

21

**DAYS**

**PRAYER &  
FASTING**

**Prayer & Fasting Guide**

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## Contents

Introduction	5
A Guide to Prayer & Fasting	6
21 Day Prayer & Fasting Guide	10
Prayer List	16
Additional Resources	17



## **INTRODUCTION**

Change. We all long for it. We want to see change in our lives, in our families, in our country, and in our world. Throughout history many people have promised change, from political and religious figures to self proclaimed experts and self help guides. But lasting change and true transformation only comes through Jesus Christ.

Our prayers are often for God to change this situation or that person. But what if God is looking to bring about change in and through us?

Over the next 21 days we will encounter God through scripture, prayer, and fasting and allow him to change our hearts and minds. Only then we will see breakthroughs in our families, our community, our city, and our world.

## **A GUIDE TO PRAYER & FASTING**

### **BEFORE FASTING...**

#### **Why fast?**

On top of being a great practice to purify our bodies, in Matthew 6:16-18 Jesus referred to Fasting as a normal expectation for each of his disciples. In Galatians 5:16 the Apostle Paul challenges believers to be led by God's spirit instead of being guided by the natural desires of our body.

#### **What is a fast?**

According to the dictionary, the word "fast" means "to suffer hunger" or "abstain from food or drink". There are hundreds of Bible verses that talk about fasting. Meditate on these: 1 Corinthians 9:27, Esther 4:16, Jonah 3:5-9. The purpose of fasting is to create a space of time for developing spiritual intensity for pursuing closeness with God. For this reason, fasting without prayer is not a biblical activity.

It is important to mention that a true fast always involves abstaining from food. That is why someone who chooses to abstain from Facebook, shopping or "giving up chocolate" is not necessarily fasting. Fasting is not a means to manipulate God. Some people mistakenly think that if they fast then God owes them a favor. We do not fast to force the hand of God to do our will but to draw closer to him and to be more available to hear his voice.

#### **What should the main goal for my fasting be?**

The main goal for fasting should be to get closer to God. In Amos 5:4 God challenges his people to "seek me and you will live." It is good to fast for urgent prayer requests but it's essential to set our hearts on seeking God first, above all other pursuits of our heart.

#### **What types of fast do we do at New Life?**

Although the Bible mentions all kinds of fasts, at New Life we encourage our members to do a liquids fast. For this type of fast we give up all types of solid food and ingest

only liquids such as juices, broth, and water. We also remove any kind of extra activities that are not essential to our daily responsibilities such as drinking coffee, going shopping, Facebook, and other forms of entertainment.

### **How do I get ready for my fast?**

- Decrease your food intake progressively get rid of non-essentials such as caffeine, soda, sugars, snacks, etc.
- Go shopping for fruits, vegetables, juices and water, before your fast. That way you will avoid store distractions during your fast.
- Free up your calendar in order to make space for intentional times with God ahead of time.
- Lastly, set some clear fasting goals for yourself. How many days will you fast? Which foods? Where will you pray? When will you pray?

### **What if I have physical ailments that prevent me from fasting?**

If you have a medical condition that keeps you from fasting, consult with your physician first. Having said this, you must also understand that fasting will force you to decide between normal things in your life, which are not essential, and the choice of seeking for God sacrificially. Anyone can leave caffeine, gossip radio, talk shows, computer games and junk foods without a doctor's permission.

### **What if my job is physically demanding?**

Thousands of Christians throughout history and across the world living under extreme pressures find times for fasting. Remember that God invites you to draw near Him (James 4:8). You should evaluate the demands of your job and seek to give your best regardless of whether you are fasting or not. Since all we do is a reflection of God's work in us, our job performance is an essential part of our personal witness. For that reason we ask that you not mindlessly put your life in danger without clear conviction from God. You may, for example, have one meal and fast the rest of the day.

## **DURING FASTING...**

### **What should I do during my fast?**

Establishing a routine of daily prayer with plenty of time to seek and hear from God is utterly essential during your fast. You may want to follow a book. Keep a fasting journal. We also recommend setting aside times to join with other people fasting for worship, prayer and encouragement.

### **What battles can I expect during my fast?**

As you begin fasting, you may experience a variety of symptoms including intense headaches, extreme fatigue, cloudy thinking, diarrhea, the chills, and more. Keep in mind that during the first days of your fast your body will experience weird and out of the ordinary symptoms. If these symptoms persist and become an obstacle for your daily responsibilities first, contact your physician and then seek guidance from a person with experience in fasting. The first three days are typically the time when your body is being flushed and drained from all the impurities and excesses of our regular “unhealthy” practices.

### **What if I fail?**

Temptations are always tough and during a fast the smallest thing might become a huge battle. You couldn't ever imagine how hard it would be to say no to a French fry. Every person who has made a serious commitment to fast can tell stories about how a long-lost friend shows up to treat you to a luxury steak dinner at the exact moment when you have just begun fasting. Yes, fasting can be grueling! But think of this: God is not a slave master; he is your loving heavenly father. Choose to seek him not out of duty but out of love.

So, If you stumble in your fast... get up, dust off and press on. Share your daily struggles with God and seek out a good brother or sister who is also fasting to walk alongside you. The victory of a heart near God is sweeter than any banquet this world could ever offer you.



