



21 DAYS
SEEKING · HEARING · RESPONDING

FASTING & PRAYER JOURNAL

Happy New Year! The start of a new year provides us all with the opportunity to begin solid, healthy habits and practices. Clinical research indicates it takes 21 days to start a new habit. The beginning of a new year is a great time to start realigning our lives around the things that are most important. There is something transformative in seeking God's heart individually and collectively in dedication and repentance as we seek spiritual breakthrough and purpose.

We want to begin 2026 with intentionality in seeking God through the spiritual practices of fasting and prayer. Fasting has been a spiritual practice through the ages that helps center our attention and direct our affection to God alone. We want to hear from God and respond in obedience as He leads us forward into a new year.

Each of us should seek God's leading and direction as we consider what we might abstain from in order to make space and focus more of our attention on God. It could be reducing or eliminating something from your diet on a daily basis (skipping a meal, not drinking caffeine or sugar, only eating vegetables or fruit), reducing or eliminating your use of some form of technology (not turning on the radio on your commute, not watching TV after dinner, pausing your involvement in social media), or abstaining from a specific activity or behavior (not snacking between meals, not using the elevator in buildings, ceasing the use of tobacco or alcohol). The purpose of a spiritual fast is to grow closer to God and experience more of His presence in your life.

I pray as we participate in this fast individually, God will speak to us and work powerfully in our lives. As we participate collectively, I pray God will move powerfully in our families, congregation, community, and world. We'd love for you to share what you are experiencing, hearing from God, learning through God's Word, and how you are taking action on anything God prompts you. You can use the QR code throughout this journal to share any/all of the above with us.

This journal is a supplement to what we are learning together during our worship gatherings on Sundays and times of worship and prayer each weekday. There's space for capturing your personal reflections from all the above. I'm excited to see what God does in and through us as we seek Him together.



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WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FASTING?

Spiritual fasting is the intentional act of abstaining from something, typically food, to refocus your heart and mind on Jesus. It creates space in your day usually reserved for meals and replaces it with prayer, worship, and scripture reading. Fasting is about drawing near to God with clarity and surrender.

Many believers avoid fasting, thinking it is extreme or reserved for the “super spiritual” or are unaware of this spiritual discipline. Fasting is not comfortable or easy, and the idea of going without food, technology, or any other activity may seem odd. However, fasting is mentioned 77 times in Scripture. For comparison, baptism is mentioned 75 times. If the Bible talks of fasting as much as baptism, we should not ignore that. Spiritual fasting is incredibly important and is a powerful part of a disciple’s journey.

WHY SHOULD I FAST?

We are all called to specific practices as part of our relationship with God. Jesus instructs us in Matthew 6:1-21 to give, pray, and fast. Jesus says, “When you give...When you pray...When you fast...” Fasting isn’t an optional practice, it is part of the Christian life. Jesus assumes we will fast. Whether a believer chooses to begin fasting for one day, one week, or 21 days, you will intentionally be seeking God.

Fasting makes you aware of the presence of Jesus in your life. The more you are aware of Him, the more time you spend with Him, the more your relationship with Him will thrive. This will impact your marriage, friendships, career and the way you interact with other people in the world. Ultimately, this leads to the greatest treasure of all, storing up treasures in Heaven. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Fasting reminds you to hunger for His Word. When Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness, he declared, “... People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4). Fasting shifts your cravings from the temporary to the eternal. Allow the Word of God to sustain you during the fast.

Fasting grows a passion for Jesus in your life and reveals unhealthy habits. Fasting reveals things that may be controlling you, rather than having self-control. You will realize when you are seeking comfort or avoiding issues by using things that do not satisfy (food, alcohol, social media, etc.), instead of turning to Christ and His Word. Fasting trains you to seek His will.

Fasting helps you see clearly. Do you have a big decision that you need to make? Are you considering a move? Are you considering changing careers? Are you considering marriage or starting a family? Before any major decision, the Bible is clear that we should fast and pray. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” The Word will give us direction and peace in our hearts when we seek God for life’s decisions.

DIETARY FAST

PARTIAL FAST

Eliminate a certain type of food from your diet for a specific period of time. Some ideas for partial fast options might be: sun-up to sun-down or other time restrictions on eating, choosing a 1, 3, or 7 day fast. Many people use the Daniel Fast inspired by the type of fast that Daniel completed in the Old Testament. (Daniel 1:12-15 and 10:2-3). In chapter 1, Daniel asked to be given a diet of only vegetables and water for 10 days, rather than eat the king's food. In chapter 10, Daniel fasted for 21 days, refraining from "choice food, meat and wine". Daniel sacrificed the choice foods to focus on worship and praying to the Lord while only consuming a simple plant-based diet for those 21 days.

