



APRIL 4, 2021

PRAYER AND FASTING GUIDE

14 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING: MARCH 22 - APRIL 4

Grace Offering is our annual time to give financially to our outreach and mission efforts across the world. GO reminds us of the mission at hand. As we consider our financial gift it is also a time to consider the condition of our heart and what has our attention.

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

North American followers of Jesus Christ and the modern church live in a culture of comfort. The average family eats out 3-4 times per week spending between \$30-\$60 on each meal. This culture of comfort clouds our view of what we need most in our relationship with Jesus Christ. A dependence and hunger for life giving bread and life giving water. Going without for one simple meal seems like an obstacle to overcome, but for the early followers of Jesus it was a way of life. A posture of being hungry for the bread of life (John 6:35) draws us closer to our need for dependence for Jesus through fasting and praying.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6:25-35

“When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.”

“
Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.

HABAKKUK 3:2

The purpose of this short document is to provide background and understanding into the pragmatics of practicing the habits of prayer and fasting. Our collective prayer is that you will be drawn closer into His presence and purpose as you point people to Jesus in all the places you live, work, and play. That as you give financially for Grace Offering your sacrifice will bring His Kingdom closer to earth.

May we remember what Jesus said, "Take my yoke (teaching) upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

The leadership of Jesus is not a burden, it is intended to bring blessing and breakthrough in our life. The modern life we live is full of demands that are cumbersome, but when we learn to engage the leadership of Jesus we become people who are filled with the abundant life that is promised when we trust and obey his leadership.

Engaging the leadership of Jesus is submitting to learn and do the things that Jesus did to have a transformational encounter and experience with Jesus.

Remember what happened when Jesus was tempted by Satan?

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said..."

*"Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."
Matthew 4:1-3, 9, 10.*

Jesus was incredibly connected to the Father after 40 days of prayer and fasting that the three temptation/s were overcome and he rebuked the power of Satan in his life. In order to have the abundant life that Jesus has promised we have to be incredibly connected to the Father and be able to rebuke the power of Satan in our lives.

Jesus was connected to his Father in the supernatural through prayer and he was disconnected from all the allures, desire, and flesh of the natural by choosing to fast.

WHY FAST AND PRAY?

The simple answer to remember during this journey is...

- **Prayer connects us to our Father in a supernatural realm.**
- **Fasting disconnects us from the world and the natural desires of the flesh.**
- **Jesus modeled what was to happen after he left the first disciples.**
- **Fasting without prayer is a diet. Fasting and praying is engaging the Divine**

FASTING KEY VERSES

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast."

MATTHEW 9:15

"When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven."

NEHEMIAH 1:4

"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."

II CHRONICLES 7:14

"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."

ACTS:13:3,2

Prayers of healing for the city in Jesus name.

ACTS 4:23-31

"Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust."

ACTS 14:23

TYPES OF FAST

Choose a fast for yourself, family, and Disciple Making Community to follow over the next 14 days.

MAJOR FAST

A major fast is when you abstain from food or drink for twenty-four consecutive hours or more. A major fast requires a certain level of physical health, and it is recommended that you check with your doctor if you're doing a major fast that lasts more than a few days in a row. Some examples from Scripture of a major fast can be found in Matthew 4:2, Acts 9:9, and Esther 4:15-16, just to name a few.

MINOR FAST

In a minor fast, you choose to abstain from food for a certain period of time (i.e., 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. or sunup to sundown). This fast is sometimes called a "Jewish fast," and it can last for days at a time, eating only at a set time of the day. In a minor fast, most people will drink liquids during the day and have one small meal after sundown each evening.

PARTIAL FAST

A partial fast is when you give up only certain foods during the course of your fast. This fast is seen most clearly in Daniel 1, where Daniel abstains from certain foods out of devotion to God for a period of time. During a partial fast, some people choose to give up certain foods they enjoy in an effort to turn their hearts more deeply toward God.

SOUL FAST

Technically speaking, biblical fasting only refers to abstaining from food or drink (or both) for a spiritual purpose. ***However, some people choose to fast from things other than food.*** Some people will give up television, social media, or other activities for a soul fast to focus on prayer. Each of these fasts can be a valuable way of connecting with God more deeply. If you are physically able, though, I would encourage you to prayerfully consider one of the first three fasts. There is something about giving up food that physically and spiritually realigns you in ways nothing else can.

"Fasting begets prophets and strengthens strong men. Fasting makes lawgivers wise; it is the soul's safeguard, the body's trusted comrade, the armor of the champion, the training of the athlete."

BASIL, BISHOP OF CAESAREA (AD 330-379)

"Fasting... opens the way for the outpouring of the Spirit and the restoration of God's house. Fasting in this age of the absent Bridegroom is in expectation of His return. Soon there will be the midnight cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' It will be too late then to fast and to pray. The time is now."

GOD'S CHOSEN FAST, ARTHUR WALLIS

PRAYER & READING GUIDE

Use the prayer and reading guide from the book of John to guide you in your thoughts, journaling, and your families financial commitment for Grace Offering.

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| | MAR 22 | MAR 23 | MAR 24 | MAR 25 | MAR 26 | MAR 27 | |
| | JOHN 10 | JOHN 11 | JOHN 12 | JOHN 13 | JOHN 14 | JOHN 15 | |
| MAR 28 | MAR 29 | MAR 30 | MAR 31 | APR 1 | APR 2 | APR 3 | "DO YOU LOVE ME?" |
| JOHN 16 | JOHN 17 | JOHN 18 | JOHN 19 | JOHN 20 | JOHN 21 | Discuss and pray with your family about what you are able to contribute to grace offering this year. | |
| APR 4 | "FEED MY SHEEP" | | | | | | |
| Discuss and pray with your family about ways you can join in the work of growing the kingdom of God. | | | | | | | |