



CHRIST COMMUNITY
C H U R C H

FAST FORWARD

Wouldn't it be nice to just fast forward through life right now? Imagine if we could skip all the waiting, wanting, isolation, mask-wearing, and crazy that is our world right now. Well we can't fast forward life, but we can be doing something else to prepare our hearts for the next chapter in life. Let's face it, things will never be exactly like they were yesterday. We are going to join together in a fast for seven days as we seek God in how He wants us to move forward. The way the church (that's you!) moves forward is on our knees in prayer and fasting. Maybe you have never fasted before or not sure how to get started, maybe even not interested in it. I want to ask that you read the guide below and try it. Join with us as a church while we seek God together. I can't guarantee that you'll lose weight or grow hair (that's not what fasting is about), but I can tell you that you will experience God's presence in your life in a deeper way. I look forward to fast-forwarding with you!

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is denying yourself food or other comforts for a specific period of time. Fasting is something that the people of God practiced throughout the Bible. Fasting was practiced for many different reasons. People fasted while waiting for insight from the Lord, as a prayer practice, to battle temptation, as an act of humility toward God, and as a way to intercede for others. The bottom line is that fasting is an act of spiritual devotion that is focused on having less of the physical things of the world in order to have more of the things of God. Great leaders in the Bible fasted routinely, including Moses, David, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. Jesus expects that we will fast regularly. In Matthew 6 Jesus addresses fasting specifically when he tells the disciples in Matthew 6:16, "When you fast. . ." Notice Jesus says "when" not "if." Fasting is not an option. Jesus assumes that we will fast. Though fasting is assumed, it is not required. We don't have to fast. We get to fast. Like all intentional spiritual practices, fasting should not be legalistic – we are not earning anything from God through fasting.*

WHY SHOULD WE FAST?

When we give something up through a fast it allows us to find more of God's presence and an increased reliance on God's grace. Our lives and souls are overloaded of things that we rely on to satisfy and distract us: entertainment, social media, food, drink, coffee, exercise, full schedules, you name it. Fasting is intentionally setting aside something that we routinely rely on for comfort or sustenance. In turn, we pursue God,



asking God to fill that space instead. This process helps us to discern God's will and often brings a clearer look at our own spiritual health. Fasting is an act of sacrificial worship and prayer. We are making a sacrifice as an act of reverence and reliance on God. We are saying to God, "I trust you all the time even in times of going without." Fasting helps us to break the cycle of dependency on things of the world and grow more dependent upon God. Many fast on behalf of others as a way to carry their burden and as a petition (cry of prayer) toward God.

HOW SHOULD WE FAST?

Jesus also tells us how we should go about it, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, **who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**" (Matthew 6:16- 18)* Fasting is difficult. But it is doable! Jesus challenges us not to share our struggle with others but to turn your longings and struggles to the Lord, asking him to fill the void and to draw us deeper into his presence.*

PREPARATION

- For several days before the fast, pray and seek God on what he wants you to set aside. Food? Coffee? Facebook? Netflix?
- The days leading up to the fast continually ask God to guide and lead you through the fast, giving you a pure heart and a steadfast spirit and the strength to stay focused on Him and His will. ([Psalm 51:10](#) provides a great meditation focus for this)
- Fasting is always done with prayer. Commit and plan to pray fervently during your fast. Set aside intentional times during the day to pray. (For example, you may want to wake up 20 minutes early for a time of focused prayer and during your lunch break find a spot where you can be alone and commit that time to prayer. Also, commit your usual dinner time to prayer). The key is to have a plan for your focused prayer time and strive to stick to it.

EACH DAY OF THE FAST DAY

- ***As a church, we will be fasting from Monday May 25th, 2020 - Sunday, May 31st*** • In your focused prayer times, be patient. Wait on God. Don't be in a hurry. Ask God to



teach you how to be still and quiet before him. Meditate on scripture. Journal your thoughts. Take notes on the things that God is revealing to you during your fast.*

- If you are fasting as a way to carry another person's burden or as a way to petition God for their salvation, be sure to take the time and moments that you would have been eating or spending in the activity you are fasting from to pray specifically for that person. (If you run out of words, repeat your prayer over and over. Also, try picturing them before God's throne of Grace)
- Pay close attention to the temptations and emotions you face during the fast, by asking questions like, "What is my strongest emotion today?" "Am I drawn to an unhealthy or sinful behavior as a means of coping?"
- Keep notes on what you are learning about yourself and God.

