

# FREEDOM'S 7 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

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As a church, we are setting aside seven days of January (4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>) to intentionally pray for 2021. In addition to this time of prayer, we are also fasting. We believe that prayer accompanied with intentional abstinence has a unique ability to align our hearts with God.

### WHAT IS A FAST?

Fasting is when someone or a group of people (in unity) abstain from food (fully or partially) for a specific period of time in order to seek God through prayer. Many people in the Bible practiced fasting as a spiritual discipline or in response to something specific. In the Old Testament, Israel was required by God to fast collectively at least once a year on the Day of Atonement as well as other occasions. In the New Testament, we have records of the early church fasting and praying together for various reasons. Reliable church tradition and recorded history also tell us that the early church (post-New Testament) practiced fasting twice a week, usually on Wednesday and Friday.

### WHY DO WE FAST?

Knowing what a fast is doesn't necessarily mean we understand its purpose. We can find many good scriptural reasons for fasting. Below are provided some of the reasons for fasting. It's important to remember that we not only fast for ourselves, but also for those around us.

1. To humble ourselves to God (repentance) - Psalm 35:13; 1 Samuel 7:6; Ezra 9
2. To come closer to God – James 4:8
3. To understand God's word (revelation) – Ephesians 1:17-22
4. To know God's will or direction – Acts 13:1-2
5. To seek healing/deliverance – Isaiah 58; Matthew 17:21
6. To seek God's intervention – 2 Samuel 12:16-23; 2 Chronicles 20:3
7. To intercede for others – Daniel 9:3

### DIFFERENT TYPES OF FASTS

There are many different kinds of fasts. The most important part of fasting is the time we spend with God in prayer. If we deny ourselves food and do not pray then we will accomplish nothing. The following types of fasts are simply references to what we can abstain from while we seek the Lord in prayer.

1. **FULL FAST:** A full fast is where someone goes completely without food for the allotted time. There are at least four references in the Bible where people fasted food and water, however, we are only referencing food as a full fast for obvious reasons. If you choose to do a full fast then we recommend you consult with others prior to doing so, especially if you take any kind of medication.
2. **PARTIAL FAST:** A partial fast is to simply go without a meal or two the day of your fast. For example, you could fast from dinner or lunch and spend an extended amount of time in prayer in place of that meal. There are no rules to this kind of fasting but you should decide beforehand what you will do and stick to it as with all fasts.

### PRACTICAL POINTS OF FASTING:

1. Plan your fast: What kind of fast? How long? Write your plan out!
2. Be specific with your fasting: Know why you're fasting.
3. Plan your prayer time for each day: When will you pray?
4. Journal your fast: Journal your times of prayer.
5. Seek accountability or a partner: It's good to share what you're doing with a trusted friend.
6. Drink lots of water: Please drink extra water in your fast and do not risk dehydration.

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## UNIFIED PRAYER SCHEDULE:

**MONDAY:** *Repentance* – Allow the Lord to bring conviction to us and our faith community.

**TUESDAY:** *Intimacy* – Pray to hear the voice of the Lord for your life.

**WEDNESDAY:** *Breakthrough* – Pray into areas you desire breakthrough for 2021.

**THURSDAY:** *The Church* – Pray for the Freedom community, leadership, supernatural provision & vision.

**FRIDAY:** *The Lost* – Pray for the unreached and unsaved in Bossier City, our region, state and the USA.

**SATURDAY:** *The Sick & Hurting* – Pray for those who are currently sick or suffering due to Covid-19. Pray for almighty God to heal them and for this virus to be eradicated. Pray for those who are also mentally suffering and struggling to provide for their families or businesses.

**SUNDAY:** *Spiritual Awakening* – Pray for a great awakening in the Bossier/Shreveport area.

## 7-DAY FAST SCRIPTURE READINGS:

**MONDAY:** **Matthew 6:16-18; Psalm 35:13**

*Reflection: Fasting humbles the soul. God sees in secret and rewards openly.*

**TUESDAY:** **Romans 8**

*Reflection: Jesus Christ has set me free from condemnation empowered me by the Holy Spirit to walk in the newness of life.*

**WEDNESDAY:** **Hebrews 4**

*Reflection: Jesus Christ knows and understands our life's issues because He has come through them. The best person to advise and assist us on a journey is one who has traveled the same road before us. Jesus traveled the road of life before us.*

**THURSDAY:** **Hebrews 11**

*Reflection: We have a heritage of faith and can look forward with hope and certainty.*

**FRIDAY:** **Luke 17:5-10**

*Reflection: Faith is the knowledge that we approach no task of life alone. In every situation with us is God and all of His power.*

**SATURDAY:** **Psalm 4; Mark 4:26-29**

*Reflection: Divine providence surrounds us. Joy is ours. We can rest and sleep, knowing that God has heard every word of our prayer.*

**SUNDAY:** **Isaiah 58**

*Reflection: to fast sincerely with right motives, to act with kindness and mercy toward others, to love God and others, and to delight ourselves in the Lord will result in God's comfort and blessings.*

Below are some of the reasons people in the bible fasted. (This is not exhaustive.)

**Repentance** – Jonah 3:5; Daniel 6:18

**When facing danger** – Ezra 8:21, 23

**Courage and wisdom** – Esther 4:3, 16; 9:31

**In times of grief** – 1 Samuel 31:13; 1 Chronicles 10:12

**Ultimate denial of the flesh** – Matthew 4:2

**Spiritual power** – Mark 9:29

**Set aside self for holiness** – 1 Corinthians 7:5

**Answered prayer** – Acts 10:3-31

## Additional fasting guidelines:

- During your fast: TV, music and reading should be Christian-based.
- Social media should be limited or refrained from completely.
- Texts, phone conversations should be limited to encouragement, prayer and godly things.