

Fasting & Prayer Guide

Simply put, growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ is about taking steps of obedience. At Wilshire Ave Community Church, we don't want to just talk about fasting and prayer, we want to practice it. Obedience isn't about earning God's love, (He already fully loves you and gave up everything to have a relationship with you), rather it is about coming into His presence and experiencing His favor. Our hope is that this guide will be a tool to help guide you as you take steps of obedience to God.

Pastor Rob

Please share with us. As you go through this guide and grow, we'd love to hear about it. Send an email to office@wilshireave.com and tell us your story.

Want prayer? Send an email to prayer@wilshireave.com.

Looking to pray with others in our city? Join the Monday night prayer group on Zoom at 7:30 PM. Send an email to bryan@wilshireave.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| A GUIDE TO FASTING | 2 |
| What Is Fasting? | 2 |
| Why Fast? | 2 |
| The Importance Of Fasting | 3 |
| Two Cautions: | 4 |
| A PRAYER GUIDE | 5 |
| Some Great Practices | 5 |
| God Is Near - The Lord's Prayer | 6 |
| Journal | 20 |

Materials adapted from Saddleback Church, Church of the Highlands and The Simple Church.

A GUIDE TO FASTING

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His followers to fast and He said that God rewards fasting. Fasting, according to the Bible, means to voluntarily reduce or eliminate your intake of food for a specific time and purpose. There are many types of fasts:

- **A Normal Fast** means to abstain from all food
- **A Partial Fast** means to eliminate certain foods or specific meals
- **A “Juice” Fast** means to drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times

When you give up eating, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They make their faces look sad to show people they are giving up eating. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give up eating, comb your hair and wash your face. Then people will not know that you are giving up eating, but your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)

WHY FAST?

There are many good reasons, and even health benefits, for fasting. But why fast?

1. Fasting gives you more time for prayer. You can use the time you'd normally spend eating in prayer for what God wants to do among us during this time. In the Bible, fasting is always connected with prayer.

As the king's order reached every area, there was great sadness and loud crying among the Jewish people. They gave up eating and cried out loud, and many of them lay down on rough cloth and ashes to show how sad they were. (Esther 4:3)

2. Fasting demonstrates the depth of your desire when praying for something. It shows you mean business with God – you are serious enough about your prayer request to pay a personal price. God honors deep desire and praying in faith.

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. (Joel 1:14)

Even now," declares the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. (Joel 2:12)

3. Fasting releases God's supernatural power. It is a tool we can use when there is opposition to God's will. Satan would like nothing better than to cause division, discouragement, defeat, depression and doubt among us. United prayer and fasting has always been used by God to deal a decisive blow to the enemy!

So we fasted and prayed to God about this, and He answered our prayer. (Ezra 8:23)

God says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6)

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

Often in the Bible, God's people fasted immediately before a major victory, miracle, or answer to prayer. It prepared them for a blessing!

- **Moses fasted before he received the Ten Commandments.**

Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant--the Ten Commandments. Exodus 34:28

- **The Israelites fasted before a miraculous victory.**

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. 2 Chronicles 20:2-3

- **Daniel fasted in order to receive guidance from God.**

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:3

While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. (Daniel 21-22)

- **Nehemiah fasted before beginning a major building project.**

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)

- **Jesus fasted during His victory over temptation.**

For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry. (Luke 4:2)

- **The first Christians fasted during decision-making times.**

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 13:2-3)

TWO CAUTIONS:

1. Remember that fasting is not "earning" an answer to prayer. God cannot be blackmailed by human effort. God wants to answer our prayers and He answers out of grace. Fasting simply prepares us for God's answer.
2. Fast only if your health allows it at this time. Please consult your doctor. If you are able only to do a partial fast - do it in faith and God will honor your intentions.

NOW, DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF FAST YOU'LL FOLLOW:

Possible Options:

A Normal Fast: skip the next three meals

A Partial Fast: skip one or two meals

A "Juice" Fast: drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times

** Note: You should always drink water while fasting*

A PRAYER GUIDE

SOME GREAT PRACTICES

- Enjoy God
- Spend time with God (He is near)
- Listen to God

Here are some suggestions to consider in fulfilling the above:

1. Use these pages as a devotional guide each day to give you some direction in praying and listening to God and His Word.
2. Join with others during the week to pray and share what God is saying.
3. Spend an extended time alone with God in prayer (away from your usual routine)
4. Journal your thoughts throughout the week.
5. Skip a meal for a day...or two or more meals during the week...and use that time to feast in prayer or Bible reading (or choose to replace the time you'd spend on another habit with time in prayer).

