

## SJC 21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING 2023

ST. JOHN CHURCH UNLEASHED

# 21 DAYS

prayer & fasting

**MARCH 15 - APRIL 7**

DAILY PRAYER: 6:00 A.M.  
PRAYER LINE: 530-881-1212  
PRAYER LINE CODE: 291-359-153

DEVOTIONAL BOOK:  
FORWARD MOVING FAITH  
BY CLEDDIE KEITH AND AARON SCHILLING



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the Lenten season?

Lent is the Christian season of spiritual preparation before Easter. In Western churches, it begins on Ash Wednesday. During Lent, many Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial, and spiritual discipline. The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ—to consider his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial.

### 2. What is prayer?

Prayer is simply communication with God. A two-way relationship in which man should not only talk to God but also listen to Him. Prayer to God is like a child's conversation with his father. It is natural for a child to ask his father for the things he needs.

There are many promises in God's Word to encourage us to pray, such as: "He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him" (Psalm 91:15); "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24); "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). The Scriptures tell us that we are to pray for one another and also assure us that God hears and answers prayer.

### 3. What is fasting?

To fast is to abstain from all or some kinds of food or drink, especially as a religious observance. Spiritual fasting is not a way to earn God's favor by getting him to do something for us. Rather, the purpose is to produce a transformation in us—a clearer, more focused

attention and dependence upon God. Fasting is never to be a public display of spirituality—it is between you and God alone. Fasting is a sacrifice. You may not get it right everyday. Simple obedience and next steps are the goal, not perfection. It is normal to be challenged, but unscriptural to be defeated.

#### **4. Who should fast?**

In scripture Jesus says when you fast, not if you fast, making it clear that it is something that He expects his followers to do. (Matthew 6:16-18)

#### **5. When should I fast?**

You should fast personally and corporately/church-wide. Personal fast is spirit-led when acknowledging your need for God and a new desire for Him. (Matthew 5:6 or Psalm 63:1) Corporate/church-wide fasting is biblical and important for the spiritual growth of the local church. (Leviticus 16 and Esther)

#### **6. What are some examples of different types of fasting?**

**Absolute Fast:** This can be used in an emergency situation. It provides great Deliverance for a life or death situation. This is seen in the story of Queen Esther, where her fast was for 3 days.

**Daniel Fast:** Abstaining from certain foods for a period of time such as luxury foods. Or this can be solely a juice fast or liquid fast. Daniel fasted for 21 days on vegetables. He had no processed carbs, juices, no coffee, no sweets! No choice food means, you do not eat anything pleasurable.

**Fasting from Indulgences:** As Christians, we may listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit. God may speak to us individually for anything that He wants us to sacrifice for a period of time. This can be fasting from many things such as coffee, deserts, TV, shopping, etc.

#### **7. What are the spiritual benefits of fasting?**

Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, was a firm believer in the power of prayer and fasting. In his guide, “Why You Should Fast”, he listed the following reasons for seeking God through self-denial.

- Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras.
- Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the “first love” for your Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.
- Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God.

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- Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.
- Fasting will encourage the Holy Spirit to quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you.
- Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience.
- Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life and make you a channel of revival to others.

### **8. Are there any biblical examples of fasting?**

#### Old Testament Fasting

- Moses fasted 40 days on behalf of Israel's sin: Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10.
- David fasted and mourned the death of his child: 2 Samuel 12:16.
- Daniel fasted regarding a mysterious vision from God: Daniel 10:3-13.
- Esther fasted on behalf of her people: Esther 4:13-16.
- Nehemiah fasted and mourned over the broken walls of Jerusalem: Nehemiah 1:4-2:10.

#### New Testament Fasting

- Anna fasted for the redemption of Jerusalem through the coming Messiah: Luke 2:37.
- Jesus fasted 40 days before his temptation and the beginning of his ministry: Matthew 4:1-11.
- The disciples of John the Baptist fasted: Matthew 9:14-15.
- The elders in Antioch fasted before sending off Paul and Barnabas: Acts 13:1-5.

### **9. What is the connection between prayer and fasting?**

In the Bible, fasting is always accompanied by prayer. Fasting is never a stand-alone activity. Prayer connects you with God, and fasting disconnects you from the world. Together, they help you “become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life...” (Philippians 2:15-16).

What are the benefits of fasting and praying?

- Prayer and fasting mortify the power of the flesh.
- Prayer and fasting reveals the mind of God to us.
- Prayer and fasting brings spiritual growth.
- Prayer and fasting brings breakthroughs to every area of our life.
- Prayer and fasting brings deliverance.

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- Prayer and fasting strengthens our relationship with God.
- Prayer and fasting brings success to our life.

### 10. Does the Bible tell us how to fast?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the [a]heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?<sup>7</sup> *Is it not* to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are [b]cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?<sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ([Isaiah 58:6-8](#))

- With proper motive (Matthew 6:16-18)
- With all your heart (Joel 2:12)
- With humility (Ezra 8:21)
- With repentance (2 Chronicles 7:14)
- With prayer (Ezra 8:23)

### 11. Will my prayers be answered if I fast and pray?

God hears our prayers. Billy Graham wrote, “One reason we know God hears our prayers is because He has promised to hear them! Even if He doesn’t always answer the way we think He should, He still hears us. The Psalmist declared, ‘As for me, I call to God ... and he hears my voice.’ (Psalm 55:16-17)”

We pray for God to move in specific ways of miraculous healing and provision. Sometimes, He does move in the exact way we pray. Regardless of whether we see the direct answer to our prayers and fasting here on earth, they are heard in heaven, and we can trust God’s goodness and sovereignty in the way He responds. Prayer and fasting are important because through them we remain connected to God. The Importance of Prayer and Fasting in a Crisis ([ibelieve.com](#))

God always answers our prayers. His answer may not be what we were expecting or when. As pastor always says, God can answer yes, no, or not yet.

