

Fasting

January 2021

As we prepare for our time of prayer from **Monday 11th January until Sunday 17th January** we thought it would be helpful to add some pointers on prayer and fasting. If you are going to fast for longer we recommend that you look into how to do this safely beforehand. Stuart recommends you don't break a long fast with a curry!

If you are going to fast - the idea would be to spend time praying during the times you would normally be eating. If you are doing a day fast (sunrise until sunset) it shouldn't be too taxing but only fast if you are able to do so safely. Please drink enough water during the day.

A few prayer pointers:

- For a renewed hunger for God and His presence in our lives. ○ Fresh encounters with God through His Word and the Holy Spirit. ○ People to be saved and added (and well disciplined by us).

Here are a few reasons to fast:

- **To call out to God** for change in a situation that is drastic. (Neh. 1:4) 'When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.'
- **To repent** (Jonah 3:7-10) This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." ¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.
- **To prepare for something.** (Luke 4) Jesus is baptised, but before He starts His public teaching ministry, He goes to fast in the desert for 40 days to prepare Himself for ministry.
- **For healing** (2 Samuel 12:16-17) ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.
- **For deeper relationship** – to develop our time with God, enjoy His presence and focus on Him.

A few things fasting is not:

- It is not to twist God's arm or a fast track way of getting what we want. ○ It is not a religious thing we have to do to make God like us or love us more.
- It is not primarily a way to lose some weight.

We trust that you will connect with God through this.

Stuart Otto & Esther Dauncey

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

1 John 5:14

¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

John 17:15

¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

James 5:13

¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.

Mark 11:24

²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 26:41

⁴¹ 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Romans 12:12

¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Matthew 7:11

¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Luke 6:12

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Romans 8:26

⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Philippians 4:6

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Colossians 4:2

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - ¹⁷ pray continually,

James 4:3

³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

¹ I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people - ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.