



21 Days of Fasting and Prayer

January 10th through January 31st

Welcome to The Fellowship's 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer Guide!

There are times when God is trying to get our attention. In a world of distractions, it is hard to hear what God might be saying to you. What if He is trying to get your attention right now? What if He is calling your name? What if God is trying to help you take a turn in life right now?

In these **21 days of fasting and prayer**, it is not only possible but probable that God will speak into your life and use this as a turning point. This season of fasting and prayer will be aided and accompanied by several tools in this guide, including a Biblical guide to fasting, different fasting options, and a prayer guide for each of the 21 days that includes Biblical passages to read and reflect upon, a brief devotional thought, reflection questions, and a prayer. **I am eagerly awaiting what the Lord will do for us, in us and through us during these very special 21 days.** As the Apostle Paul wrote ...

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ... Ephesians 1:16-19

Pastor Jerry

Fasting Guide

What does the Bible teach about fasting?

Biblical fasting involves abstaining from eating (and/or drinking) for spiritual purposes.

In the Old Testament, Israel celebrated certain annual fasts, the most prominent being the Day of Atonement. There were also occasional fasts tied to specific historical events, sometimes individual and sometimes corporate. Here are a few of the occasions for fasting: a time of grief (I Sam. 31:13; Nehemiah 1:4), a time of repentance (I Sam 7:6; I Kings 21:27), an expression of humility (Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10), and an expression of a need for God's guidance and help. What all of these fasts share in common is that they were an expression of dependence on God.

Several New Testament passages give us insight about fasting.

Fasting teaches us that God's Word nourishes us. Matthew 4:1-4 records the only example of Jesus fasting, just prior to His being tempted in the wilderness. He faced temptation with these words, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3-5, which talks about the 40 years Israel spent in the wilderness, depending daily on manna to sustain them. He says that God humbled them and let them be hungry in order to teach them to depend on God's Word to sustain them. By His example of fasting, Jesus reminds us that food alone cannot sustain us. We need to be nourished by God's Word.

Fasting teaches us that doing God's will sustains us. John 4:31-35 records Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. When the disciples return, they encourage Jesus to eat. He responds by saying, "I have food to eat that you know not of." Then He adds, "My food is to do the will of the Father." Again, Jesus reminds us that food alone is not enough. We are sustained by doing God's will.

Fasting teaches us that Jesus Himself sustains us. In John 6:48-50 Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die." We see this pictured symbolically in the bread and the cup of the Lord's supper. Jesus is the source of eternal life. Fasting is feasting on Jesus. He assumed that fasting would be a part of His disciple's spiritual life. In Matthew 6:16-18, He says, "when you fast," not "if you fast." He warns us not to fast to impress people, but to be near to the heart of God.

What is the purpose of fasting? Fasting is designed to intensify our dependence on God by weakening our dependence on food and other things. How does it do that? Fasting reveals and heals our dependence on food (and other things) to fill the discomfort caused by low self-esteem, unfulfilling work, unloving relationships, uncontrollable circumstances, etc. It removes the false peace derived from the pleasure of eating.

Richard Foster says,

"More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. David writes, "I humbled my soul with fasting" (Psalm 69:10). Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear—if they are within us, they will surface during fasting."

Fasting teaches us that we can go without getting what we want and survive. Fasting can free us from having to have what we want. Therefore, fasting can teach moderation or self-control, not only in relation to food, but in other areas as well. It teaches contentment. (I Timothy 6:6)

Fasting expresses and deepens our hunger for God. Richard Foster says, "Fasting reminds us that we are sustained "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God:" (Matt. 4:4). Food does not sustain us; God sustains us. In Christ, "all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). Therefore, in experiences of fasting, we are abstaining from food or other activities and feasting on God's Word. Fasting must always, first and foremost, center on God. **It must be about Him.**

THREE STEPS TO PREPARE

Step 1: Clarify the purpose of your fast.

Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Fasting is God-led and God-initiated, which means that He fuels a desire to fast and pray. He loves it when we fast.

Step 2: Specify the kind of fast you will do.

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:

- **How long you will fast?**
One meal, one day, one week, several weeks, certain days
(Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts)
- **What type of fast does God want you to undertake?**
This is discussed in the Types of Fasts section below.
- **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 your heart, mind, and body for fasting.

Fasting is not a spur-of-the-moment thing. It is planned. We must prepare. The very foundation of fasting and prayer is **repentance**. Un-confessed sin can hinder your prayers. There are several things you can do to prepare your heart.

- **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.
- **Do not rush into your fast.** Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high fat and sugary foods. Eating raw fruit and vegetables prior to your fast is helpful. 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.
- **Prepare your heart and mind.** Remember that God is your Father and He loves you and is for you.
- **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.
- **Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ** (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).

Types of Fasts

Now that we have explored the Old and New Testament teaching and instruction on fasting, we can proceed to discuss specific kinds of fasts. Let us begin with the helpful words of Richard Foster in his classic, *Celebration of Discipline*:

*“As with all the Disciplines, a progression should be observed;
it is wise to learn to walk well before we try to run.”*

Biblical fasting almost always concerns food. Since the purpose of fasting, as we saw above, is to focus on God, to humble ourselves and to remind ourselves that we are sustained by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, then the task in fasting is connecting our “going without” to “hungering for God.” This takes time, focus and prayer in itself. Please do not expect to be an “expert” at fasting right away. Fasting is a discipline that can take a very long time to understand well. Also, do not let this fact deter you or intimidate you.

Fasting is not unlike a beautifully written masterpiece of literature. It is simple enough for a youth to understand and enjoy, and yet magnificently rich enough for the scholar to devote his/her entire life to.

