, or energy drinks</li><li>▪ <b>Sugar</b> – Eliminating added sugars and sweets</li><li>▪ <b>Processed Foods</b> – Focusing on whole, unprocessed foods only</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle Fasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Complaining</b> - Consciously avoiding negative talk</li><li>▪ <b>Gossip</b> – Refraining from speaking about others</li><li>▪ <b>Multitasking</b> – Focusing on one activity at a time</li><li>▪ <b>Rushing</b> – Intentionally slowing down daily activities</li><li>▪ <b>Noise</b> – Creating periods of silence in your day.</li></ul>

# BENEFITS OF FASTING

## 1. Fasting Increases Faith and Power With God

“Why could we not cast it out...This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:19-21)

## 2. Fasting Increases Our Sensitivity To The Holy Spirit

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2)

## 3. Fasting Brings Guidance And Clear Direction

“Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:3)

## 4. Fasting Overcomes Evil Strategies Against Us

“And Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast...and the enemies of Judah were defeated” (2 Chronicles 20:1-22)

# BENEFITS OF FASTING (CONT.)

## 5. Fasting Brings Divine Intervention In Times Of Crisis

“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer” (Ezra 8:23)

## 6. Fasting Removes Pride From Our Hearts

“I humbled my soul with fasting” (Psalm 35:13)

## 7. Fasting Prepares Us For An Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit

“Announce a time off fasting, call the people together...And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people” (Joel 2:15, 28)

# TIPS ON FASTING

**Consult Your Physician — Everyone should consult their physician before beginning any fast, especially:**

- Those under medical care
- People taking medications
- Individuals with existing health conditions
- Anyone with a history of eating disorders

**Breaking Your Fast — When your designated fasting period ends, transition gradually:**

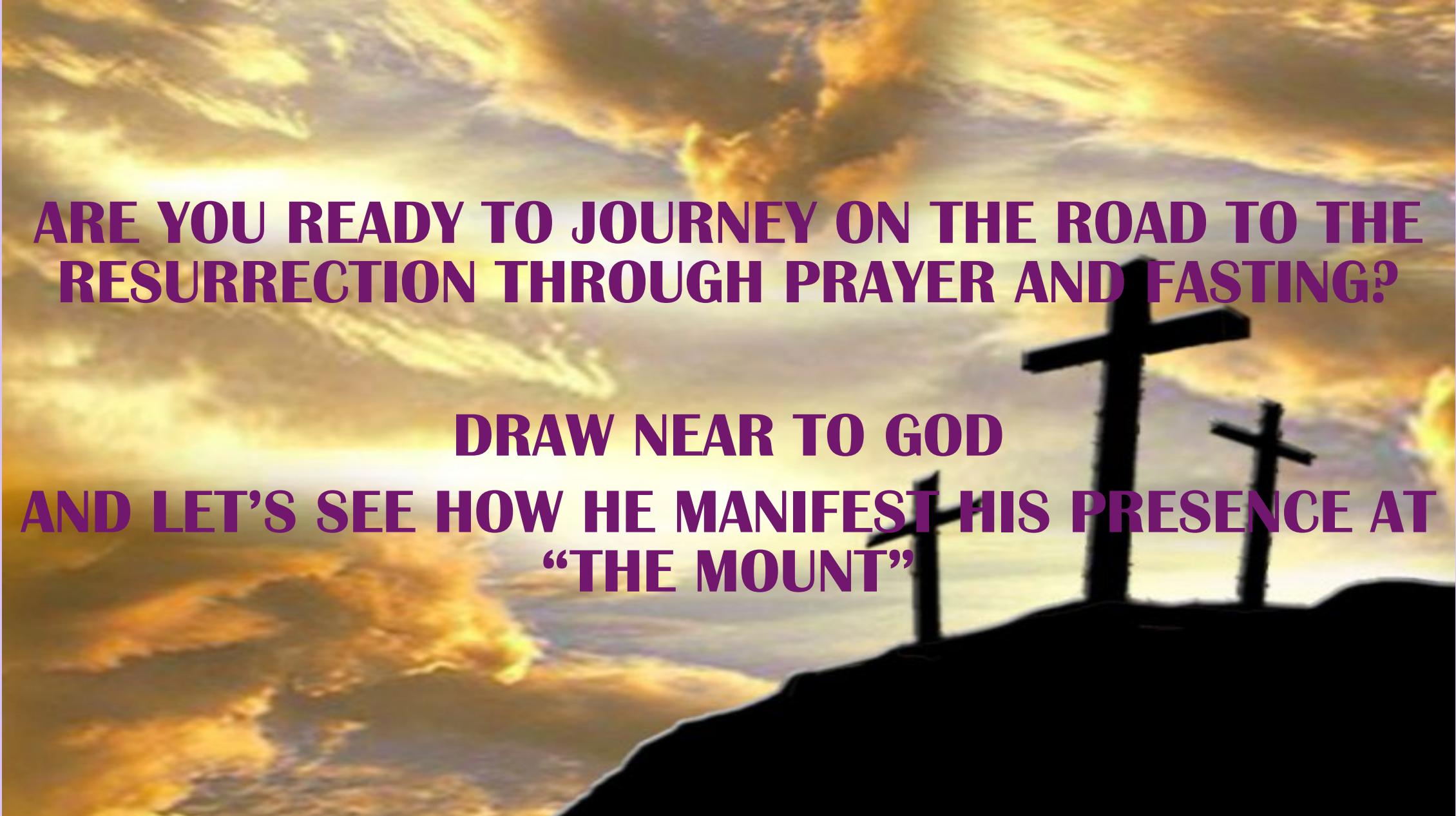
- Do not rush back to solid foods
- Begin with small portions and simple foods
- Allow your body time to readjust
- Serious side effects can occur from breaking a fast too quickly

**Spiritual Focus — When cravings arise:**

- Recognize these as the flesh opposing the spirit
- Use these moments as triggers for prayer
- Redirect your attention to praising God
- Meditate on Scripture during times of temptation

**Pure Intentions — Fast as unto the Lord:**

- Present your fast as a form of worship
- Offer it as a sacrifice to God (Zechariah 7:5)
- Let it be a time of seeking His presence (Acts 13:2)



**ARE YOU READY TO JOURNEY ON THE ROAD TO THE  
RESURRECTION THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING?**

**DRAW NEAR TO GOD  
AND LET'S SEE HOW HE MANIFEST HIS PRESENCE AT  
“THE MOUNT”**