### 12. Which is more important prayer or fasting?

Both are important to a healthy spiritual life. Fasting is mentioned in the Bible over 70 times. However, Prayer is mentioned about 650 times in one way or another. Jesus said in Luke 18:1 “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”

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Prayer and fasting exist alongside each other as important practices in the spiritual lives of God's people. Their purpose is to draw us closer to God by sharpening our focus. We eliminate distraction, choosing instead to focus on God. Fasting, removing something from our lives intentionally for a period of time in order to dedicate that space to God, is just as important as prayer.

Fasting without praying isn't fasting. It is dieting or deprivation. The only reason to fast is to make space for you to seek the Lord with greater urgency. Instead, we pray when

we were supposed to be eating. Use the hunger pangs to remind you to remind yourself you hunger for God. In other words, fasting gives us more time for prayer and prayer helps tear down walls, usher us into spiritual breakthroughs, destroys chains, and gives us clarity of God's answers that we seek! Luke 2:37 tells us about the widow who until she was eighty-four never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. That's commitment

### **13. Do I really need to fast during the 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting?**

Yes, because fasting will give you God's focus for your life. It is a major key to hearing God's voice along with true worship. Listen, we need focus from God more than anything b/c the world we live in is working overtime to distract us, to entice us, to win our hearts and minds, our focus, and to determine our vision. Fasting cuts out the world so we can tune into God. If we are obedient to God fasting will make us catalysts for revival and awakening. In the Bible there are fasts from 1 to 40 days. Even Daniel had different fast lengths (i.e. Daniel 1:12). However, The St. John Church is praying and fasting for 21 days.

### **14. If I don't fast, will God still answer my prayer?**

The short answer to this question is, "Yes!" God has promised that, when we ask for things that are in accordance with His will for our lives, He will give us what we ask for see I John 5:14-15. However, there is one caveat to add to this: we may not always like the answer. Keep in mind that prayer is not our way of getting God to do what we want. Our prayers should be focused on things that honor and glorify God and reflect what the Bible clearly reveals God's will to be see Luke 11:2 "Father, Reveal who you are. Set the world right for me." However, there are some concerns that requires prayer and fasting. So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Mark 9:29

### **15. How much time should I set aside for my personal quiet time with God?**

There is no set amount of time. It can vary. Sometimes your personal quiet time with God is spontaneous. You have to be intentional (set a certain time/appointment) to spend time with God just like you do with family and friends. Be Consistent.

## **16. Is journaling necessary? If so, what are the benefits of it?**

It is not necessary. And, there is no command in Scripture—explicit or implied—requiring or obligating Christians to keep a journal. However, the benefit of journaling is that you have a reference to go back and see what God has done. And, journaling can improve your memory and help you remember bible verses better as you think about what they mean and how they apply to your daily life.

- Jeremiah 30:2. “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you.”
- Habakkuk 2:2 “And the Lord answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

## **17. How can children/youth participate in the church-wide fast?**

First, make sure they understand why they are fasting. Then, let them determine what they will sacrifice. Below are practical ways to have our SJC children/youth participate in our church-wide fast:

- A No Sweets/No Fast Food fast. For a period of time, choose healthy foods for snacking. Instead of cookies, choose carrots. Instead of soda choose water. Instead of fast food, choose nutritious meals.
- Social Media fast. Log out of your accounts, delete them from your device for a period of time, and just spend that time being present with God. Pray and listen. Spend some time in nature soaking in His beauty. Spend some time alone worshipping God.
- Secular Music- Instead of listening to Top Hits on the radio, you can choose to listen to the Christian radio station for a period of time. Pop in a CD of your favorite worship leader when you're driving to work. Listen to a Christian podcast or audiobook. You can even turn the stereo off completely and spend that time in prayer. You'll be amazed what this little change will do for your life.

## **18. What are some of the things that we need to be praying for as a church?**

- Pray for the pastor(s). Pray for their families and pray for them as they preach the Word.
- Pray for other church leaders. Whether they are called deacons, elders or board members, keep them in your prayers, especially that there would be unity with the pastor(s).
- Pray for the community. Pray for those who live near the church that the Spirit would open their hearts to their need for Jesus.

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- Pray for the people in the church who seem to have disappeared from Sunday morning worship. This doesn't mean you don't contact them, but you can start with prayer.
- Pray for the congregation. Pray that they would be open to hear from God through the Scriptures, worship and sermon.
- Pray for the hurting. There are people all around you in the pews who are struggling. They look fine on the outside, but they may be falling apart on the inside.
- Pray for the other churches in your community. Congregations are not in competition. Churches should be working for God's kingdom not individual success. There is more than enough work for everyone.
- Pray for other brothers and sisters in Christ around the World. Pray that they get the same freedom to worship as we do here in America. Pray for the persecuted church, for their safety and for their persecutors.

### **19. I am supposed to tell people that I am fasting?**

- First, ask yourself what is your reason for telling someone else? Do they have a need to know?
- Remember the purpose of the fast is for you to focus on God, not draw attention to yourself.
- Matthew 6:16-18 - 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.