

A Call to Fasting and Prayer

As Calvary has been seeking a Senior Pastor, the Call Committee is committed to prayer and has fasted at various times during the search. God has laid it on the Call Committee's collective hearts to ask the Congregation to join in committing to pray daily and fast for one day each week until a call is issued to a Senior Pastor. Below you will find a model for prayer and fasting that has been effective for the Call Committee and we hope will be helpful for you. May God bless you and Calvary as we call upon His Name.

Adapted from an article by Bill Bright

Beginning Your Fast

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

STEP 1: Set Your Objective

Why are you fasting? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.

STEP 2: Make Your Commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15). For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- Should you consider fasting longer than one day, decide how long up front - one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, forty days? (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often)
- What physical or social activities you will restrict
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2).
- Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17).

STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

A Call to Fasting and Prayer

While You Fast

Your time of fasting and prayer has come. You are abstaining from all solid foods and have begun to seek the Lord. Here are some helpful suggestions to consider:

- Avoid drugs, even natural herbal drugs and homeopathic remedies. Medication should be withdrawn only with your physician's supervision.
- Limit your activity.
- Exercise only moderately. Walk one to three miles each day if convenient and comfortable.
- Rest as much as your schedule will permit.
- Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness and anxiety.
- Expect some physical discomforts. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness or the "blahs." Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches. Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness or sleeplessness.

Should you decide to fast longer than one day, the first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Morning

- Begin your day in praise and worship.
- Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work "in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." Philippians 2:13.
- Intercede for the Call Committee as the Spirit leads you.
- Pray for the person God is calling to be Calvary's next Senior Pastor.

Noon

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for Calvary, its leaders, the Call Committee, our community's and the world's unreached millions, for your family or special needs.

Evening

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- Pray for Calvary during this time of transition.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit's presence and influence at Calvary would expand.
- If others are fasting with you, you may want to meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

When possible, begin and end each day on your knees for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

Expect Results

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers. A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians. It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor you for your faithfulness.