



August 17—September 10, 2025

**Welcome to our Guide for 25 Days of Response:** a special time of Thanksgiving, Prayer, Giving & Fasting as we celebrate all that God has done in our midst since we began the 2025 Vision, kick off our 2025-2026 ministry year, and seek His Vision for 2026 and Beyond. Whether you are newer to FIRST or have been here for decades, we are excited to have you journey with us over the course of these 25 Days!

First a quick note. **This is *just* a guide.** It is meant to be helpful and does not have to be viewed as an ‘assignment.’ Feel free to use part or all or none of it—whatever is useful in directing your attention on Jesus heading into this new season of life, ministry, mission, and vision.

Here’s the deal... **YOU are invited to pray and fast with us over the course of these 25 Days to ask God to reveal Himself and accomplish His purposes in your own life, and also in the Family we call First Baptist!** If prayer is new, uncomfortable, or hard for you...that’s okay! *We’re here to learn together.* If fasting seems daunting...we agree! *You’re in good company.* Bring whatever courage and commitment God will help you muster and do what you are able because we believe our Heavenly Father’s heart responds to His children when we respond to Him in these ways! No matter how simple or extravagant your response, He will bless you where you are and lead you deeper on the journey of faith in Christ.

**Over the course of the 25 Days you are encouraged to consider fasting in addition to prayer.** *Fasting is simply setting aside something, typically food, to redirect our attention in prayer to God.* Now, we are not recommending fasting for 40 days straight like Jesus—more like inviting you over the next 25 days to consider: one or two days a week of intentionally skipping a meal, fasting for an entire day, fasting from sunup to sundown on Wednesdays and Fridays like the early church did, or fasting from other specific things, be it food, activities, media, etc. **If you have never fasted before and want to learn more, we encourage you to check out the great info available at the end of this guide or contact a pastor as we would love to help you!**

**You are also being invited to prayerfully consider giving a special monetary offering to the Lord in celebration of all that He has done in our lives and in our church family!** As a fun way to encourage everyone to participate in this special offering no matter one’s age,

income, or stage of life, we invite you to consider a gift utilizing the number “25!” *For example, for children, youth, or those with lesser means, maybe you save up quarters (\$.25) to give as an offering. Perhaps your gratitude for what God has done leads you to give \$2.50 or \$25 as a special offering. God may call you, or your love and joy may compel you, to give \$250, or \$2,500, or even more to the Lord.*

**You can, of course give a special gift of ANY amount during the 25 Days** as a way to worship, thank, and bless the Lord, and fuel His ongoing work in and through our church family, ministries, and missionaries! There will be special envelopes, designated giving boxes, and a drop-down option in our online giving portal to give this special offering. **Anything given for this special offering should be over and above your regular giving, and please be at peace if you are not able to give a special gift at this time!**

*As you are using this guide, here are a few things to know:*

- **First**, you will find a theme (Thanksgiving, Praying, Giving, and Fasting) for each of the four weeks. This will set the focus of each week’s prayers, scriptures, and prompts.
- **Second**, we provided a short prayer for each week. We encourage you to utilize this prayer, or put it in your own words, throughout each week, praying it multiple times throughout your day and, in doing so, turning your attention to God and what He is doing.
- **Third**, we provided Scripture passages for each week’s theme. We encourage you to read and utilize them in whatever way is best for you! For example: prayerfully read them all every day, spread them out across the week, or focus on one to meditate on or memorize.
- **Lastly**, you have been given two prompts for each specific day: a question to reflect on and a prayer prompt to pray through. These are simple and short, so take as long as you’d like on them and follow the Spirit’s lead as you ponder and pray. The important thing is to simply do it.

Also, if you are looking for other ways that you can partner with us as we launch into our 2025-2026 ministry year and seek God’s direction for His Vision for 2026 and beyond, here are several ideas. Choose one or more as God leads:

*First*, make every effort to worship with us, ideally in person, every Sunday this year.

*Second*, pray throughout the year ahead for God's clear direction as we seek Him and discern His Vision for this next season of life and ministry.

*Third*, serve in one of our many wonderful ministries this year if you're not already signed up to do so. Our staff would love to help you find a great fit!

*Fourth*, commit to a regular time to seek the Lord in the Bible and prayer with your brothers and sisters through our Community Groups, LIFEgroups, Bible studies, Men's and Women's groups, and/or Prayer Groups.

*Finally*, give generously of your finances throughout the year as the Lord leads out of reverent worship and joyful obedience to Him.

And with that... May the Lord bless you, guide you, keep you, and give you peace as you pursue Him intentionally throughout these 25 Days of Response!

