

Why should I Fast?

- + Cultivate a renewed hunger for heavenly things.
- + To seek God's deliverance, protection, provision, or guidance.
- + Greater intimacy in prayer life.
- + Healing for others, self
- + To express repentance and a returning to God.
- + To overcome temptation and/or dedication of yourself to God.
- + To express love and worship of God and a concern for His work.
- + Soul training for self-denial living.
- + Mourning/Grieving
- + Humility in seeking revival
- + Break free from deeply rooted and/or demonic strongholds.

What to fast from?

- Food | processed sugar, fast food, soda, coffee, candy, meat, etc.
- Entertainment | video games, TV, social media, phones, technology
- Sexual intimacy
- Alcohol
- Social activities | shopping, dating



Scriptures to meditate on while fasting

- +Crisis/Need | 1 Ki 17.2-16, Lk 4.24-27, Ac 20.35, Phil 4.16-19, Ps 50.14-15
- +Healing | Exodus 15.26, 23.25, Ps 103.1-3, Luke 8.43-48, Matthew 9.1-6
- +Future spouse | Genesis 24.1-67
- +Marriage | Isaiah 58.1-11, 1 Cor 7.1-5, Matthew 9.14-17, Genesis 22.1-12
- +Calling/Ministry | Acts 13.1-5, 14.21-23
- +Deliverance | Romans 7.14-25, Mark 9.14-29, Matt 13.31-32, 17.14-21
- +Praise/Thanksgiving | Psalm 34, 100.4, 105.1-3, 118
- +Justice | 1 John 3.17, 4.20, Luke 10.25-37, James 5.1-6, Isaiah 58
- +Protection | James 4.1-10, 2 Kings 6.8-23, Esther, 2 Chronicles 20.1-30
- +Spiritual Warfare | Luke 4.1-13, Habakkuk 3.17-19, Philippians 4.12-13
- +Purity/Holiness | Genesis 39.1-23
- +Suffering | John 16.33, James 5.11-15, Romans 12.2, 1 Peter 5.10-11

Fasting IS

- +An individual decision to abstain from something the flesh desires for a time in order to better seek God.
- +Dial down the noise of the world to better hear God.

Fasting is NOT

- A guaranteed answer or way of manipulating God.
- So much about what you're having to let go of, but what you are preparing to take hold of.

Types of Fasting

- *Normal | Abstain from food, but not water.
- *Partial | Limitation of certain desirable foods, but not total abstinence.
- *Absolute | Avoidance of all food & liquid.
- *Private | Matthew 6.16-18
- *Congregational | Joel 2.15-16, Acts 13.2
- *Occasional | In times of crisis, special need



Congregational Prayer & Fasting

- + Be present for Vision Sunday worship on Jan 4 and the next four Sundays (1.11, 1.18, 1.25, and 2.1) as our Pastoral team brings messages from God's Word on prayer and fasting.
- + Join a LifeGroup or HomeGroup, as all small groups will be going through studies together based on the prayer/fasting sermons.
- + Take part in the congregation wide emphasis for fasting together as a church each Monday.
- + Read, "Beginning a Praying Life" booklet. (see below)

Fasting Length

- + One day (sun-up - sun down) | Judges 20.26, 1 Samuel 14.24
- + One 24 hour day | Daniel 6.18
- + Three days | Esther 4.16
- + Seven days | 1 Chron 10.12
- + Forty days | Deut 9.9, Lk 4.2

How to Start

+ Start Small: Fast from 1 or 2 meals in a 24 hour period - stay at it for a week, or even several weeks.

+ Move up: Try 24 hours w/ only water (devote time that normally would be spent eating to prayerful meditation on scripture.)

+ Don't draw attention to what you are doing (only tell those it is necessary to inform.)

+ Try going longer 36 hours, 3 days, or even a week (*if led to do so and physically able; consult w/ physician as necessary*)

+ Accountability | While it is a private spiritual discipline, inform a spouse, close friend or family member to pray with and for you as you proceed.