Three Keys to a Daniel Fast:

1. Consume only fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and whole grains.
2. Drink only water, herbal teas or 100% fresh fruit or vegetable juice.
3. Avoid ALL sweeteners, breads, meat, dairy, and eggs.

For more information regarding a Daniel Fast, please visit ultimatedanielfast.com

WATER/JUICE FAST

Abstain from solid foods and consume only water or fresh fruit/vegetable juices.

COMPLETE FAST

Eliminate all food and water for a specific period of time. We see an example of this in Jesus' 40-day fast in the wilderness.

*Seek medical clearance before attempting a water, juice or complete fast.)

- DURING THE FAST

While observing a dietary fast, your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:17-18 (NLT), "But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you." Do your best not to let anyone know you are fasting by complaining about it, looking like it or being mean. We all can get a bit edgy when we go without certain foods, coffee, or sodas for a while. So pray that you will find peace in the fast. If someone asks why you are eating only certain foods, use this as a time to speak about your faith walk with Jesus and the spiritual journey you are on.

Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to worship music. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Allow your hunger pains to remind you to pray. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

- AFTER THE FAST

Begin eating again by consuming small portions, gradually. Don't overeat and don't eat greasy, fried food first. Realize your body has been purified and has gone without certain things (proteins, sugars, caffeine, etc.) for a while. It will take some time for your body to re-adjust.

- TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DIETARY FAST

During a spiritual fast, the goal is to spend more time in prayer and reading God's Word, not in planning, preparing or cooking.

1. Stay hydrated. Drink water throughout the day.
2. Start small if fasting is new to you. Consider fasting one meal a day or doing a partial fast.
3. Make a simple plan and prep for multiple meals in advance so that your mind is focused and in control rather than your stomach. One great way to do this is to make a one-week plan and repeat it weekly. Try not to get caught up in complicated recipes. Choose one or two options for each mealtime and get those ingredients in place.
4. Clear out the pantry/refrigerator of "junk food". Out of sight=out of mind. This helps reduce temptation.
5. Read labels, look for foods without sugar or sweeteners.
6. Food is meant to fuel the body, so for these three weeks, eat for nourishment, not entertainment, pleasure, or comfort.

ELECTRONICS FAST

In addition to—or instead of—dietary fasting, you may choose to fast from electronic devices. Disconnect from screens and internet-connected devices (phones, computers, TVs, games) for a specific time or number of days. Limiting interaction with screens/electronic devices during time away from work or other necessary tasks (paying bills online, etc) provides focused attention and discretionary time to focus on God through Scripture reading, prayer, and even service.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FAST OF ANY TYPE

1. Prepare spiritually. Begin with prayer, asking God to reveal His direction for your fast.
2. Create a plan. Determine how you feel God leading you to fast. Choose an intentional way to engage in Scripture (use the provided journal, choose a specific reading plan, choose a book of the Bible to study). Think through your schedule for the time period you will be fasting to select times and places to commune with God, activities you might choose to forgo, opportunities for new spiritual practices/rhythms.
3. Journal your journey. Record what God reveals to you through His Word and prayer.
4. Stay focused on the goal ... drawing closer to God. Be gracious to yourself if you struggle, miss a day, return to eating or behaviors you have chosen to abstain from. Perfection is not the goal ... intimacy with God is the goal.

DAY
11

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 // **JOEL 2:12-27**

DAY
12

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15 // **JOEL 2:28-32**



DAY
25

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 // **NEHEMIAH 1:1-11**

DAY
26

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29 // **2 CHRONICLES 20:1-37**



PRAY *for* OUR WORLD

Use the following prayer prompts as we collectively fast and pray for God to work and move in our world... and add your own in the blanks provided.

PRAY that God would break down walls of division between peoples and grow the Church into a visibly reconciled family across ethnic, economic, educational, political, and social barriers.

PRAY that God would open the eyes of global leaders to justice and mercy, so decisions about borders, trade, and migration protect the vulnerable and reflect God's heart.

PRAY that the Church worldwide would be filled with the fullness of Christ, so our worship, witness, and service become a healing presence in places of conflict and poverty.

PRAY that God would raise up and sustain faithful intercessors in every nation, from city prayer rooms to remote villages, who pray without ceasing for their neighbors and rulers.

PRAY that God would tear down spiritual strongholds that enslave people (fear, corruption, idolatries, etc.) and release the freedom of the gospel in closed and hurting places.

PRAY that God would strengthen those who serve among refugees, the displaced, and the marginalized, supplying wisdom, resources, protection, and deep compassion.

PRAY that God would give bold and humble partnership across cultures and denominations, so Christian witness and practical love (education, health, justice, etc.) bear lasting fruit in every region.



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