Abstaining from certain types of foods (meat, sweets, etc.) - Daniel 10:3 This type is a good one for beginners to fasting or those with health needs and special or restrictive diets. Choose to abstain from something like breads, sweets, sodas, coffee, or even red meat. Perhaps spend some time reading through Daniel's fast in Daniel chapter 1 and chapter 10. Stick to only fruits and vegetables like he did or something similar. Determine the timing and duration of your fast and begin. You may choose to go without this specific type of food on only certain days like Fridays, or you may go without during the weekdays only or perhaps every day. Finally, choose the duration of your fast. This fast is 21 days (January 10 – January 30), but that does not mean you must go without for all of the 21 days. Determine the timing and duration ahead of time and stick to it. Rather, pray through it.

Types of Fasts (continued)

Abstaining from all food - Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9 This kind of fast is more difficult, but can be broken up by timing and duration. This seems to be the most prevalent of the fasts we see in the Bible. It is also the most intimidating, but refuse to let it scare you. Fasting from all food is not scary if you determine beforehand when you will do so and for how long. Here are some ideas.

- Start slowly. Begin with fasting for only a part of a day (lunch, or lunch and dinner). Do this for one day a week, or perhaps three days a week. You determine the timing and duration. Take a step of faith. Fasting is risky and involves our faith.
- Next, try fasting from food but not beverages. This means that according to your timing and duration, you would not eat any solid foods, but only drink water, juices, smoothies, or perhaps simple soup broths.
- Do this for the first one or two weeks. Devote the time that you normally would eat to Scripture reading and prayer. Focus on Jesus' statements about food.
- Next, try a 24-hour fast. This means that you get up and eat a good breakfast and drink only water or juice until the following breakfast the next day. Set aside specific time, during normal meal times, if possible, to pray and seek God.
- Finally, you may progress to a two or three day fast. For some, progression may lead to a multi-day, even multi-week fast. But remember the purpose of your fast.

Abstaining from entertainment - Daniel 6:18 The king's voluntary "fasting" from entertainment in the time of Daniel helps us further understand yet another type of fast. Fasting from entertainment can be particularly helpful and accessible to kids and teens. Think of abstaining from television, social media, video games, music, texting, all reading except the Bible, etc. for the duration of your fast. This can be a very powerful decision, even as a supplement to food fasts.

Choosing your fasting plan is a very personal decision. We are all at different places in our walk with God and our spirituality should never be a cause for comparison or competition. There is nothing more "inherently spiritual" about one type of fast as opposed to another. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but know your body, know your options, and most importantly, seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. **It is also important to not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast.** This is a time to disconnect enough with your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God.

**If you do not choose to fast, or no matter what kind of fast you choose,
let's seek God together as a church in prayer.**



Day 1, Sunday, January 10

Increasing in spiritual hunger and holiness

READ - Psalm 51; Daniel 6

It was Daniel's practice, three times a day, to go to an upstairs room in his apartment, open the windows facing Jerusalem, get down on his knees, and pray to the one true God. No doubt, Daniel prayed at other times also. He probably prayed throughout the day. But there were these special times, set aside times, where it was his priority to meet with God in prayer. In fact, it was such a priority to Daniel that when the king passed a decree that for the next thirty days people could only pray to the king, Daniel was unfazed. "No way." Daniel may have been an important official in Darius' kingdom, but when the king's law (don't pray) conflicted with God's Law (pray), the choice was clear. Daniel just kept right on praying. Read Daniel 6. Daniel was thrown in the lion's lair, but God protected Daniel, delivered Daniel, honored Daniel, and put it in the Bible for all to see. Of the many truths in this stunning chapter, one concerns Daniel's prayer. Three times a day, he set aside a special time to pray. God nowhere commands us that we must do the same, but there is wisdom here. Wisdom would suggest a special time, or several briefer times, set aside each day to meet with God in prayer. A time we prize. A time we protect. A time we prioritize.

REFLECT

Yes, we want to pray throughout the day, having an ongoing conversation with our Father. But it is wise to also have a special time of prayer each day. Maybe it is not a long time, but it is your time, as in you and God. It is your time to talk and listen and be together, no matter what else happens that day. Your time to connect. During that time, God will fill you up, restore your soul, and prepare you for whatever the day brings.

- Describe your thoughts around Daniel and his commitment to the Lord.
- What special time will you set aside in the next 21 days to talk and listen to God?

PRAY

Lord, awaken my heart to Your love. Give me an increased hunger to spend more time in prayer, worship, and Your Word. Please give me a greater awareness of Your holiness, a tender conscience, and a heart to please You in every thought, word, and deed.



Day 2, Monday, January 11

Draw close to the Lord

READ - Psalm 24:3-4; Psalm 32:5; Hebrews 4:14-16

How can I sincerely draw close to God knowing He is all powerful, all knowing, and fully aware of all my sin? It is a common malady of this Christian life to face serious insecurities when considering approaching God. In my own life, I have struggled believing that God really wants to be with me knowing what he knows about me. Why the struggle? Because I know me! I know my propensity to sin. If I were Him, I would not be pleased to have me come near. Praise God! He knows we have these struggles. And, He has an answer. **First**, my confidence in drawing near to God is not based on my performance. My confidence is in the performance of Jesus. Hebrews 4 instructs us to come to God with boldness based on our full confidence in the finished work of Jesus on our behalf. And **second**, my confidence in drawing near to God is based on His love. I can trust His love for me. And strangely enough, the very things in my life that appear to disqualify me – sin, weakness, failure, flaws, etc. – provide convincing proof of God's love. If someone says they love you, but are not familiar with your past failures or current weaknesses, you cannot be sure they really love you. But if they are fully aware of the good and the 'ugly' ... and love you anyway, you are truly loved. Praise God! He knows it all and loves us anyway.