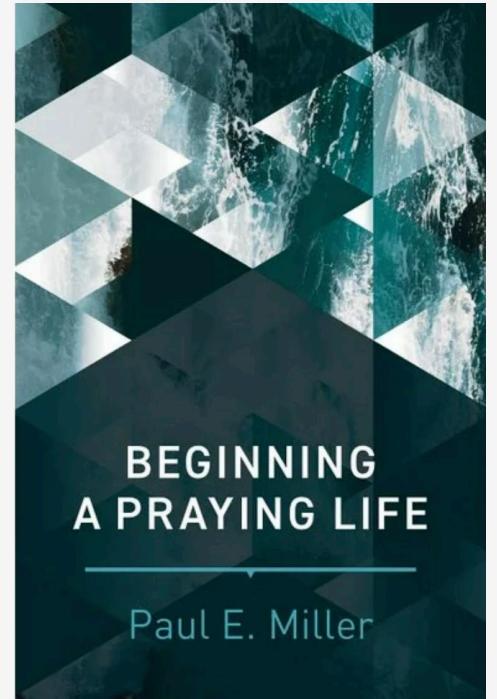
Helpful Reflections

- * What sin is the Holy Spirit bringing to light as you fast?
- * Is there someone you need to extend forgiveness to?
- * Is there someone you need to confess your sin(s) to and ask their forgiveness?
- * What idol(s) is the Lord revealing to you? Are you willing to surrender in this area?
- * Are you yielded in every area of life?
- * What spiritual lift are you noticing as a result of spending time in prayer instead of gratification of the flesh?
- * What self-sufficiencies do you need to repent from so that you might rely on Christ and abide in Him more fully?



Isaiah 58.6-7

*Is this not the fast that I have chosen:
To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens, To let
the oppressed go free, And that you
break every yoke? Is it not to share
your bread with the hungry, And that
you bring to your house the poor
who are cast out; When you see the
naked, that you cover him, And not
hide yourself from your own flesh?*



Free Booklet, "Beginning A Praying Life"

Manna church is investing in our membership with purchasing a large quantity of the very helpful prayer resource, *Beginning a Praying Life*. You can pick up your free copy at the Welcome Center or tables in the back of the auditorium, or from one of our greeters at the door on your way out of service!



Jan 11th Sermon

Fasting is Feasting

Pastor Kevin

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:17-18)

GROUP DISCUSSION | Read **Matthew 6:16-18**

- 1) When you hear of fasting, what imagery or thoughts come to mind? Do you have an experience(s) to share from past times of personal fasting and seeking the Lord? What were the results of that season of seeking?
- 2) It is a dangerous thing to fake a sanctification you don't possess. Matt 6:16 warns against hypocrisy and boastfulness in fasting by ensuring others take notice of you while doing it. Why do you think fasting is to be carried out in secret and authenticity? Why is there such a strong tethering between fasting and humility?
- 3) As a follow-up to question #2, why do you believe that when fasting, God receiving His glory is more important than you or I receiving our desires? Knowing this, what will help us keep a correct mindset while fasting?
- 4) Read **Matthew 4:1-11** As the Son of God, why do you think Jesus believed fasting to be essential before ministering and while being tempted? What do you suppose Jesus gained by fasting and prayer during His time of being tempted in the wilderness?
- 5) Keeping the above passage in mind, also read **1 John 2:15-17**. In Matthew 4, the devil tempted Jesus in every area that John warns against in our love affair with this world, namely, the *lust of the flesh* (fulfilling our fleshly desires without regard to the will of God), the *lust of the eyes* (materialism, sex, money and the insatiable desire for more), and the *pride of life* (Our arrogant bent towards self-sufficiency, being applauded by others, and accolades). In which of these three areas is temptation's pull the strongest for you?
- 6) Pastor mentioned some benefits of fasting are: 1) Draws us in closer intimacy to God, 2) Reveals what controls us, 3) Helps keep a proper balance to life, and 4) Aids in decision making. In self-assessment, which of these areas could be the most transformational and help strengthen your relationship with Christ in 2026 and beyond? What challenges do you foresee when fasting? What practical steps can you take to help you prepare and see victory?

PERSONAL REFLECTION |

Read **Isaiah 58:1-12** Meditate on these passages on fasting and your personal intimacy with God. Ask Him to help you make needed application and address any areas of pretense, formality, or ritualism that has encroached in your life.

EXHORTATION | RETURN TO CHRIST

*Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul?... To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke. **Isaiah 58:5-6***

Jan 18th Sermon

Four Anchors in Prayer

Pastor Rob

Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. (Acts 27.29)

GROUP DISCUSSION | Read Matthew 15.25-26, Luke 23.42, Psalm 143.11, Matthew 14.28-31

- 1) Which one of the four "anchors in crisis praying" mentioned from the verses above, (1) *Lord, Help Me*, (2) *Lord, Remember Me*, (3) *Lord, Revive Me*, or (4) *Lord, Save Me*, resonates most right now for you? Why is that?
- 2) These four different prayers for times of crisis can effectively be reduced to a heart-cry of simply 3 words each. (see #1). Are we prone to drift towards complexity, pomp and wordiness in our praying? If we had an intensified heart passion for prayer, could we say more while saying less?
- 3) How does one (or more/all) of these anchors in prayer remind you of God's sovereignty and help you to maintain hope and perspective in moments of crisis or even amidst longer seasons of hardship?
- 4) **Read Acts 27.13-29.** As we just turned the page to a new year, what are some of your very own, personal "Euroclydons" you have faced in 2025 (or in previous years) that God proved himself faithful amidst the storm? How can knowing of and trusting in His faithfulness help steady you amidst new storms in 2026 and beyond?
- 5) It was mentioned in the sermon that, "*Comfortable people have all the answers. Desperate people just have Jesus.*" Of course there are gradients, but which of these two, disparate adjectives best describes your faith right now; Comfortable or Desperate?
- 6) Read **1 Samuel 30.1-8.** When enduring incredible loss and hardship, v6 states that, David encouraged himself in the Lord. While God has wired us for community and we are called to encourage others, could we be more resolved (and biblical) in our thought-life and do better at encouraging ourselves in the Lord? How do we make strides in this important area?

