



Week One

Worship Scripture Reading Closeness Sacrifice Discovery-Prayer &
Fasting 2019
January 7-19

Theme: Partners in Prayer

Scripture: James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

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PRAYER & READING GUIDE

2019 CORPORATE PRAYER & FASTING (14 DAYS)

This Prayer & Reading Guide is designed to be your companion throughout your 14-day journey of corporate prayer and fasting with your New Life church family. There is something for each day to help direct your thoughts and heart toward God, and to help prepare yourself for God's purposes in 2019.

Together, we'll be fasting and praying for God to shape our lives, families, and church more fully around the life, mission and message of Jesus.

OUR PLAN

Pray-Commit to specific times of prayer each day.

Fast-Join us in one of the suggested fasts.

Keep a Journal-Pick up a small journal or notebook to record your prayer requests and petitions also what the Spirit speaks to you.

Bible Study for the next 2 weeks-after a brief teaching, we will have a time of corporate prayer in the sanctuary.

Getting Started-Personal Reflections Questions Week One



What is my spiritual growth plan for 2019? _____

What drained me emotionally last year? _____

What fills me emotionally?

Is there anyone whose forgiveness I need to seek or anyone that I need to forgive?

Where is the clutter / disorder in my life?

How can I correct the clutter / disorder in my life?

What You Always Wondered About Fasting



What is fasting?

Fasting is the practice of abstaining from something for a spiritual purpose.

It is different from dieting in that the goal is to re-focus and re-align your heart and attention toward God. According to Matthew 6, Jesus says that fasting - like prayer grows your relationship with God. If practiced with humility, fasting will increase your sensitivity to God's voice and allow you to connect more deeply with God's work within and around you.

Experiencing hunger while fasting is normal; take any signs of hunger as a cue to turn your heart toward God in prayer. A good way to practice fasting is to pray and read during the times you usually eat or engage with media. A Prayer & Reading Guide has been provided as your personal companion for the journey.

Are Christians supposed to fast?

Fasting was common for the first Christians, just as Jesus taught them it should be (Luke 5:33-39; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23). Fasting was also typical for Christians through the centuries. John Wesley would not ordain a man to the ministry if he did not fast twice per week.

Why does the Lord ask us to fast?

It may seem strange that God tells us to refuse to eat or sacrifice in order to seek Him. Some people may feel that God is unloving to demand that we fast on occasion. But God is good, so there must be good reasons for us to fast periodically. To name a couple, fasting fosters humility (Deuteronomy 8:3; Ezra 8:21) and hunger for God (Luke 5:33-35). It has more effectiveness in the spiritual realms than we realize (Daniel 10:12-14).

How long should I fast?

The typical way of fasting in the Bible was to go without food during daytime hours. On occasion, individuals in the Bible fasted around the clock, “day and night” (Matthew 4:2; Esther 4:16). The church is participating in a 14 day fast. However, each individual should seek the Lord about how long to fast and the type of fast. Corporately the church is praying and fasting will be Monday thru Friday. Weekends are free time.

(Source:https://www.dayandnight.org/what_you_always_wondered_about_fasting)

Fasting can help us embrace Jesus' invitation to enter into the new year by helping us step out of the ordinary, experience surprising aspects of freedom, and meet God in new ways.

How to Design a Fast?