REFLECT

My sin and weakness become my opportunity to really know He loves me. I can really trust His love for me.

Today we draw near to God.

We do this by uncovering the 'ugly' side. We confess our sin. We reveal the part of our life that puts His love for us to the test (at least in our minds). And praise God again ... He proves His love. He forgives and loves us anyway. It is not until we recognize the depth of our sin that we realize the depth of God's love.

- What sins have you minimized to 'little mistakes' versus acknowledging they are what nailed Jesus to the cross?
- According to Romans 2:4, it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance? Where and how are you experiencing that now?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, reveal anything in my life that would hinder my ability to come into Your presence. Help me see my propensity towards sin and help me to change. Help me to see my sin the way You see it. Thank You for loving me in spite of my failures. Lord, it is your loving-kindness that leads me to repentance.



Day 3, Tuesday, January 12
Worship with a whole heart

READ - Psalm 111; Psalm 27; Romans 12:1-2

In You, O God, I find my identity. When I come to seek You, I find that You are already here, seeking me. What gives my worship meaning is so much more than anything that I can do or say - **it is You!** You are the reason I came to exist; You are the giver of my next breath, and You are the reason for my continued being. **You are the reason I worship.** I worship You with my whole heart. I come to worship You because of who You are! You are the one and only true God! I bring You praise because of Your holiness. You are so gracious to me, and You have already done more than enough for me to bring You thanksgiving. I worship You. May my life bring glory to You, my Lord and my God. I want to worship You with my whole heart. I am not ashamed to declare my love and adoration for You before others. All I am is Yours, and I belong to you. I am Your possession. May You be pleased with my worship. I long to recapture a spirit of genuine worship, a personal revival of my whole being, heart, soul, and spirit. Heaven and earth declare Your glory, O God, and therefore so do I. All of creation submits to You, and so my life is surrendered to You. I worship You with my whole heart.

REFLECT

How can I be in God's presence and not be changed? Do you long to be the kind of worshipper that God has been looking for, fully devoted to Him and Him alone?

- How has being in God's presence changed you?
- Because everything we do can be an act of worship, how does this affect your view and more so, your attitude about common, everyday tasks?

PRAY

Humbly and yet confidently, I come into Your presence. I am relying on the promise of Christ, providing me the relationship with You as my Heavenly Father. Bring me fully into Your presence God. Lead me more fully into Your will so that every day of my life will be worship, offering a living sacrifice to bring You glory.



Day 4, Wednesday, January 13

Set the desire of your heart

READ - Psalm 27:4; Psalm 37:4; If you have time read Ezra 7-10

When it comes to setting our hearts in the proper place, there may be no better example outside of Jesus than an obscure often forgotten figure in the Old Testament named Ezra. He did not lead the first wave of exiles back to Jerusalem; he led the second. He was not a powerful military leader, just a scribe. He did not even show up in the book that bore his name until chapter 7 (out of only 10). But once Ezra arrived on the scene, he arrived in force. We learn that the hand of God was all over this man (Ezra 7:6,9,28). That he successfully led 5,000 people with 30 tons of precious metals on a four month, 900 mile journey from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 8). That he was supremely concerned about holiness and the purity of God's people (Ezra 9). And that he ultimately led God's people to repentance like few other scenes we read in scripture (Ezra 10). So what is the point? The point is that all of **Ezra's success can be Biblically directed back to the place where he set his heart.**

This is the key to Ezra's life of leadership and a clear guide to success with God in our own lives. Set your heart to the study of God's Word. Set your heart to doing God's word. And set your heart to giving God's Word away.

REFLECT

Spend a few moments thinking deeply in God's presence about where your heart is currently set and where He is calling you to set it.

- The world needs more people like Ezra. Where will you set your heart?
- Jesus reminds us of an important place to set our hearts in Matthew 6:33. Where and how will you set your heart and life on the Kingdom of God, the reign and rule of Christ in your life and world?

PRAY

Lord I want You to be the top priority of my life with nothing even close in second place. Help me, Father, to love You more than I ever have before. I want You to fill my heart, all of it, so Your love and grace can flow richly through me to everyone I come in contact with.



Day 5, Thursday, January 14
Walk in wisdom and revelation

READ – Psalm 43; Ephesians 1:17-18

Too often we slide slowly into the normalcy of pretending and stay there ... unaware. With this strange statement, I mean that as Christ Jesus has resurrected our souls by His grace, we know that light and life only come from Him. We are convinced of this emphatic truth. We have looked elsewhere for life and have been awakened to its emptiness. But sadly, we often return there slowly and sink into the gray of unintentional motion, conditioned responses, and banal routine. **Lord Jesus, Open our eyes!** James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, reminds us that when we lack wisdom, we should ask it of God who gives generously. In Psalm 43, the Psalmist confesses that God's light and God's truth are the only reliable leaders, for they bring us to where He is. **God of Heaven, Lead us with your light and truth!** As we continue our way into this consecrated season of fasting and prayer, we are coming together as a church praying that God would lead us, open our eyes, and give us the moving power of His Spirit in a fresh and awakening way. This prayer is a heartfelt, guttural, straining desire to return to True Reality, God's light and life. We know that Christ Jesus has resurrected our souls by His grace and that light and life, along with wisdom and revelation, come only from Him.

REFLECT

Spend a few moments in silence. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart to reveal places where you need wisdom, understanding and discernment.

- Where have you sensed God giving you the gift of wisdom and/or discernment in your life?
- James tells us that God will give us wisdom if we ask. Where do you need wisdom and discernment in your life?
- Where have you fallen back into ways that are empty of God's light and truth? Confess and repent of that now.

