



A PERSONAL GUIDE TO

Prayer & Fasting

In the Bible, prayer and fasting are often mentioned together. Throughout history, God's people have made fasting part of their worship. Fasting is God's way of helping us take our focus off the physical and place it on the spiritual.

◆ **WHAT IS FASTING?**

Fasting is so foreign to most of us in the global west, it seems like a strange and ancient practice. To fast primarily means “not to eat.” Yet, biblical fasting has a broader application. It has a spiritual purpose, in an act of the will through which the Christian exerts spiritual control over the flesh with a view to a more personal and powerful experience with God through prayer.

◆ **IS FASTING RELEVANT TODAY?**

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus said, “When you fast...” He makes the assumption that fasting is a normal part of the Christian's walk. He doesn't say, “You must fast” or “If you fast,” simply “When you fast.” In Matthew 9:15, Jesus says, “The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they will fast.” This is perhaps the most important word about fasting for our day. The most natural interpretation of the days when Jesus' disciples will fast is in the present Church age. In fact, this is how the disciples understood Him as well because it was only after His ascension to the Father that we read of them fasting (Acts 13:2). It is this age of the Church to which our Master referred when He said, “Then they will fast.” The time is NOW!

◆ ASSESS YOUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION

This is the most critical question of the fast. Preparation for a meaningful fast begins with repentance and confession. If you have unconfessed sin, you must confess it. (Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:2)

- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit brings to your attention.
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. (Mark 11:25, Luke 11:4, 17:3-4)
- Ask God to fill you with His Spirit so that He will be your sustenance. (Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 5:14-15, John 4:32-34)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart. (Hebrews 11:6)
- Hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. (Galatians 5:16-17)
- Remember that fasting is feasting as you “feed” on His presence and His will.

PSALM 22:14

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14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.
16 For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—
17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of
the dog!
21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued² me from the horns of
the wild oxen!
22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will
praise you:

You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you
offspring of Israel!
For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him,

before him shall bow all who go
down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep
himself alive.
30 Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the
coming generation;
31 they shall come and proclaim his
righteousness to a people yet
unborn,
that he has done it.

The Lord Is My Shepherd

A PSALM OF DAVID.

23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall
not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green
pastures.
3 He leads me beside still waters.⁴
He restores my soul.
4 He leads me in paths of righteousness⁵
for his name's sake.
5 Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,⁶
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
6 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil,
my cup overflows.
7 Surely⁷ goodness and mercy⁸ shall
follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell⁹ in the house of the

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PSALM 26:7

He will receive blessing from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of
his salvation.
1 Such is the generation of those who
seek him,
who seek the face of the God of
Jacob!
Selah
Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
1 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!
2 Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
3 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory!
Selah

Teach Me Your Paths

25 O you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust.
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.
Indeed, none who wait for you shall be
put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are
wanton and treacherous.
26 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
27 Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.
28 Remember

11 For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
12 Who is the man who fears the LORD?
Him will he instruct in the way that
he should choose.
13 His soul shall abide in well-being,
and his offspring shall inherit the land.
14 The friendship¹ of the LORD is for those
who fear him,
and he makes known to them his
covenant.
15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the
net.
16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
bring me out of my distresses.
18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
19 Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they
hate me.
20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!
Let me not be put to shame, for I
take refuge in you.
21 May integrity and uprightness
preserve me,
for I wait for you.
22 Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all his troubles.
I Will Bless the LORD

WAYS TO FAST

There are many ways to fast. The purpose of fasting is to give up in order to have more focus on God in prayer. Several types of fasting are appropriate:

◆ **MEDIA FAST**

Spend less time on your phone. Designate hours, days, even weeks to be off of social media. Don't start your day on your phone. Monitor the amount of time on your phone, screens, playing games or watching movies.

◆ **A PARTIAL FAST**

Refrain from certain types of food such as soft drinks, coffee, sweets, desserts, and only eat fruits or vegetables. A partial fast can also include a liquid diet during which time the individual drinks only fruit drinks and water. A partial fast could also mean that you have only water. Make sure you are in a healthy physical state for this kind of fasting.

◆ **AN ABSOLUTE FAST**

During an absolute fast the person has no food or water. Make sure you are in a healthy physical state for this kind of fasting.

◆ **OTHER FASTS**

Any activity that takes time and keeps you from having time to focus on God in prayer can be sacrificed for Him. Focus on prayer during the time you would ordinarily spend with these activities.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR FASTING SCHEDULE BE?

During your fasting period, you could follow a daily schedule. A routine that could look like this:

◆ **MORNING**

Begin the day with prayer and fasting. Don't look at your phone and get lost in the news, social media, or e-mails. Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees. Invite God's Spirit to fill you with His presence. Let Him know that all you desire in life is His good pleasure. Pray for vision for your life, your church, country, and beyond.