1. Consider with whom you might fast or who might pray for you. Fasting is much richer when we experience it in community. Accountability is the key.
2. Consider what you would like to fast from.
 - Would you like to have more time for prayer and reading the Bible? If so, reflect on the pattern of your life or ask a friend or family member to talk with you about it. What activity takes up a lot of time that might be freed up for prayer and reading the Bible?
 - Does something in your life feel like it is an addiction or border on being addictive? If so, consider giving it up for a time to pray about the place of that activity in your life.
 - Would you like to be able to give money to someone in need? If so, consider fasting from expensive food treats, coffee drinks, shopping, or paid entertainment. Are you diabetic, do you take medications with meals, or do you have a medical condition that requires you to eat? Then consider fasting from only one food item, such as coffee, meat, or sugar, or consider fasting from something other than food, such as shopping or electronic devices. Fast from something that does not involve food.
3. Consider **how long to fast**. For electronic devices, a few hours might be a good place to start. Other fasts typically last one to three days, a week, the four weeks of Advent, or the six weeks of Lent.
4. **Make plans to prepare for the fast** -- perhaps praying, writing in a journal, or talking with a friend about your hopes. Do some dreaming and planning about how you will use the time or energy freed up by the fast. In what new ways would you like to draw near to God.
5. Plan for **what you will do after the fast** to get the maximum benefit from it. Perhaps set aside extra time for prayer, journal writing, or reflection for the first few days afterwards. If you have fasted from all food, do not have a huge meal after the fast. Instead, celebrate the end of the fast with a lovely, but small, meal.

<https://www.upperroom.org/resources/spiritual-practice-fasting-and-freedom>

Full Fast

Drink only liquids (you establish the number of days).

The Daniel Fast

Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruits and vegetables.

3-Day Fast

This fast can be a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.

Partial Fast

A partial fast is from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sun up to sundown.

Juice Fast – Fruit and vegetable juices only.

Corporate Fast – A church or group of people who feel God has called them to fast together for a certain period of time.

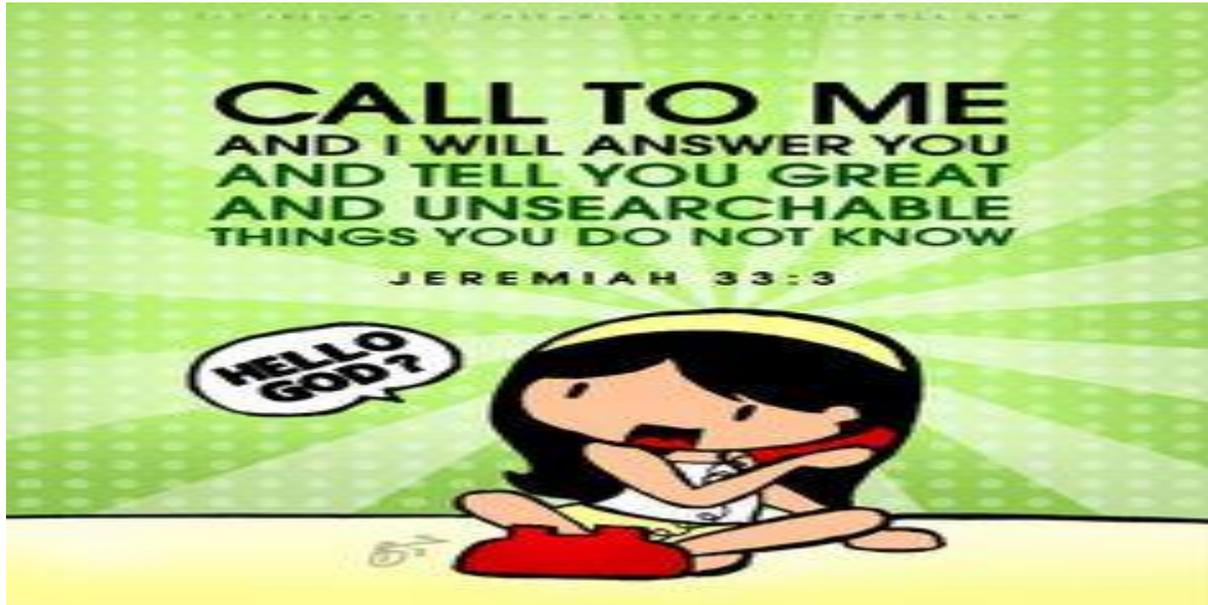
Social Media Fast/unplugged from the screen-Television (Netflix, YouTube, etc.)

radio, **if** not used for work, business, or ministry purposes, restrict yourself from mindless posting and scrolling on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, etc.)

