



MORE

a time of

AND NOW, ISN'T IT WONDERFUL ALL THE WAYS IN WHICH THIS DISTRESS HAS GOADED YOU CLOSER TO GOD? YOU'RE MORE ALIVE, MORE CONCERNED, MORE SENSITIVE, MORE REVERENT, MORE HUMAN, MORE PASSIONATE, MORE RESPONSIBLE. LOOKED AT FROM ANY ANGLE, YOU'VE COME OUT OF THIS WITH PURITY OF HEART.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:11-16 (TMSG)

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer
January 22 - February 11, 2024

Introduction

Our annual fast begins Monday, January 22nd and ends after service Sunday, February 11th. During this time, I believe that God is shaping and refining us. Each obstacle we face, we become stronger, more grounded, and more resilient. This process allows us to adopt His kingdom's values and to mature with a kingdom perspective. God knows the enemy is lurking around the corner, ready to throw "more" at God's people, but our almighty Father is preparing us for "MORE." He's crafting us into warriors, ready to face whatever comes our way.

Here are some notable shifts in attitudes towards spirituality and community:

- Self-worship has replaced dying to self
- Gatherings are no longer valued and even despised
- Submission is often equated with control
- Correction is often dismissed and turns into "church hurt"
- Selfishness is increasingly prevalent, and generosity is viewed as insincere
- Gossip bloggers have become the modern-day apostles
- Everyone feels entitled to their own personal theology and interpretation of the Word of God

These are some of the realities of this day and age. However, it is important to remember that we have the power to change them. We can *choose* to put others before ourselves and practice humility. We can *choose* to come together in gatherings and build meaningful relationships. We can *choose* to submit to wise and loving leadership, and see correction as an opportunity for growth. We can seek out wise and trusted sources of information, rather than blindly following the latest gossip. And we can approach the Word of God with reverence and humility, seeking to understand its meaning rather than bending it to fit our own desires. By making these choices, we can position ourselves for MORE.

Our scripture focus for this year's fast comes out of 2 Corinthians.

"And now, isn't it wonderful all the ways in which this distress has goaded you closer to God? You're more alive, more concerned, more sensitive, more reverent, more human, more passionate, more responsible."
2 Corinthians 7:11 MSG

Let us spend the next twenty-one days ridding ourselves of distractions and purposefully seek the Face of God. Let us ask Him to produce clear visual definitions in us, center our interests and activities, and adapt to the prevailing level of light to see clearly.

Corporately, we are suggesting a Daniel Fast. But we are asking you to seek God, concerning the conditions of your fast. This is not only limited to food, but any other things that you need to abstain from. The important thing to remember is position yourself and your household to hear from God like never before. We encourage all persons (children, adults, members and frequent attenders) to participate on some level.

We will have weekly prayer focuses, but we also suggest you personalize your time of fasting and respond to the Lord's prompting.

Let's remember to support and encourage one another during the next few weeks. Together we will stand strong and walk clearly into this next season.

Corporate Weekly Prayer Focus

Week One: January 22-28, 2024

- **More alive:** We should not be afraid, but rather embrace everything that God has presented before us – in our ministry, as well as in our daily lives. Rather than being controlled by fear or shame, we should seize every moment with confidence and courage.
- **More concerned:** It's critical that we focus our attention on the things of God including extending our concern to our fellow human beings. Taking care of yourself and your health during this season is vital. We must take care of ourselves in order to take care of others.
- **More sensitive:** It's important to be attentive to the world around us, including discerning the Holy Spirit and the work of the devil. Additionally, we should be more sensitive to the people in our lives, such as our spouses and family. The people we cross paths with throughout our day deserve our compassion and care.

Week Two: January 29 – February 4, 2024

- **More reverent:** Reverence can manifest in various ways such as having the fear (profound admiration, awe and deep respect) of God. Our worship and prayer must go deeper than the surface. God lives within us but we can become so comfortable/casual with His presence that we start to lose the wonder of God. We can get to the place of taking God's grace and mercy for granted.
- **More human:** Work on forming relationships with others. We need true, deep connections with people. This includes making an effort to be in the House of God, connecting with a spiritual family. We must also recognize carnality. The Bible Dictionary defines carnality as "the state of being carnal, or fleshly; disposition to live according to the flesh, i.e., sinful lusts. Carnality is not just about what we do, but what we think and why we do it. It is a state of mind focused on self rather than God.

Week Three: February 5-11, 2024

- **More passionate:** When we stop going through the motions, we become more passionate. We realize that time is precious, and tomorrow is never a guarantee. This fresh sense of urgency can help us to fully embrace the present moment with enthusiasm and vigor. This also includes becoming more passionate about the things of God. What are you called to do? What does God want you to give your time to?
- **More responsible:** Being accountable for yourself and your actions will help build responsibility. Let's quit procrastinating and focus on our priorities. Being more responsible means keeping our emotions and anger in check. It means honoring our commitments and promises. Stewardship, tithing, and volunteering are all ways to become more responsible in the House of God.

My Commitment

After you prayerfully consider how/what you will fast and what your prayer focus for the fast will include, record those commitments below.

Description of my fast commitment (Daniel Fast or other food or activities you plan to abstain from):

My Personal Prayer Focus(s):

The Practical: What do I do and how do I do it?