PRAY

Lord, open my eyes to see You more clearly and my ears to hear anything You desire to speak. I pray for a Spirit of wisdom and revelation that I might know Jesus more deeply and have a profound understanding of the hope that is in His heart for me.



Day 6, Friday, January 15

Living with power and purpose

READ – John 15:1-4; Romans 15:13

As we near the end of the first week of fasting, you may be tired. You may be wondering how you will be able to fast for two more weeks. It reminds me of how often in life we feel tired. Physically tired, spiritually tired, emotionally tired. We have so many things pulling at our time and making us tired. Our daily To Do lists just seem to get longer and longer with less and less time for rest. Do you ever have those days where you just feel completely drained? Like you have nothing left to give? I often ask myself, "How can I fulfill the purpose God has for me when I feel like I have no more to give?" The answer is simple. God's Word, the Bible. Jesus tells us in John 15:1-4, "I am the vine ... **Remain in me.**" It takes discipline to keep your relationship with Christ at the top of the priority list. Especially, when there are so many other things fighting to be at the top of the list. The Bible is very clear, though, in that **if we are to bear fruit, we must stay connected to the vine.** He will prune us to bear fruit and cut off what is not bearing fruit for His purpose. **God does have a plan and a purpose for each and every one of us.** We must remain in Him to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. If we put God first and stay connected to Him, He will give us the strength and power to do the tasks He has set before us.

REFLECT

This has been a season where so many of us have felt disconnected from Christ, the church, our family. We have filled our time, schedules and lives with other stuff, habits and interests.

- What areas of your life are not bearing fruit and can be pruned?
- Where can you find more time in your schedule, your week, your life to stay connected to the vine?

PRAY

Father God, I pray for You to help me stay connected to the vine. Lord, I desire You in every aspect of my life. Please prune off the things that are not important and get in the way of my time with You. I know that I can only fulfill your purpose for me by being filled with Your Holy Spirit.



Day 7, Saturday, January 16

Find and fulfill your destiny

READ – Jeremiah 29:11-13; Psalm 139

So often, we are the ones to decide what we want to be or do with our life. As children, we are asked “What do you want to be when you grow up?” We get out of college and it is all about the job. **The truth is that finding and fulfilling our destiny can only be done in God.** Joseph was given a dream, David had an encounter with a prophet, and Joshua had a mentor. In all three cases, God conveyed His plan into the lives of these individuals. Jeremiah wrote that God has a plan for your life and when you seek Him, you will discover your destiny (Jeremiah 29:11- 13). Moreover, you find out His plan is far superior to yours. Holding on to the dream is tough when you face prison time and accusations, as Joseph did. The words of the prophet can fade away when you find yourself hiding and living in caves, as David did. The disciplines of your apprenticeship imparted by a mentor can become a lonely place when he is gone, as Joshua discovered. However, all three experienced what Mary said in Luke 1:37, “All things are possible with God”. It is only the word from God that can sustain you in the long term. His plan for our lives is better than our own. The greatest joy, fulfillment, and success come when we seek Him about the direction

REFLECT

Take a minute and think about the dreams you had as a child. What did you want to be when you grew up?

- When did you first become aware that God might have a different and better plan than yours?
- Where do you believe God is leading you?
- Are you willing to surrender your plan in order to discover and live out His plan for you?

PRAY

Lord, please give me the next step in Your divine plan for my life. Help me to be still and know that You are God, so that I can clearly sense Your guidance and hear from You. I commit to follow You, wherever You lead me.



Day 8, Sunday, January 17
Produce the fruit of the Spirit

READ – Galatians 5; 1 Corinthians 13

Once we ask Jesus into our lives, the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us. The apostle Paul gives some great advice for loving and living in the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5. He tells us we are called to serve one another humbly; to love others like we love ourselves. He goes on to list the fruit that comes from living in step with God, one of which is love.

Love is a loaded word. If you asked ten people to describe it, you'd most likely get ten different answers. The good news is we don't have to guess what true, Godly love is. It is spelled out for us in the Word. Love is patient and kind. It does not boast because it is controlled and gentle. It is not rude, self-seeking, or easily angered. It does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth because it is full of goodness, faithfulness, and joy. Do you see the connection between these two pieces of scripture? They weave together quite beautifully and leave us with a clear picture of what love and living in the Spirit really looks like.

One thought or interpretation is that love is the actual fruit and all the others are attributes of love much like we read in 1 Corinthians 13. You might then say love is also ... joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control ... when we are filled with love, we are filled with all these fruits.

REFLECT

If these are fruits of the Holy Spirit living in us, then the more the Spirit is filling us and in control of us the more likely love and all the fruits are to be visible and edible. Spend a few moments asking the Holy Spirit to fill you and lead you.

- Which fruits do you think you and those in your family bear often and easily?
- Which fruits do you think you should ask God to help you bear more often?

PRAY

Gracious God, thank You for Your Word that describes so clearly what love is and for Your Son Jesus who humbly modeled it on earth for us. Help my family and I to produce the Fruit of Your Spirit and love each other in a way that pleases You. May we always have a love that protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.