Bible Reading

- Pray however you feel comfortable - the important thing is that your heart is turned toward God. Be yourself in prayer. Be the best you. God wants to hear your voice. Also give time to hear God.
- Make sure you read in a place where you can focus and reflect on what you're reading. Some people think better in complete silence, others like to read in public (e.g. at a coffee shop). Read where you are going to give yourself the best chance to absorb and chew on what you're reading.

Day One-Heaven's calling



During this time in history, Jeremiah was God's Prophet and the children of Israel were in Babylonian captivity due to sin and disobedience to God. They are now living the promised punishment that was prophesy to them year in and year out for their continual sin, idolatry and disobedience against the Lord their God.

Jeremiah had been preaching and warning God's people for years but instead of heeding what thus says the Lord, they instead rejected his message and imprisoned him. In jail, behind prison walls is where God speaks to His Prophet Jeremiah and invites him to pray to His God.

Prayer is God's phone number. It is His line of communication. Prayer is how we reach and connect with God the Father, Prayer is our invitation to direct access to our God in heaven. Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 18:1-it is necessary always to pray and not lose heart. This verse of text is God's call to prayer and it consists of 3 parts.

(1) Invitation: Call unto me. God's call brings with it a promise if we obey. What is the promise? Find the scriptures that speak to your situation, write them down-place them where you will see them often, and stand in faith.

(2) Promise: I will answer thee. Oh what a promise of assurance God offers to those who seek Him in prayer on today for He says "I WILL answer thee"! God not only promised to answer us but He made us another promise if we call upon Him in prayer.

(3) Promise: I will shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

People of God, through prayer, God promises to work in a mighty way on our behalf.

Like Jeremiah, God invites us to pray to Him for we as His people have His personal phone number called "prayer" so that we may be able to reach Him directly through Christ Jesus by faith anytime of the day or night.

What I have learned about seeking God through prayer is the fact that it **MUST** become a habit day in and day out and all throughout the day. Prayer does not have to be loud and boisterous, just a whisper is good.

Nothing in the world or in our lives is beyond repair with God. Faith is our launching pad and "Prayer" is our guided missile which can be launched from any location and any physical posture.

Do you need strength and wisdom? Ask God who gives freely to all who ask. Do you need to draw closer to God on today? Whatever you stand in need of on today the invitation is for you to come and when you do, God promises to not only hear and answer, but He promises to show you great and mighty things you have never seen before in your life.

Today is the day and now is the time to get connected to God through "PRAYER"! Remember, pray about everything, in all things and through all things! God bless.

Question: What is it you want the Lord to do for you during this time of fasting and prayer? And why? _____

Day 2-Hinderances to hearing Him



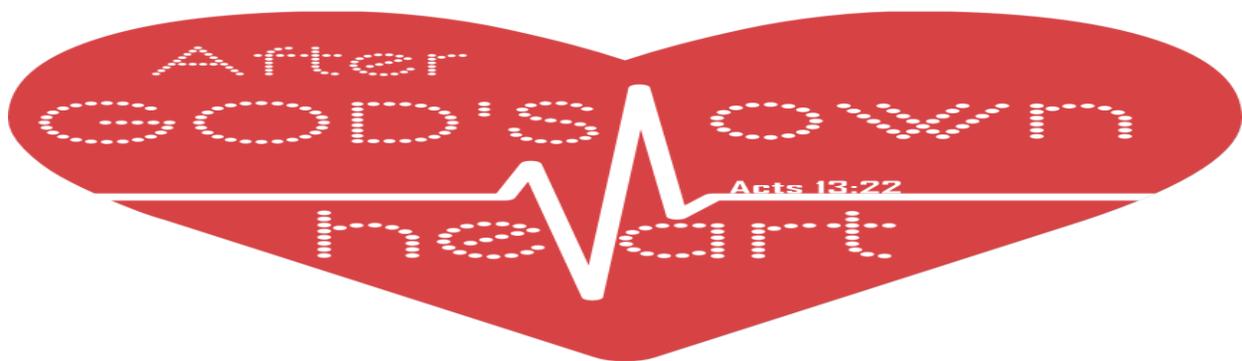
Is your relationship with God a monologue or a dialogue? In order to grow in intimacy with the Lord, we must spend at least as much time listening to Him as we do speaking. There is a difference between “hearing” and “listening.” Hearing is one of the five senses. You can’t but to hear someone speaking so long as you’re not deaf. Listening, however, is a whole another thing. It takes effort and a decision to listen. And during our time of prayer and fasting, expect the Holy Spirit to speak to us as we focus on Him.