**AFTER FASTING...**

**How can I be sure that the effects of my fast become permanent?**

1. Respond in worship to all the blessings you have received. You may want to voice the testimony of your fast in your small group, at our Sunday celebration, or on Facebook. Proclaim God’s goodness!

2. Make a list of those blessings here:

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3. Persevere in the prayer routine that you have begun. Consider fasting once a month, once a week, or as the Lord leads you.

4. Finally, examine your life, seek counsel, and ask the Lord whether some of the foods or activities that you have gotten rid of during your fast should be put out of your life permanently!

*On the next page you will find a plan to help you during the 21 days. Use it as a guide and to record your experience.*

**WEEK 1      Fasting Plan**

Circle when you will fast and the type of fast you will do. Read the scripture passage for each day and write down your observations in the space below. Then review your prayer list in the back of this book.

Meals:	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner				
Days:	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Fast:	Fruits & Vegetables		Juice	Water			

**DAY 1      Read Daniel 10**

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**DAY 2      Read 1 Chronicles 21**

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**DAY 3      Read Daniel 1**

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**DAY 4            Read Psalm 119**

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**DAY 5            Read Matthew 6**

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**DAY 6            Read Isaiah 58**

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**DAY 7            Read Mark 14**

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**WEEK 2      Fasting Plan**

Circle when you will fast and the type of fast you will do. Read the scripture passage for each day and write down your observations in the space below. Then review your prayer list in the back of this book.

Meals:	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner				
Days:	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Fast:	Fruits & Vegetables		Juice	Water			

**DAY 8      Read Psalm 100**

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**DAY 9      Read Romans 12**

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**DAY 10      Read Luke 4**

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**DAY 11            Read James 1**

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**DAY 12            Read 1 Corinthians 1**

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**DAY 13            Read 1 Peter 2**

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**DAY 14            Read Matthew 5**

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**WEEK 3      Fasting Plan**

Circle when you will fast and the type of fast you will do. Read the scripture passage for each day and write down your observations in the space below. Then review your prayer list in the back of this book.

Meals:	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner				
Days:	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Fast:	Fruits & Vegetables		Juice	Water			

**DAY 15      Read Psalm 51**

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**DAY 16      Read Psalm 27**

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**DAY 17      Read Daniel 4**

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**DAY 18      Read Joel 2**

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**DAY 19      Read Psalm 84**

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**DAY 20      Read Zechariah 7**

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**DAY 21      Read Ezekiel 47**

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**PRAYER LIST**

True and lasting change can only be accomplished by the power of God. Prayer is our direct connection and communication with God. Through prayer we access God’s infinite power and allow his power to change us from the inside out. Only God can change a life. Use this prayer section to pray for each area of your life.

**MY LIFE**

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**MY CHURCH**

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**MY CITY**

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**MY WORLD**

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## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **7 Basic Steps to Successful Prayer & Fasting**

“Fasting is the most powerful spiritual discipline of all the Christian disciplines. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life.” - Bill Bright

#### **STEP 1: Set Your Objective**

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

#### **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:

- How long you will fast - 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. 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).

#### **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. 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.

#### **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.

#### **STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually**

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

#### **STEP 7: 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.

*Adapted from "7 Basic Steps to Successful Prayer & Fasting" ©1994-2016 Cru. All Rights Reserved. Read the entire article online at: <http://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/7-steps-to-fasting.html>*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER OUTLINE

### I. POSITION: *Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*

- a. Thank God you can call Him Father by virtue of the blood of Jesus.
- b. Dwell on the fact He is your Father.
- c. Hallow the names of God and declare what is yours in Christ.

Jehovah – tsidkenu	The Lord My Righteousness
Jehovah – m'kaddesh	The Lord Who Sanctifies
Jehovah – shalom	The Lord Is Peace
Jehovah – rophé	The Lord Who Heals
Jehovah – jireh	The Lord's Provision Shall Be Seen
Jehovah – nissi	The Lord My Banner
Jehovah – rohi	The Lord My Shepherd

### II. PRIORITIES: *Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

- a. Yourself (seek first the kingdom).
- b. Your family (mate, children, other family members).
- c. Your church (pastor, leadership, faithfulness of the people, harvest).

### III. PROVISION: *Give us this day our daily bread.*

- a. Be in the will of God (prayer, church, work habits, in giving).
- b. Believe it is God's will to meet your needs.
- c. Be specific. Be persistent.

### IV. PEOPLE: *And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

- a. Cleanse your heart before the Lord, especially in the area of relationships. Forgive and release others in your life.
- b. Set your will to walk in love, humility and acceptance.
- c. Pray for relationships in the church to be healed and protected. Marriages especially.

### V. PROTECTION: *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

- a. Pray against any areas of weakness in your own life.
- b. Put on the whole armor of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. Pray against any schemes of the enemy that hinder the work of the kingdom.

### VI. PRAISE: *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.*

- a. Exalt Jesus as head over all things.
- b. Declare in faith what God has called you to do in His authority.
- c. Conclude with thanksgiving and praise.