Blessed to follow and serve Jesus with you,

Pastor Jared

## **Week 1 — THANKSGIVING**

**Prayer for the Week:** Heavenly Father, thank you for all you have done in me and among us!

**Scriptures for the Week:** Psalm 71:14-19; Psalm 100; Philippians 1:3-6

### **Daily Prayer Prompts:**

#### Day 1 - Monday, AUG 18

Question: How has God been at work in my life over the past several years?

Pray for: God to grow a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving within me.

#### Day 2 - Tuesday, AUG 19

Question: How has God been at work or blessed my family and friends recently?

Pray for: God to bless, strengthen, and transform the people I love.

#### Day 3 - Wednesday, AUG 20

Question: How have I witnessed God at work through our church family?

Pray for: God to work in our church family and through our leadership.

#### Day 4 - Thursday, AUG 21

Question: How have I experienced or witnessed God helping us “be family to those who need family?”

Pray for: God to open our eyes to see and hearts to love those who long to belong.

#### Day 5 - Friday, AUG 22

Question: How has God been working through our church family among the “least, last, and lost” in our area?

Pray for: God to be working in places and people where it is hardest to see Him.

#### Day 6 - Saturday, AUG 23

Question: How will I be more intentional each day in giving thanks to God for who He is and all that He has done for me, my loved ones, our church, and community?

Pray for: God to help me be more intentional about giving thanks to Him each day.

## Week 2 — PRAYING

**Prayer for the Week:** Lord Jesus, help me prioritize prayer like you did.

**Scriptures for the Week:** Psalm 65; Matthew 6:5-13; Ephesians 3:20-21; I Timothy 2:1-4

### **Daily Prayer Prompts:**

#### Day 7 - Sunday, AUG 24

Question: When, where or with whom do I feel God's presence the most?

Pray for: God to reveal Himself to me in order to more deeply know Him.

#### Day 8 - Monday, AUG 25

Question: How has God answered my prayers in the past?

Pray for: God to strengthen my faith as I remember His faithfulness.

#### Day 9 - Tuesday, AUG 26

Question: How can I be more consistent in my prayer life?

Pray for: God to awaken a deeper longing for communing with Him.

#### Day 10 - Wednesday, AUG 27

Question: Who does God want me to be praying for to place their faith in Jesus?

Pray for: God to help unbelieving family and friends to repent of their sin and believe in Jesus.

#### Day 11 - Thursday, AUG 28

Question: What does God want to do in and through our church family in the years ahead?

Pray for: God to help us clearly discern His vision for our next season of life, worship, ministry, and mission together.

#### Day 12 - Friday, AUG 29

Question: How does God want to utilize my gifts, talents, experiences, passions, and resources to accomplish His mission at First?

Pray for: Clarity in how God wants to work through me and courage to do it.

#### Day 13 - Saturday, AUG 30

Question: What God-sized prayers am I faithfully praying?

Pray for: God to be working and growing and moving in ways that are beyond comprehension—that He would do the impossible.

## **Week 3 — GIVING**

**Prayer for the Week:** Father, teach me to be as generous as You have been to me.

**Scriptures for the Week:** 1 Chronicles 29:10-14; Matthew 6:19-24; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 9:6-15

### **Daily Prayer Prompts:**

#### Day 14 - Sunday, AUG 31

Question: In what ways has God been most generous in my life?

Pray for: Gratitude: reflect on & give thanks for all of God's good gifts.

#### Day 15 - Monday, SEP 1

Question: In what areas of life do I struggle to be generous?

Pray for: Clarity and conviction in giving generously as God leads me.

#### Day 16 - Tuesday, SEP 2

Question: What are some ways to show generosity to those I love most?

Pray for: Creativity in loving and serving family and friends generously like Jesus.

#### Day 17 - Wednesday, SEP 3

Question: What does it look like to participate in generosity at church?

Pray for: God to help us give more generously of our time, talent and treasure.

#### Day 18 - Thursday, SEP 4

Question: What needs do I see in those around me: at school, at work, in our community, and/or in other parts of my life?

Pray for: The wisdom to discern what needs God is calling me to meet.

#### Day 19 - Friday, SEP 5

Question: Are there ways that I could be a better steward and/or cut back on other financial expenses in order to give more generously to God and others?

Pray for: God to grant wisdom to discern and courage to make any changes He wants me to make to provide greater capacity for generosity.

#### Day 20 - Saturday, SEP 6

Question: Does God want me to give a special offering as a way of giving thanks for all He has done and to fuel His work in our church, ministries, and missionaries in the year ahead?