PERSONAL REFLECTION |

Thinking over David's trial at Ziklag from the above passage in 1 Samuel, is there a present circumstance or scenario in your life-or those close to you-that demands a, "*Bring hither the ephod*" moment of desperate praying? Who or what is hindering you from praying like that?

EXHORTATION | RETURN TO CHRIST

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus... Hebrews 6.19-20a

Jan 25th Sermon

A House of Prayer

Pastor Mike

A house of prayer should be: **1)** For people from all ethnic groups (Mark 11.17, Isaiah 56.7, **2)** A place consecrated to the Lord (Matthew 21.12-13), **3)** Missionally focused (Mark 11.17), **4)** A place of healing (Matthew 21.14), **5)** A place of worship (Matthew 21.15-16)

GROUP DISCUSSION | Read **Matthew 21.12-16**

- 1) Read **Isaiah 56:7** and **Mark 11:17**. What do these verses teach us about who should be a part of our church and how this will look in God's future Kingdom?
- 2) Read **John 2.13-16**. How does Jesus' cleansing of the temple illustrate the sacredness of prayer? (*John records the cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry while the other gospels record a second cleansing towards the end of his ministry*)
- 3) Why is it important for the church to be a place of healing physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually? (see v14 in passage above). Practically, what are some ways can you play an important role in ensuring Manna is a just such a place of refuge and healing?
- 4) How can you foster a more missional focus in your group's prayer time? **Note:** The word "missional" is simply the adjective form of the noun *missionary*. It is used to describe people and churches who operate as missionaries in their local contexts." ~Missional Essentials by Brad Brisco & Lance Ford
- 5) Reflect on a time when you witnessed prayer bring healing or transformation. What are some ways you can share that experience to encourage others?
- 6) What distractions do you feel may have entered your personal space of worship? How can you begin the work of addressing these according to the sermon?

PERSONAL REFLECTION |

What are some practical ways to incorporate prayer further into your personal life and your family life? When will you begin to make these changes? If not now, when?

EXHORTATION | RETURN TO CHRIST

Make your home and your church a house of prayer.

Feb 1st Sermon

Practice of Prayer

Pastor Kevin

But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6.6)

GROUP DISCUSSION | Read Matthew 6.5-15

1) In verses 5-7, we are cautioned against losing focus in prayer. What might prompt someone to elevate the praise of others in their praying, rather than focusing on communicating with God? In these 11 verses, what are some things Jesus prescribes to help us maintain proper focus on and in prayer?

2) Think of a past (or even present) season of prayer where God did not seem to respond (or was "slow" in His response). Why do you think God was silent or His answer delayed? How can meditating on God's character and His great love for us provide needed help during seasons of waiting?

3) In reflecting on the Lord's prayer, how have you beneficially used this as a model in your rhythms of prayer? In what ways has the Lord's prayer been helpful and clarifying? In what ways has it been confusing or ritualistic?

4) Reflecting on verses 11-13 and meeting us right where we are at with three important areas...

WORRY: We all can worry or become anxious about the future. How can giving over to prayer today's needs help alleviate tensions in our thoughts for the future?

FORGIVENESS: Forgiving others (or ourself) is hard. Why is this so? How does knowing Jesus has forgiven us help in this hard work of forgiveness towards ourselves and others?

TEMPTATION: How does knowing that God provides a way of escape when we are tempted encourage and equip you? How do we identify and lean into His provided ways of escape?

5) Sometimes the lines of our "needs" become blurred with our "wants". How can we guard against this?

6) From these 15 verses, Pastor drew out 5 important characteristics in our prayer life. 1) Intentionality (*when you pray*), 2) Consistency, 3) Humility (*needy posture of our heart*), 4) Expectant. On a scale of 1-5 (1 = low); honestly assess yourself in these five characteristics (*i.e. How intentional are you in your prayer life, etc.*)

PERSONAL REFLECTION |

In the sermon Pastor mentioned, "*Public conversation with people reveals what is on our minds. Private conversation with God reveals what is on our hearts.*" What does reflecting on the frequency, fervor and petitions of your prayer life in 2025 and this first month of 2026, reveal who or what is near and dear to your heart? Is this good/right? Healthy/balanced? God-honoring? What does your current prayer life reveal of your beliefs of God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and the importance of prayer?

EXHORTATION | RETURN TO CHRIST

"God is not looking for better methods, but for better men (and women). People mighty in prayer."
~adapted from E.M. Bounds