Each Day Ask/Task Yourself:

1. What am I giving up or fasting from today so I may better focus on the things of God?
What did I add to my life that will bring greater will bring greater wholeness or spiritual depth?
What did I do in the earth to advance the Kingdom of God in at least one life that touches mine?
2. Check the Daniel Fast guidelines to see what foods The Dwelling Place family has chosen to abstain from and purpose to join in.
3. Read through Ephesians 1:17-21 and the weekly focus. Then prayerfully seek God for how this applies for your life.
4. Check email and/or Facebook for practical ideas and discussions or contact a friend to discuss what you are learning – this is a community effort, not a solo exercise.
5. Make extra effort to be at every prayer time and service.
6. If you forget, mess up, or just plain give up...don't let it keep you down or away. Just get up and start again.

Daniel Fast Explained

The background of the “Daniel fast” is that Daniel and his three friends had been “deported” to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians had conquered Judah (2 Kings 24:13-14). Daniel and his three friends were put into the Babylonian court servant “training program.” Part of the program was learning Babylonian customs, beliefs, laws, and practices. The eating habits of the Babylonians were not in complete agreement with the Mosaic Law. As a result, Daniel asked if he and his three friends could be excused from eating the King’s food (which was likely sacrificed to Babylonian false gods and idols). Daniel stepped out in faith believing God had called him to eat such a diet and would protect him.

Food Guidelines for Observing a Daniel Fast:

You have freedom to modify this fast according to your personal, physical and spiritual needs. You can modify these guidelines as you feel led by the Lord. The main thing is to decide ahead of time how you are going to apply the Daniel Fast, then stick to your commitment. Daniel only ate things planted for harvest and drank only water. You may want to keep it simple and eat only fruit and vegetables and drink only water.

- Whole Grains: brown rice, oats, rolled oats, oatmeal, barley, corn, popcorn, wheat
- Legumes: dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, green beans, green peas, peanuts, etc. Grain legumes include beans, lentils, lupins, peas and peanuts (includes natural peanut butter).
- Fruits: apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, berries, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, breadfruit, cantaloupe, cherries, coconuts, cranberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, grenadine, guava, honeydew melons, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, melons, mulberry, nectarines, oats, olives, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon, etc.
- Vegetables: artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, any peppers, any potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, etc.
- Seeds: all nuts, natural peanut butter, natural almond butter, sprouts, ground flax, etc.
- Liquids: spring water, distilled water, filtered water, 100% all-natural fruit or vegetable juices

Food to Avoid:

- Meat, fish, poultry, etc.
- White flour and all products using it, white rice, hominy, and pasta
- Fried foods
- Caffeine
- Carbonated beverages, including diet sodas
- Wine or any other alcoholic drinks
- Foods containing preservatives or additives
- Refined sugar
- High fructose corn syrup
- Chemical sugar substitutes
- Margarine, shortening, animal fat, high fat products

Fasting Tips to Help You Succeed:

1. Drink lots of fluids. Keep them on hand and cool if needed.
2. Prepare for by eating lightly the day before you begin.
3. Develop a strategy to avoid food shopping and meal preparation for others.
4. Even as you set aside time to focus on spiritual things, do not sit around thinking about your stomach. Stay busy, plan ahead to have available what you can eat, etc.
5. At normal meal times, study your Bible and pray — even at work. —Snack on the Bible frequently.
6. Pray in the Spirit often, whenever there is opportunity.
7. If fasting a full day and skipping supper, plan for early bedtime to avoid the late evening munchies.
8. If you experience a period of weakness, try fruit juice to get a little sugar into your system.
9. Don't watch TV food commercials — they know how to hook you.
10. Apply spiritual authority to your body when it begins to “talk back.” Remember, the real you is the person on the inside; your spirit. Take authority!
11. Call a spiritual friend or mentor for encouragement.
12. Study fasting in the Bible and in Christian books on the subject. Education on the subject strengthens our resolve and sharpens our focus.
13. Bear in mind that short term fasting is both safe and satisfying and has been endorsed by various medical and health experts as being beneficial.
14. If you reach a point where you are about to give up your fast before you wanted to, try a liquid meal drink — this can often take the edge off enough to keep going.
15. Focus on the fact that the Head of our church, Jesus Christ, has led the way in fasting (40 days on one occasion), and has asked us to follow His example. God's Son would never lead us to harm, only to abundant living (John 10:10).
16. When breaking a fast, don't overeat or you will pay the price. Let your first meal be a light one and then snack later if you are still hungry.
17. Try to limit strenuous activities that will deplete the body of fluids during a fast. Moderate exercise is okay, but watch the heat levels.
18. Headaches can occur when fasting due to the purging of toxins that have been stored in your system. Pray, continue to drink plenty of fluids to flush your system, and feel free to take over-the-counter medication if needed.
19. If you blow it, don't spend time feeling condemned. Successful fasting is learned and practiced. God still loves you and your effort means more to God than not trying at all. You will succeed one meal and one day at a time!
20. A fast does not mean that you cannot eat out, many local restaurants have vegetable plates or salad options that can be modified to accommodate a Daniel fast. You do not have to give up social interaction that may occur over a meal, just focus on the fellowship and not the food.
21. Stay involved with the body as a whole. Allow yourself to be encouraged by others on this fasting journey - share ideas and recipes, pray for one another, etc. Phone calls, email, and the church Facebook group are all great tools to stay connected.