

“When I pray, coincidences happen. When I don’t pray, they don’t happen.” ~ Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple

Vision 2:28

“Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.” Joel 2:28

Christ Church’s Guide to “21 Days of Fasting and Prayer”

A Wesleyan Understanding of Fasting and Prayer

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, preached and printed a sermon based upon Matthew’s account of Jesus’ teaching on fasting and prayer. The Sermon is ***Sermon XXVII Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*** from the scripture Matthew 6: 16-18. The essence of the sermon is not to make too much of fasting, nor should it be ignored. Fasting can be a means of God’s grace working in our lives as we seek to hear from God through this simple act of *denying physical need for spiritual gain*.

Wesley wrote about fasting, “It is not all, nor yet is it nothing. It is not the end, but it is a precious means thereto; when it is duly used, He will surely give us His blessing.” Sermon XXVII Jackson’s Works, p. 344

Fasting

By participating in this experience, you will be in good company. Moses the Law Giver, Elijah the great prophet, and Jesus our Savior all fasted and prayed for 40 days. Why? Were they not already advanced in their walk with God when they began their fasting? Yes, they were—this is why they submitted themselves to this spiritual discipline so God could reveal more of Himself and His direction for them and those they led.

Fasting literally means to abstain from food. In some passages in the Bible, you will read the story of Moses, “he ate and drank nothing.” (Exodus 34:28) Some observe a 24 hour fast or even a 40 hour fast, while some will endure a 72 hour fast and only drink liquids.

In the early church, Christians would fast on Wednesday and Friday by not eating any breakfast nor lunch. They would only drink water or other liquids during their fast. The next form of fasting is abstaining from pleasing food or a full meal. In other words, you would just eat toast and some protein with no flavoring or condiment. Daniel observed a form of abstaining from certain foods in the Book of Daniel as God revealed Himself in this fasting from fatty meats, etc.

During the 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer, some of the worshippers at Christ Church will participate in a true 21 Days of fasting by not eating after the evening meal until the next evening meal—a full 23 to 24 hour fast each day. The exception would be on Sunday when the Sunday lunch after worship can be observed.

Praying: Vision 2:28 “Reaching a Lost World with the Good News of Christ”

There are many forms of prayer. There are prayers of lamentation, tears, confession, adoration, petition, intercession, sacramental, and unceasing prayer just to name a few.

During the 21 Days of Fasting & Prayer we will focus upon *Petition* and *Intercession*. Both forms of prayer can be powerful experiences, which draw us close to God during our time of fasting. In the fasting experience we open ourselves up to hearing from God, due to our posture of obedience, and in our prayer time we listen to God through the reading of Scripture and prayer.

1) Petition: During the 21 Days praying for Personal Dreams & Visions

In Luke 11, Jesus gave us permission to “knock and the door will be open, seek and you will find, ask and it will be given to you.” Prayers of petition are expected from God as He knows we have needs. What are your personal dreams? Mark Twain once said, “Most men die at 27 we just bury them at 72”. Do you have a personal vision statement about your life—where you want God to take you?

2) Intercession: Praying for the Unchurched and for God’s Dream & Vision for Christ Church

In Hebrews, Jesus intercedes for each of us, “Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.” We are called to pray and intercede for one another. In addition, we are called to pray even for our enemies according to Jesus’ own words in the Sermon on the Mount.

Vision 2:28 is all about praying for the unchurched, for those who have yet to belong. Praying for others is one of the most important forms of ministry and compassion that we can engage in. Pray for those struggling with anxiety, depression, drugs, finances, relationships, etc.

What do you pray for during the 21 Days of Fasting & Prayer? We will have two focuses:
God’s Vision for you Personally and God’s Vision for Christ Church

Personal Vision—During the 21 Days, what do I need to ask God?

- 1) Personal needs—what do I need in order to become physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy? (Exercise, watching what I eat, reading Bible daily, counseling?)
- 2) How is God moving already in my life? What is God asking me to do by the prompting of His Spirit? (Has God been nudging you to get involved, to serve someone, to initiate reconciliation? Have you resisted? How is God working already in your life?)
- 3) What Vision do you have for your life? What is God calling you to do to find fulfillment through Him? Challenge yourself to write out your personal dream or vision statement.

Example, “To be a loving spouse, a leader in the lives of my children, and to encourage my unchurched friends to try Jesus by living a sold-out life for God.”

Intercession: God’s Vision for Christ Church—Where is God taking Christ Church over the next 3 to 5 years?

God’s Vision—Ask God three questions in the 21 Days of *Vision 2:28*

- 1) What are the biggest needs in our community? (Is it broken homes, marriages, poverty, drugs, illiteracy, students & children needing mentoring, jobs, etc.?)
 - 2) How is God already at work in our community? (Where do you currently see God moving and how can we join Him? How can we bless what He is already doing?)
 - 3) Considering Christ Church’s Mission Statement—**Specifically praying for Vision 2:28:**
 - Plant 10 new churches in the next 3 years, one located in the Unifour area.
 - Double Life Groups to over 100.
 - Double baptisms and people joining the Christ Church family.
 - Increase worship attendance by 25%.
- a) Raise 5 Million dollars through sacrificial Giving by each member giving the largest gift they’ve ever given over three years to any Christian organization.**
- First Million to go towards Building a permanent facility for the Lincolnton Campus for worship, ongoing ministry, and a fully functioning child development center. Cost is \$2,840,000.
 - Debt reduction by \$3.5M over the next 3 years for all of Christ Church to take our \$6,500,000 debt down to \$1,800,000.
- b) Specifically praying for each campus’ focus and mission:**
- Northside Campus: Further Expansion of outreach on Northside of Catawba County and beyond. Growing Children, Student and Life Group Ministries.
 - Mt. View Campus: On and Off Ramp at 321 & Sandy Ford Rd.
 - Fairgrove Campus: Reaching Newton/Conover area for Christ, growth in Children’s, Student and Life Groups & maximizing facilities.
 - Statesville Campus: Greater visibility in northern Iredell County, maximizing use of facilities to equip followers of Christ.
 - Online Campus: To continue to grow by reaching people in other states, in prison, and around the world.