Pray for: Clarity and joy as I continue to give regularly, generously, and sacrificially to the Lord.

## **Week 4 — FASTING**

**Prayer for the Week:** Spirit, strengthen me with spiritual nourishment as I fast.

**Scriptures for the Week:** Daniel 9:3; Matthew 4:1-2, 6:16-18

### **Daily Prayer Prompts:**

#### Day 21 - Sunday, SEP 7

Question: Who or what have been the most impactful people, things, or practices/disciplines in my faith journey?

Pray for: Gratitude for these people, events, and practices on my journey with Christ.

#### Day 22 - Monday, SEP 8

Question: What has God been calling me to fast from during the 25 Days journey, and what has been the impact of the fast?

Pray for: God to continue to use fasting to strengthen and transform me.

#### Day 23 - Tuesday, SEP 9

Question: How has denying myself of food or other earthly things increased my desire for Jesus and appetite for spiritual nourishment?

Pray for: God to help me desire Christ and His Kingdom above all else.

#### Day 24 - Wednesday, SEP 10

Question: Where is God calling me to increased Kingdom impact in my relationships, at church, and in our community?

Pray for: The clarity and commitment to step into new (or old) areas of impact.

#### Day 25 - Thursday, SEP 11

Question: What would it look like if God answered every prayer that has been prayed, sung, and preached by our church family over the past 25 days?

Pray for: God to do immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine.



## FASTING GUIDE

Each week, we will collectively focus on one theme, with a weekly prayer and Scriptures, plus daily questions and prayer prompts, to provide a devotional opportunity to lead you deeper in your walk with Christ. We encourage you to pick a form of fasting to practice, either for the entirety of our journey or you can practice different forms of fasting over the four weeks. An example might be:

Week 1 - Routine Fast (*Choose something to substitute this week*)

Week 2 - Corporate Fast (*Pick a friend and choose something to limit together*)

Week 3 - Common Fast (*Choose one day and refrain from any food for 24 hours*)

Week 4 - Celebratory Feast (*Choose a day and focus on rejoicing over what God has done!*)

Fasting is not just the “going without,” but it is saying ‘no’ to something to say ‘yes’ to something else.

### Fasting Forms

**Common Fast** – No food or sustenance of any kind for an extended period of time\* (except water).

**Partial Fast** – Giving up certain kinds of foods (wheat, meats, coffee, sweets, etc.)

**Corporate Fast** – Committing to abstinence from something as a group.

**Routine Fast** – Substituting technology, social media, socializing (solitude), etc. to seek God.

### Fasting Lengths

**Single Meal** – If you desire to make fasting a more consistent rhythm or if you are new to fasting as a practice, consider fasting from a single meal to seek God.

**24 Hour** – Traditionally speaking, food fasts last 24 hours (roughly 6p to 6p).

**Multiple Day** – There are many examples of multiple-day fasts in Scripture (between 2 - 40 days).

\*If you have a health condition that would be negatively impacted by going without food and or water for a period of time, please consult with your doctor if and before you choose to participate.

## Fasting Purposes

**Fasts for Help** (Ezra 8:21-23; 1 Kings 17:9-16; Acts 9:9; Esther 4:16; 5:2)

In these passages, biblical figures went without food to seek God for guidance, healing, and restoration.

**Fasting in Repentance** (1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Samuel 12:16; Jonah 3:5; Joel 2:12-13)

Individuals or people groups fasted in response to the humbling reality of personal or corporate sin for the sake of life transformation.

**Fasting in Mourning** (Nehemiah 1:4; 2 Samuel 1:12; 1 Samuel 31:13)

Food fasts were a common response to death, brokenness, and suffering in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

**Fasting in Preparation** (Luke 1:15; Matthew 4:1-11; Acts 13:3)

Fasting was implemented as an act to prepare one's heart for the spiritual calling on their life.

## Other Examples of Fasting

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| A fast for Leaders       | (Acts 14:23)     |
| A fast for Humility      | (Psalm 69:10)    |
| A fast for Mental Health | (1 Kings 19:4-8) |
| A fast for Favor         | (Daniel 1:5-21)  |
| A fast for Justice       | (Isaiah 58:6)    |
| A fast for Worship       | (Luke 2:37)      |

As we begin our fasting journey, we're starting by declaring our desire to dwell in deep communion with God. To linger in His presence and to gaze upon His beauty. The Psalmist writes in chapter 27: "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." We want this posture to be true of our own lives and so we're asking God to renew within us a desire for His Name and His glory.

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