Day 9, Monday, January 18

Saved and delivered

READ – Psalm 18:2; Psalm 16; Acts 16:31

Andrew, 17, was from a strong Christian home, where he was loved and cared for. Close to graduating high school, he took a turn for the worse. Andrew was a smart kid, but academics were not his forte. His friends joked, "Andrew will work at McDonald's all his life." They thought it was funny. Andrew laughed on the outside, but grew more broken inside. Early in the school year, he began to use drugs. He kept it a secret from his family; he thought they would not understand. In the dark, his addictions grew. His family tried every method to get through to him. They tried punishment, and Andrew would rebel more. They tried loving him in every way they could think of, and he rebelled more. **His family was exhausted and confused.** They came to a place where they finally realized that the situation was out of their hands - placing it entirely in God's hands. His family cannot explain it, nor can he really, but when things seemed most hopeless, God saved him. Andrew struggles to put it into words, but somehow, he felt the love of God, which altered the course of his life. It was almost as if a light went on inside him; the blinders were off. **He was saved and delivered into the love of God.** His family counts their failed attempts and gives God all the glory for doing in Andrew what human beings could not. **It does not always happen ... but it can!**

REFLECT

Maybe you know an Andrew. Maybe you are the parent of an Andrew. God can save and deliver them and we are called to pray and believe.

- Is there someone you know who your heart aches for and you long for them to be saved and delivered?
- Will you trust that God will do the impossible in their lives?
- In this painful and confusing time, will you trust God to be your rock? Take refuge in Him.

PRAY

Father, I pray for the hurting and lost of this world. I ask that You do what only You can in the life of _____ (insert name). Be their Rock, their Redeemer. Use me in effective ways to show Your love. Enter into the hearts of those far from You. Be their Savior; deliver them into a transforming relationship with You. I pray for any loved ones by name who do not know the Lord or have fallen away from You. I ask You to reveal Yourself to them as the awesome God that You are. I pray a hedge of protection around my family from all deception, temptation, and any plans of the enemy that would thwart the good plans God has for them.



Day 10, Tuesday, January 19
Staying connected in community

READ – Psalm 100; Hebrew 10:19-25

The Christian life was never intended to be a solitary one. Jesus shared His life with twelve disciples and then taught them to share it with others. The early believers gathered together to break bread and share the living Word. What we do each week in church is an expression of shared belief in Jesus – His body, a community of faith that gains strength and courage through worship and the word. But a full and meaningful life of following Jesus is built on much more than one hour a week in church. It requires personal devotion and an interdependency with others in prayer, study, fellowship, and worship.

In other words, **the best way to follow and serve Jesus is in community.** Finding a Group can be hard for today's families because they come in all shapes and sizes, and with all kinds of schedules and demands. Many are widowed, single, divorced, or living in a blended family. Some have zero children while some have twelve. Some are working two jobs or may be recently unemployed. No matter what, where, who, when, or how ... we need each other and to be in community with other followers of Jesus. **The church is a place of belonging.**

REFLECT

Being in relationship with others is messy but necessary for us to live out the teachings of scripture. Sit quietly and listen to the Spirit as you ask and ponder these questions. We say that Groups are a place to know and be known, love and be loved, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated.

- Does your worship of God reflect your love for Him and His people, the church? Why or why not?
- Where does God have you connected with other Christians in the church? Who would you call if you needed help?
- Are you actively attending a Group? What stands in your way? What would help you?

PRAY

Great Father God, Jesus my Brother, Holy Spirit my Comforter ... lead me into deeper communion and fellowship with You and with my community of faith, The Fellowship. Give me the grace, strength and peace I need in community with others. Lord, help me find a Group of people to do life with, or thank you the Group I am in.



Day 11, Wednesday, January 20

He is with you in your suffering

READ – Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Peter 4:12-19;
Romans 8:31-39

There are no mistakes in God's plan. There is no plan B. It was God, the Holy Spirit, that placed Jesus in that desert for that particular time. **We only know His complete plan for our lives as we look backward.**

A.W. Tozer said,

"To the child of God, there is no such thing as an accident. Accidents may indeed appear to befall him and misfortune stalk his way; but these evils will be so in appearance only and will seem evil only because we cannot read the secret script of God's hidden providence."

Our whole perspective of life changes when we find ourselves facing overwhelming temptation, tragedy, or any hard situation. We are where we are today because God permitted it. As someone has said, "Nothing gets to the child of God unless it passes through His Hands first."

If we are in a time of trial, He is here. Remember He is the One who has promised never to leave or forsake us, never to forget or abandon us. He is sovereignly and purposefully working. So, if we find ourselves in a difficult spot of needing healing and reconciliation, against all evidence to the contrary, there is no better place to be.

REFLECT

The Lord is often testing our faith, leading us into hardship, teaching us wisdom, showing us His ways, changing our course on this journey called life, calling us back to Himself — in the process healing us spiritually and sometimes physically. Our first reaction is usually anger, panic, and/or a sense of 'Why is this happening to me if you love me so much, Lord?'

- Are you in a difficult place right now?
- How is God present with you in the midst of what you are going through?
- Look back over your past. Where has God been with you in difficult circumstances and worked evil for good in your life?

PRAY

Father God, You know everything about me. You know the challenges and hopes that I have. I pray that You would guide my prayers, thoughts, and actions. I pray that You would give me spiritual eyes to see You in my life and give me the desire and ability to respond to hardship in a way that pleases You. Teach me what You want me to learn and help me to grow closer to You each day.



Day 12, Thursday, January 21
Ask Him to pour out His Spirit

READ – Psalm 51; Acts 2

The Spirit of God dwells in us and yet, we are often living our lives unaware of His work, strengthening, leading, comforting and even convicting us. We might even find ourselves giving credit to our character, or our intelligence, or even our own sense of what is right or wrong. To be aware of the presence and work of the Spirit requires a filling up. Much like an empty glass and pitcher of water. The pitcher pours the water and fills the glass. We ask to be filled with the Spirit and He Pours it out. Yes, the Spirit is in you, living, dwelling and yet, we must grow in our ability to live in and keep in step with the Spirit.

There are many word pictures or descriptions of the Holy Spirit; one is water. Notice the request from Psalm 51 is for 'another' to wash, cleanse, and purify us. The very work of the Spirit invokes the idea of cleansing or purifying by literally being the 'Living Water' flowing in power from within.