Bottom line? Allow God to direct your time today or this week.

Enjoy Him!

GOD IS NEAR - The Lord's Prayer

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray..." Luke 11:1 NIV

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"
(Matthew 6:9-13)

"Our Father in heaven..."

DAY 1 // CONNECT WITH GOD RELATIONALLY

You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15 NLT)

God loves for us to call Him our Father. Establish your intimate relationship with Him and thank Him for the relationship you have with Him.

“...Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”

DAY 3 // PRAY HIS AGENDA FIRST

God's Priorities...

“This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3)

God desires all people to find and follow Him.

Ever been caught off-guard when someone wants to know more about your faith? Maybe it is their willingness to learn about Jesus that surprises you or their interest in what our church is doing in the community. We need hearts that ache for those who don't know Jesus personally. Why? Because people matter to God, and God wants to use us to reach out to those He has placed in our lives.

This week, walk around wide-eyed, looking at people and praying for them with a heart that believes God will reach them, and that He wants to use us in the process!

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV)

- Pray for our community, city, nation, leaders, those who have influence to be impacted by the gospel
- The schools in your community

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:14)

Your 8-15

- Your workplace
- Your friends
- Your family members
- Your neighbors

DAY 7 // BE A DIFFERENCE MAKER

"Now here is what I am trying to say: All of you together are the one body of Christ, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27 TLB)

God is at work...all of the time. And it's safe to say that as long as we're breathing, He's not through with us yet. So look around. Open your eyes to the possibilities. What is God's next mission field for you? Will you be ready to respond when God wants to use you to take Wilshire Ave further?

You? Yes! God has placed our Pastors and Difference Makers in place to lead our church ministries. But God has called all of us to obey Him. That means His plans for our lives may be radically different than any of us originally thought.

Prayer starters...

- What dreams has God placed on your heart?
- How could I help make a difference Sunday morning? (Children, Youth, Sunday service team)
- What's one skill you believe God wants you to learn?
- Who is someone who needs to be invited to serve in ministry?
- What people can use your encouragement as they serve the Lord?
- What changes can be made to most effectively impact each of our ministries?
- Who can you encourage in their ministry?
- How's the condition of your heart as you serve?
- Pray for our people to continue to "discover" what the Lord has for them ...

"Do your work with enthusiasm. Work as if you were serving the Lord, not as if you were serving only men and women." (Ephesians 6:7 NCV)

DAY 8 // LOVE OUR CITIES

One of the things we tend to forget is that God is already at work in our city. Sometimes we forget and feel we need to bring God to the city when He is already there and at work. We need to pray for our eyes to be open to see what God is already doing and then get on board with Him. We have some great opportunities we feel God is already involved in and we hope you will join us as we love our cities together on this journey.

*With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God
(Micah 6:6-8)*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**" (Acts 1:8)*

Pray how God might use you to join WA as we **love our Cities** (Locally & Globally)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Our Jerusalem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food co-op ○ Love Fullerton serve day ○ Park clean up days ○ Local school outreach ○ Partner with nonprofits | <p>Our Judea & Samaria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orange County: Giving Children Hope, Solidarity, OC United ○ Mexico: Partnering with orphanages & churches across the border ○ Blood drive |
|--|--|

Ends of the Earth

- **Missions**
 - + Trip to Guatemala
 - + Pray for our Missionaries (Central and South Africa, Asia, Guatemala, Thailand and across the globe)
 - + Providing health care, medicine and needed resources for impoverished and communities facing crisis or natural disasters.
 - + Empowering individuals to provide for their communities and families.

When you look at our city and world, what are some of the things you see? What are some of the needs/things that break your heart?

Is there any area of ministry, you feel God may be calling you to serve? What are some of the things that are holding you back?

If you are not sure, spend time in prayer asking God to show you, where He may want to use you. Pray for His strength as you step out and trust Him.

DAY 9 // LEAVE A LEGACY

Finishing strong is a hurdle we all face. But it's also one we have to clear. Why?

We need to grow. And others need us to grow so that we can train them. Then those who are trained need inspiration to train others...who will only continue the process.

That's called discipleship, and it's revealed in 2 Timothy:

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Keep growing...and praying for the growth of those God entrusts to you.

Prayer starters...

- What step of faith is God asking you to take?
- What is God teaching you in your times alone with Him?
- What people have God placed on your heart? How can you encourage them to grow?
- What role does God want you to take in discipling others?
- Pray for those who are helping you grow
- What area of your life is God working on right now?
- Pray for our church to "grow" as we reach more

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore 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, NIV)