Why We Fail in Hearing God’s Voice

1. Divided loyalties 1 Corinthians 7:35 ³⁵ Now I say this for your own welfare *and* profit, not to put [a halter of] restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly *and* in good order and to secure your undistracted *and* undivided devotion to the Lord.
2. Cares of Life-Mark 4:19 but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.
3. Distractions- Luke 8:7 Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants.
4. Sinful temptations-1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is unusual for human beings
5. Fear-Matthew 14:28-31 Peter answered him, “Lord, if it’s you, order me to come to you on the water.” Jesus said, “Come on!” So Peter got down out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came to Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he was frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, “Lord, save me!” At once Jesus reached out his hand, caught him, and asked him, “You who have so little faith, why did you doubt?”

Closing Prayer: Whatever it takes, Lord, increase my resolve to pursue only what you call me to do, and deliver me from the fragmenting effect of fruitless distraction. Father, you have redeemed me from the darkness of this world. I refuse to allow strife, envy, jealousy, past failures, unforgiveness or doubt to operate in my life! Please show me those things that would hinder my prayers (or distract me) so that they can be positive and productive! I commit in 2019 to seek you first in my life above all else. Help me when I place my desires in front of your will for me. I repent when I get out of balance with the cares of this life. Restore divine order within me. In Jesus name.

Day 3 - After God's Own Heart



Acts 13:22 says, “After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; **he will do everything I want him to do.**’”

Acts 13:22 (AMPC) ²² And when He had deposed him, He raised up David to be their king; of him He bore witness and said, I have found David son of Jesse a man after My own heart, **who will do all My will and carry out My program fully.**

This entails much more than simply a regular routine of rote prayers and church attendance. Rather, such intimacy is founded upon an intense yearning to grow as close to the loving Father as possible. The scripture says David was obedient in doing God's will and in the Amplified bible it says he carried out God's program fully.

What did God see when He looked upon the heart of David?



Trusting – The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

Obedient – Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Psalm 119:34

Humble – Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Psalm 62:9

Strong Faith-Psalms 23:1--¹ The Lord is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack.

Repentant-Psalms 51:10- Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

What does it mean to have a heart after God's?

- It means to have your life in sync- in harmony with God, in agreement with God, in touch with God, in tune with God and in pursuit of God Look at the order of the hearts.... God's heart comes first and our heart is commanded to go after His. As His children we are to follow after God's divine will for our lives and not our own desires.

As we close/Points to Ponder-What would it take for you to be described as a man or woman after God's own heart? _____

What activities, thoughts, or behaviors would need to be removed from your life? What would need to be added?

Ask God for His help in making these adjustments—and for the commitment to make this epitaph the goal of your life.

Dear Lord, help me to cultivate the simplicity of devotion to You. I want You to be my primary ambition in life. I desire to behold Your beauty, and dwell in Your house all the days of my life (Psalm 27:4). Let seeking Your heart be the goal of my life even in busy and stressful times. Help me to be one who seeks after Your beauty. Help me to discover Your emotions and the purposes of Your heart. I want to be a lover of God and thirst after You daily (Psalm 42:1-2a). "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings" (Psalm 17:8).