An important note if you're fasting from food:

If you have chosen to fast from food, be sure to do this wisely. Consult your physician if you have any health concerns. Fasting can be either total (abstaining from all food) or partial (abstaining from a meal or a type of food that brings you comfort). If this is your first time, don't swing for the fences. Start small and work your way up over time. Fast from certain meals, or perhaps only during the daytime (from sunup to sundown) and drink fruit juice or light smoothies throughout the day. During a fast from food, you may feel weaker than usual, irritable and find difficulty concentrating. You may also get a headache. This is normal, but because of this you also want to abstain from exercise and other strenuous physical activities during your fast.

FAST FORWARD: 7 DAYS OF SEEKING GOD

Day 1 "Be Still and Listen"

Today, don't ask or say anything to God. How do you pray without saying anything? Prayer is not only talking but it is being present and listening. Throughout the day and while you read, meditate on the fact that you're in God's presence, He is with you and He is watching over you.

Morning Reading: [Psalm 46](#)

Evening Reading: [Psalm 46](#)



Day 2 “Holy Spirit Filling”

Throughout your day today focus on the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life. Surrender your will to His will. Commit to following the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Morning Reading: [Ephesians 5:18](#)

Evening Reading: [Romans 8:1-15](#)

Day 3 “Holy Spirit Leading”

Without realizing it, we are often led by our stomach, our eyes, desires, and our thirsts. We have the Holy Spirit, our advocate and counselor, living in us. God gave us His Holy Spirit as a guide to lead us in paths of His righteousness. As your hunger, cravings, and temptations come today, reflect on what we are normally led by. Then surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Morning Reading: [John 14:23-31](#)

Evening Reading: [Isaiah 30:20-23](#)

Day 4 “Holy Spirit Renewal”

Day-to-day life is draining on its own. When you add to this our spiritual battles, crisis, conflict, and disruption from our normal rhythms of life, we find ourselves empty. We need constant refreshing from God by His Holy Spirit. Today, as you fast and reflect on God’s word, focus on the renewal He wants to give you. Ask him to fill the well of your soul with His refreshing Living water. As the Holy Spirit leads, share this encouragement with others.

Morning Reading: [Hebrews 10:19-23](#)

Evening Reading: [Psalm 51:10-12](#)

Day 5 “Holy Spirit Wisdom”

We can find plenty of people to give us their opinion or advice, but what we need is the wisdom of God. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Wisdom. This a deeper understanding of God so that we may know Him better. This grows us in His hope, power, and strength. Today our fasting reminds us to not seek the guidance or hope of material things, but the hope that is found in the wisdom of God. We know it is the wisdom of God as He tells us His wisdom is peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere.

Morning Reading: [Ephesians 1:15-23](#)

Evening Reading: [James 1:5](#) & [James 3:17-18](#)



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Day 6 “Holy Spirit Revival”

Today we turn our focus toward people who have yet to surrender their life to Jesus and to those who have gone away from Him. We are given the privilege to join in with what God is doing through prayer. As we fast, read, and pray, think of all the people in your life. Picture their faces, the ones you know and the ones you see every day at the coffee shop, gas station, at work, and so forth. Lift them up to God and ask, in the name of Jesus, for the Holy Spirit to turn their hearts toward Jesus. Pray as a church gathered, and as a church scattered, that God would use us as a pipeline for the Holy Spirit. Let us seek God together where He is bringing revival and how we can join Him in what he is doing.

Morning Reading: [John 6:44-51](#)

Evening Reading: [Joel 2:28-32](#)

Day 7 “Holy Spirit Power”

Following Jesus and being a witness for Him takes courage, strength, and power beyond our own. We have a promise from Jesus that “we will” receive power and “we will be” His witness’. Now is the time to be bold, to overcome your fears, anxieties, social stigmas, relational barriers. We need to pray for and act on the Power of the Holy Spirit that we may be Jesus' witness. Pray for the deep desire to be a witness. Picture yourself empowered by the Holy Spirit, telling your story and God’s story. Commit to God to be His witness. Pray for those in all the churches represented and in our area, all believers to be raised up and released into the world to testify of our Living Lord and Savior.

We have nothing to lose and they have everything to gain!

Morning Reading: [Acts 1:8](#)

Evening Reading: [1 Thessalonians 1:4-10](#)
