



Fasting and Prayer Guide

When we fast, we turn away from gratifying our natural appetites and turn toward feasting on God and his Word. In a very real way, fasting awakens us to just how much we are driven and controlled by fleshly desires. This recognition calls us to repent and acknowledge the truth of Jesus' declaration: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

We recognize that some people, for medical or other reasons, may not be able to fast from food. For them, we recommend fasting from something else that characterizes their daily life—like social media, television, or some other habitual activity. Remember: fasting is not a way for us to impress or manipulate God; it is a time to recognize our complete dependence on him. What you fast from is less important than what you are fasting for.

Suggestions for a Successful Fast

1. Pray and ask God to reveal himself to you during this time.
2. Determine the length of your fast ahead of time and plan for how and when you will break the fast. You may choose to fast for 24 hours, for a set period of the day (such as dawn to dusk), or for a specific number of meals.
3. Be sure to stay hydrated. Water and juices are excellent for this. Avoid caffeine and processed sugar, both of which contribute to dehydration.
4. The goal is not merely to refrain from eating but to replace eating with prayer. So plan for specific times of prayer through the day and be careful not to fill up your day with activities that keep you from praying.
5. Remember that others may be impacted by your choice to fast—family, roommates, etc. Be sure to consider and plan for how this will affect them.
6. Keep your Bible and a journal close by. You will want to be alert to what God might say to you as you wait before him, making notes of any insights you gain.

Prayer Points

1. Prayer of Adoration

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” Genesis 1:31

“How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you make them all; the earth is full of your creatures.” Psalm 104:24

Look up at the vast sky, consider all the beautiful green trees and grass, listen to the birds. All of it is God’s handiwork. It originated in his imagination and was created by his great power. And it shouts how great and beautiful and glorious and creative and powerful he is. Let creation lead your heart to worship God.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

Hebrews 1:1-3

The One who created all things by his powerful word is the same One who sustains all things by that same word. He is sovereign over all things, faithfully working in every situation to accomplish his good purposes. Take a moment to marvel at the sovereign goodness of God. Thank him that he is working all things together for our good, even when we do not understand. Rejoice that, though the enemy intends destruction in this current crisis, our God means it for good.

2. Prayer of Confession

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ... But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” Romans 5:12, 15

God’s incredible creation has been marred by sin, sin for which we all are responsible. Paradise lost. Death spread to all men because all sin. The effects of your sin are devastating, for yourself and for others. What do you need to confess? What idols do you need to cast down? Where has a love of comfort and seeking life in things displaced your love for God?

Consider again the sovereign goodness of God. Where has fear caused you to doubt the faithful love of God? Confess where you have foolishly violated James 4:13–16, acting as if tomorrow was promised to you. End your time of confession by giving thanks to God for the redemption and forgiveness purchased for us by Christ Jesus.

3. Prayer of Humility Before God

“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:12

Certain life events bring our mortality into focus. Our weakness and vulnerability gets exposed. Ask God to give you a humble heart that rests in his sovereignty. And pray for wisdom as you live each day in light of eternity. Give God thanks for the promise of eternity with him through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

4. Prayer for Awakening and Salvation

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” Mark 6:34

As you consider your neighbors and those who live around you, ask God to give you a heart of compassion for those who do not know him. Pray that God would bring an awakening to your city through this current crisis. Ask God to help people see their need for him and bring many to salvation. Pray specifically for your One, asking God to use this season to turn their hearts toward him.

5. Prayer for Provision

“The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.” Psalm 145:13b–16

Every single one of us is dependent on God to provide for us and sustain us. And the Scriptures remind us over and over that God cares for the widow and the orphan and the alien. His heart is turned toward those who are oppressed and cast down. Pray that God would use his people to provide for the needy. But also ask God to provide in miraculous ways like he did for the widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17) or the multitude he fed with a few fish and loaves of bread.

6. Prayer for the Church

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who

had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:42–47

Pray that our churches would be marked by unity and love for one another, that we would care well for each other. Pray that we would be blessed so that we can be a blessing to the communities where God has placed us. Ask God to give wisdom and direction to our pastors and leaders as they shepherd the flock of God.

7. Prayer for God’s Mission

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” Luke 10:2

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” Psalm 46:10

The heart of our God longs for those who are separated from him. He is not willing that any should perish. He promised that he would be exalted among the nations. And to that end, he told us to pray that workers would be sent out to preach the good news.

Pray for an increased willingness to go, asking God to stir your own heart for the nations. Pray that hundreds, even thousands, would go to the mission field because of this. Pray that he would open doors for missionaries to go into all the earth. Ask God to protect those who are on the field now and keep them healthy and safe so that they can continue to be a light in darkness. Pray that God would make this a season of unprecedented advance of the gospel.