- God is faithful. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God is good. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God is merciful. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God is able to do what He has promised to do. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God has forgiven you all of your sins in Christ. God will never take account of our sins for He sees the righteousness of Christ covering us. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God has provided a merciful and willing and gentle and humble Savior to shed His precious blood on the cross for us. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God has provided a Mediator in Jesus so that you can boldly approach the throne of grace to find mercy and help, a sympathetic friend. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God is your God as He has promised. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God is with you and will never leave you nor forsake you. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will uphold you, strengthen, help you in every situation. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will sanctify you and make you like Christ through His Spirit and Word. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will give you illumination to understand His Word. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will grant you joy in Christ through believing His promises. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will turn all the “bad things” into good. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will help us to persevere in His grace. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will meet with us to speak with us through His Spirit and Word. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will feed us with Christ. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will give us the eternal inheritance of Christ. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will be our God for all eternity. “...*Forget not His benefits*”
- God will one day restore all of us and all of the universe. We will leave sin, death, and hell behind us and enter into eternal felicity and bliss with Him forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Amen and amen! “...*Forget not His benefits*”

And not to forget the greatest benefit of all, for: This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is found in his Son. (1 John 5:11)

(So much more I could say?!) (Source: newingtonumc.org)

Prayer: Dear Lord, Thank you for your guidance in my life. Thank you that fear is decreasing and faith is increasing daily. We will never forget all you have done for us. Help us to focus our hearts and minds on you. Daily we remember that you are a faithful and loving Father. And we will walk in Your benefits daily. In Jesus name. Amen

Day 5 -Power of Corporate Prayer/Better Together



⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NRSV)

(Jesus said) : “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”
Matthew 18:20 (NRSV)

The teacher of Ecclesiastes has a good point in the value of standing together with others. We are stronger together. A threefold cord is referring to a braid or braided rope- when multiple strands are woven together their strength is multiplied. The Ecclesiastes reference can also be taken as a foreshadowing of the revelation of the Trinity- God as Three in One. There is strength in numbers.



Acts 12:5 (AMPC)-⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but **fervent prayer** for him was persistently made to God **by the church (assembly)**. The king appointed many armed men to guard Peter. He thought that by this he would make his deliverance impossible. Yet he did not take into account the fact that though Peter was kept in prison, **THE CHURCH WAS PRAYING**

WITHOUT CHEASING TO GOD FOR HIM. Herod could not stop this, and thus could not stop God from acting on those prayers.

How can we truly welcome others to our own church as well as to the greater community of Jesus followers? God calls us to relationship, but as we learn from Scripture and from life, relationships are hard work. In relationships we will feel pain. Relationships can get messy and complicated. We will be offended. *We will offend*. Yet by the grace of God, we are forgiven, and likewise called to forgive as Jesus forgives us.

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus, you are our Prince of Peace and You prayed for unity in the body of Christ – that we may be united in love just as You are united with the Father - in love. Give Your children the desire to love one another, as You have loved us - for by this will all men know that we are Your disciples. Give us a hunger to live in union with each another, and may we be united as one, in the bond of peace and fellowship, in the Spirit. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen



Congratulations!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You've completed your first week of corporate prayer and fasting. We pray it has been a blessing to you. As we close out this week, our fast ends on Friday and resumes on Monday. Have a great weekend. See you in service on Sunday. Be blessed. Let's pray.....

Father God, thank you in advance for hearing our prayers and answering. But Father, as much as we want needs met and prayers answered, we want YOU! Fill us — satisfy us with Your presence. Holy Spirit, breathe fresh upon the Word each day. Give us an undying passion for

Jesus and souls for Your Kingdom. Help us tarry before the throne in secret prayer. Baptize us in the fire of Your holiness! Break our hearts over what breaks Yours. May the things that delight You, delight us. For then...we will have the desires of our heart.

Holy Spirit, fall! Fall on my brother. Fall on my sister. Breathe on us afresh. Like a mighty wind, light the fire again! Come magnify the Son in us — today, tomorrow, next month, all year! Show the Savior to the world through our lives! We want to take Your Truth in Your power to a lost and dying world. In Jesus' mighty, precious, holy name, Amen!