◆ **NOON**

Return to prayer and God's Word. Take a short prayer walk. Spend time in intercessory prayer for our church, our country, and our world. Pray for our church staff. Pray for the lost people you know.

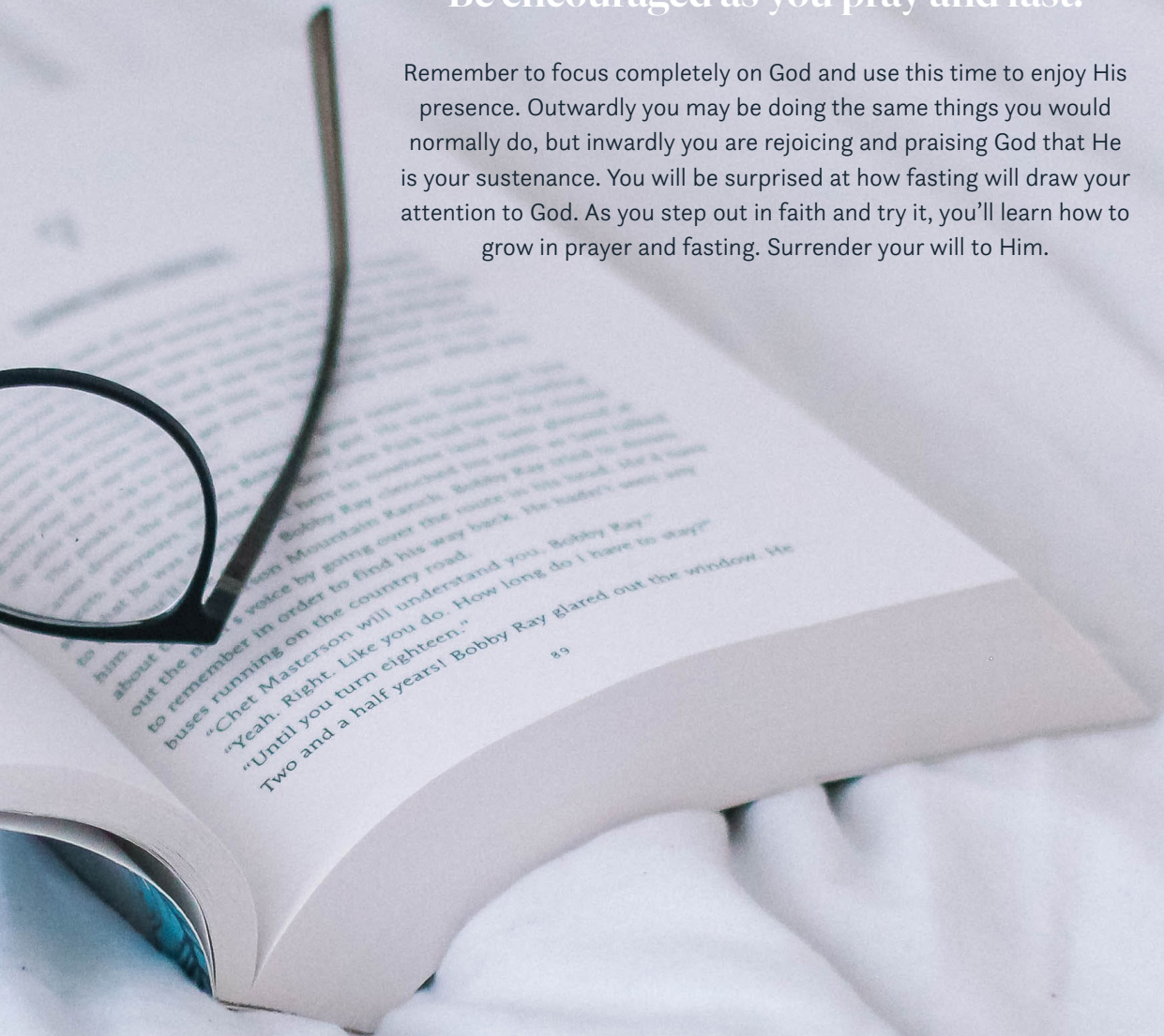
◆ **EVENING**

Seek a quiet place alone with the Lord. If others are fasting, join them in prayer. If you are married, pray with your spouse for God's will to be done in your marriage and in your family. Pray that God alone would be your one desire.



Be encouraged as you pray and fast.

Remember to focus completely on God and use this time to enjoy His presence. Outwardly you may be doing the same things you would normally do, but inwardly you are rejoicing and praising God that He is your sustenance. You will be surprised at how fasting will draw your attention to God. As you step out in faith and try it, you'll learn how to grow in prayer and fasting. Surrender your will to Him.



**JOIN THE PARK CITIES FAMILY THE FIRST MONDAY
OF EVERY MONTH AS WE PRAY AND FAST TOGETHER.**

Park Cities
BAPTIST CHURCH