When God pours out His Spirit, we are refreshed, renewed, revived, restored and more. We see our sin and we are set free from its power through confession and repentance. We bare spiritual fruit; we are able to persevere; we have strength, power and might in our Lord.

REFLECT

Are you feeling dry? Do you long to have a fresh awareness of God's presence and power in your life? Now is the time ... today is the day. Spend some time in silence asking the Holy Spirit to show you places that need cleansing and healing in your life.

- Do you need a fresh awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life?
- What might happen if you fully surrender your will and way to the will and way of the Holy Spirit?
- Pray and ask God to pour out His Spirit upon you and to fill you to overflowing.

PRAY

Lord, I pray for times of refreshing as Your Word and Holy Spirit's presence cleanse and renew me. I pray that I will be spiritually-minded and that I will say yes to Your way and will through me. Thank you for Your faithfulness to me! I pray that my spiritual family at The Fellowship will receive a fresh outpouring of Your Spirit as well.



Day 13, Friday, January 22

Seek a Holy Vision

READ – Proverbs 29:18; Habakkuk 2:2-3; Joel 2:28

The crowd was buzzing. The morning dew was burning off under the heating sun. Dogs barking, birds chirping, and the announcers giving instructions to the trainers to bring their racing greyhound dogs to the track in the appropriate gates. These dogs have been bred and trained since birth to do one thing: run after the lure (an artificial, mechanical bunny). They were made for this. The gate opens! The dogs sprint! The crowd erupts! The announcers shout! But this race had an unexpected turn ...

Part way through the race, the lure exploded! For a brief moment, the dogs continued to run, but eventually slowed down, not knowing what to do. Some ran around aimlessly, some ran back toward the gate where they began, and other dogs just laid down on the track pathetically with their tongues hanging out. There was no way to determine a winner, so the race was called off. The race was over. So what caused the dogs to lose focus? Why couldn't they continue the race? **They lost their vision.** Even though they had received the strictest training, they failed to achieve anything because they had nothing to aim for. This illustrates a powerful truth found in Proverbs 29:18 about God giving us a preferred future that we run after. Without it, we simply cast off wisdom, common sense, biblical truth and direction.

REFLECT

A vision cannot be a 'God given' vision unless it is guided by... well... God. As Christians, we find our ultimate vision in the pages of God's story, the Bible. Vision is built. Not just by human effort and planning, but by seeking God through His Word and prayer.

- What is your vision for your life? What dreams has God given you?
- Are you ready to train and chase after God's vision for your life?
- Will you trust and pray for your church leaders as they seek God's vision for The Fellowship and come out of this year into a new season?

PRAY

Father, the giver of vision, help me to hear Your voice through Your Word. Mold and motivate me to chase Your vision for my life and the vision You have for Your Church. Answer the prayers of the leaders of this church; give them a clear and passionate vision. Help the vision to stick on the hearts and minds of this congregation - that we might win the race with You! Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.



Day 14, Saturday, January 23

Prepare a way for the Way

READ – John 14:6; Matthew 13:58; Psalm 95;
1 Chronicles 16:9a

Oh, how Matthew 13:58 breaks my heart because I so desire that God be more active in the city of Katy! Therefore, I must pray. Several times in scripture we see God looking for a person who will stand in the gap for a people, a nation, or the land. He desires to come with blessing, healing, and salvation and is looking for someone, or a group of someones to agree with Him by paving the way for His coming in prayer.

For thousands of years, God has looked for a people who will be His presence in a neighborhood, a community, a city, a nation, the world. A people of faith who will be the hands and feet of Jesus and will pray bold prayers and live with sacrificial power and presence among a people who are in need of God's saving power.

The Kingdom of God is at hand ... in your hands. Followers of Jesus care about the suffering of people, injustice and lostness. We follow the Lord and obey His command to love one another. A love that is in word and deed. A Gospel that is both demonstration and proclamation.

REFLECT

Where are you preparing the way for others to meet the Way of John 14:6? Take a minute and ask the Holy Spirit to show you relationships, spheres of influence or third spaces that He desires to use you.

- How will you play a role in preparing the way of the Lord in your community?
- In what areas can you play a leadership role in fighting for social justice, or showing Christ's compassion to our community?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I lift up my neighbors before You Lord, asking for Your presence to fill the atmosphere so that they will hear You speak and see You work in their lives. Right now, I pray for all of my neighbors by name, and I ask, God, that You will reveal Yourself to each one of them.



Day 15, Sunday, January 24

A heart and life of integrity

READ – Matthew 5:8; 6:5-6; 25:31-46; Proverbs 4:23;

If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a noise? Whether a noise is heard or not, the fallen tree is dead, and there is now a hole in the forest. **There is impact.** It has been said integrity is what you do when no one is looking. **Does it matter what you do when no one is looking?** Do you think there is really an impact?

How about with your relationship with God?

God looks at the heart. We cannot hide this from Him. The core of who we are, He knows. What we look at, think about, talk of, and act on is all made clear to our Creator. Integrity is also about workability, as in a bridge that has integrity. If I have poor integrity, my life is not going to work for and with God. Consistent poor integrity that disobeys God is defiance to God. It slowly builds a brick wall in between us and God until we can hardly hear Him at all. Poor integrity hinders our connection with God. Good integrity is not being perfect. **It is being humble, repentant, and obedient to God even when no one is watching.**

REFLECT

Take a moment in silence and think about 1 Samuel 16:7, the second half of that verse says that God looks at the heart ... not the part of you that everyone else sees. Why do you think He looks at the heart? When God looks at your heart, what does He see?

- Do you value integrity?
- How might God use a growing commitment to integrity in your life?

PRAY

Father, I know you can see my thoughts and know them completely. I want to be obedient to you. I want my life to work as a follower of Jesus. I desire for my words to line up with my actions and with your Word. Allow others to see how you are changing me from the inside out.



Day 16, Monday, January 25

Mourning for all that is

READ – 1 John 1:8-10; Nehemiah 1:6b, 8-9

In a meeting of diverse Christian leaders someone said, **“The church in our city needs to repent.”** One response to the statement was, “What do we need to repent for?” Then the individual asking the question went on to talk about all the good things the church in that city was doing and finished by trying to make the case that there was not a need for repentance and the seeking of forgiveness from God, but rather the favor of God was resting on the city.

1 John 1:8-10 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” The scriptures reveal the sinfulness of cities such as Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh, and others. Those that repented and turned to God were blessed and those that did not, well, some of them do not even exist anymore. **God loves to take a sinful city and turn it into a revival center.** He did just that in Antioch, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Nineveh, and more recently, Cali Columbia, Fiji, Guatemala, Uganda, Brazil, and hopefully, very soon, in our own community.

REFLECT

How does it happen that an entire community or city repents to the extent that it gets God's attention and a transformation begins to occur? It begins by individuals getting honest with God, confessing their sin, and crying out to Him for forgiveness and freedom. The real question is not, can it happen in our community, but will you allow it to happen in you? Let's be honest before God about those things in our heart. Confess our sins to Him and repent!

- Imagine what our community would look like if a true transformation occurred among Christ followers. What would look different?
- Will you pray for the revival to begin in you?

PRAY

Holy God, I understand that a city or region cannot receive Your blessing if it is built on sin and bloodshed. That type of foundation causes the people to labor and gain nothing. Lord, we humbly ask Your mercy and for Your forgiveness to be poured out in the community we live in. Lord, at this time, I also name the specific sins that I am aware and I repent of them. I ask that You use me in my community wherever you desire so that You are glorified.



Day 17, Tuesday, January 26

Experiencing Revival

READ – 2 Chronicles 7:14

It is pointed out that 2 Chronicles 7:14 is addressed specifically to Israel. That is true. But surely the passage shows God's heart for any people, any land. What does God want from us? **First**, we must humble ourselves. We must admit that God is God and we are not. We must submit to God and come to Him in brokenness and repentance. **Second**, we must pray and seek God's face. No revival or awakening comes without prayer. Extensive prayer. Fervent prayer. Corporate prayer. Continual prayer. It is worth noting that the prayer here is focused on seeking God's face and not God's hand. **We are seeking God for Himself and not for what He gives us.** We are locked in on God's glory, not on our need. **Third**, we must turn from our wicked ways. God wants obedience, not religious ceremony. We cannot just say the words of repentance and pray the prayers of repentance. We must do the deeds of repentance and obey God in every part of life.

If we do these three things, then God promises to respond in three ways. **First**, He will hear us. He will hear those prayers. **Second**, He will forgive our sin. He will remove our sin as far as the east is from the west. And **third**, God will heal our land. He will pour out His favor and blessing upon us.

REFLECT

Take a moment in silence and think about God's promises found in 2 Chronicles 7:14

- During this time of fasting and prayer, have you humbled yourself before God?
- How will you continue having a humbled state before God when our 21 days of fasting and prayer end? Is there a practice you can commit to, such as kneeling before Him at the beginning of everyday to recognize who He is in your life?
- How will you continue to pray and seek God's face when our 21 days are over?

PRAY

Father, I pray for a revival to sweep through our community and for revival to break out in the streets, schools, media, businesses, entertainment, government and congregations – especially in Your church... right here in The Fellowship as we are reflecting who You are. I ask, Lord, that You give all of the influence, leadership and voice we need to lead those who look to us to Your throne of grace, goodness and power.



Day 18, Wednesday, January 27

Justice for all

READ – Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Hosea 12:6

My stomach dropped into my shoes as my eyes grew big. I had just heard that there are more slaves in the world today than at any other point in history. How can that be true? In the progressive post abolition culture that we live in, how can there be over 27 million slaves worldwide? Surely, slavery does not happen here in Katy, Texas. But it does, and the reason is because there is heartbreaking injustice in the world. As Christ followers, God makes it clear that we are to take a stand against injustice and fight for those who do not have the ability to fight for themselves. When I compare this command to the statistics of injustices like human trafficking, poverty, homelessness, domestic abuse, and so many others, I begin to feel helpless. **How do we even begin to act justly when injustice seems to be taking over?** Where do we start?

The best place that we can start is where many great Biblical leaders before us have started: with prayer. Look to the examples of men like Moses, Ezra, and Nehemiah who turned first to God and pleaded for His guidance and intervention. These men saw God change the attitudes of kings and rulers to move in ways that were beyond what they had imagined.

REFLECT

There is an overwhelming amount of work to be done to solve the injustices in our world today. So where do we begin to stem the tide of heartbreak? The best place, the only place to start, is on our knees asking God to give us His wisdom and discernment as we work to uphold justice in our circles of influence. Our call is to uphold righteousness and justice in the world around us, but God does not leave us alone in that task.

- What injustices cause your heart to break?
- Where is God giving you influence to fight injustice?
- Ask boldly for God to move the hearts of those with greater influence: our leaders, politicians, media.

PRAY

Father God, Your Word shows that You care deeply for those that are suffering injustice. I ask that You lead our leaders and work through them as You have so many times throughout history. Where there is a lack of passion, move in their hearts to create an urgency to uphold justice. Show me how I can work to influence those around me, and move in my own community to show Your love and compassion. May Your Kingdom come even now!



Day 19, Thursday, January 28

Encountering the Holy Spirit

READ – Psalm 43:3-4; Acts 1:4-5; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:14-17

There is something powerful about encountering the Holy Spirit. I was nine when I felt a deep weight of the presence of God. There was conviction, tears, joy, happiness and more. Throughout my life, there have been many moments where I have experienced the power and presence of the Spirit. Those times are lifechanging because they remind me of the presence of God in me, with me, leading me. **In those moments, He is all that matters to me** and it is a taste of what my relationship with God was intended to be like ... abiding in His presence.

- *"There is not a better evangelist in the world than the Holy Spirit."* Dwight L. Moody
- *"Souls are made sweet not by taking the acid fluids out, but by putting something in—a great Love, a new Spirit—the Spirit of Christ."* Henry Drummond

From the first moment the Holy Spirit touched my life until this day, my life has never been the same and I am so filled with joy because of that truth.

REFLECT

Take a moment and be still in the presence of God. Ask the Holy Spirit remind you of all the ways He has powerfully shown up in your life over these last 19 days of fasting and prayer.

- Have you met the Holy Spirit? What was that experience like for you? Journal some thoughts.
- As we approach the end of our 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer, where has God shown up for you?

PRAY

God, I pray that Your Spirit comes down in real and powerful ways in my life. Come alongside me today and demonstrate who You are. Show me the power of Your radical love, show me who I am because of what You have done, and show me how that can impact those around me with Your will and love. Be near to me, show me Your presence and Your power, and make me a different person because of how You love me. But more than anything, I pray that You show up in my life right now. I acknowledge that there is no church and no faith without You, and so I pray that You are present and vibrant in all that I think, say, and do.



Day 20, Friday, January 29
The glory of God in your life

READ – Exodus 34:1-10

At a time when Israel was rebellious, immoral, and indifferent towards God, Moses prayed, “Lord, show me Your glory!” God was quick to respond to this prayer. And Moses saw with his own eyes a portion of the glory of God. As John Piper says, “The beauty of God’s holiness on display.”

So when we pray for God’s glory to come, we are praying for His nature to overwhelm our nature. We are seeking His nature to drive out the influence of our sin nature, or any influence that is counter to Him. This hour for us is not unlike the time when Moses prayed this great prayer. We, too, are at a time when our nation and the world have never been so contentious with God. The name of Jesus stirs deep resentment in many people. Holiness is rare. Morality is in rapid decline. And the church of Jesus Christ is in a battle for its existence. In America, 3,500-4,000 churches a year close their doors. Churches lose 2.7 million people a year to nominalism or secularism. And 1,500 pastors a month are leaving the ministry. (Barna stats).

Moses could have prayed, “God meet our needs.” But this circumstance demanded so much more than “meet our needs.” He prayed, “**Show me Your glory!**” We are in a desperate place today. We join our hearts in intercession to pray, “God, show us Your glory!” Overwhelm the numbness of our hearts with Your fire. Revive me with Your presence. Show Your glory in the church. Show us Your glory in America and all over the world. “Father God, Show us Your Glory!”

REFLECT

Take a moment in silence and think about what that experience was like for Moses to be in the presence of the glory of God in Exodus 34.

- Will you begin to pray, “Lord, show us Your glory” so that the world will see and know Him?
- What does it look like for you to put the “holiness of God on display” in your work place, your school, your neighborhood?

PRAY

Sovereign God, I pray that the believers in our community would be a city set on a hill and ‘salt and light’ to the world. I ask that we would influence other nations with righteousness. I pray You give me Your perspective on reaching this world with the Love of Jesus. Lord, instill in me a passion to join You in the mission of pursuing people to know You so that You are glorified among all nations and peoples. Lord, may I hunger and thirst after You and desire that for all people.



Day 21, Saturday, January 30

Chase after God

READ – 1 Chronicles 29:13; Jeremiah 29:13;
Psalm 63:1-8

Gail and I like to run ... well, the truth is we have to run to keep the pounds from catching us. One of the things we have done in half and full marathon races is to try and catch the person in front of us. We chase them down.

For the last 21 days, we have been chasing after God as we have fasted and prayed. We have deliberately chosen to focus on Him and seek His presence. We have deliberately chosen to take time to read His Word and listen to His voice. **For some of us, we can honestly say we did not really 'hear' from God in a profound way during this time.** For others, this has been an amazing time of growth, and we have felt His guidance and direction about something we were seeking. Regardless of what we have learned through this time or not, these past 21 days have been crucial to us because we have obeyed God's command to seek His presence. **It is always a beautiful thing when we chase after God and we put Him first because we desire to know Him more.** As we conclude our 21 days of prayer and fasting, it is important to ask, "Now what?" Very simply, decide to love God and seek Him. Decide to chase after Him every day and not the things of this life that quickly distract us from Him.

REFLECT

It will take intention, effort, desire, and time. But it will be so worth it as your relationship with Him grows, develops, and you fall more and more in love with Him. Hebrews 11:6 says that God will reward those who earnestly seek Him. Will you continue to earnestly seek after the God of this universe who loves you completely and desires to walk with you daily? The reward will be great because God is great!

- How will you continue to pray daily and seek God through Scripture now that our 21 days of fasting and prayer are ending?
- Will you pray daily for a hunger and a thirst to chase after God and seek His presence?

PRAY

Father God, thank You for these last 21 days of focusing on You. Thank You for the promise that You will be found when I seek You. Thank you that You do not hide from me, but that You constantly draw me near to You. Please put a hunger and a thirst in my life for You Lord. And I am deciding to chase after You with all of my heart from this day on. Lord, may I put You first and seek Your face. I love you Lord and I want to love and know You more. Amen.