

7 DAYS OF

PRAYER & FASTING

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH



**20
26**

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A WORD FROM PASTOR JAMIN

Thank you for joining our church family for **seven days of prayer and fasting**. This is a dedicated time of personal devotion that we start the New Year here at Trinity Baptist Church. During these seven days, we reset our spiritual compass and ask God to bring about refreshing in our lives. Our hope is that this time of prayer and fasting will renew us personally as well as our church corporately.

Our week of prayer and fasting is intentionally designed to be flexible so that you can participate at any level. Whether you have done a 7-day season of prayer and fasting before, or if this is your first time, **you can start where you are** and experience God in a powerful way.

Each day, **beginning Sunday January 4**, we will open our Worship Center for corporate prayer for those who would like to spend intentional time praying in the House of God. Come and kneel, sit or walk the sanctuary as you simply talk with God and ask Him to speak to you.

We pray that you will experience the **presence and power of God** in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to Him this week. May you be closer to God than ever before as you seek Him first.

As you prepare for this week, **ask the Holy Spirit** to clarify His leading and objectives for your life this week and this year. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Write these down and be open to hearing what God wants to show you in those areas.

When praying, make your primary goal **to know Jesus more** and experience Him. Focus first on what's right about Him, such as His goodness and His greatness. Thank Him for all He has done.

Finally, make time to **pray daily**. Don't overcomplicate this! Just talk to God. Have that place and time where you can seek Him every day. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. Consider writing this down and filling in the blank. Put it in a place where you will see it during your dedicated prayer time:

During this fast, I am praying and believing God for: _____

Trusting God For Great Things,

Pastor Jamin

AN INTRODUCTION TO FASTING

FASTING EXPLAINED

The Bible defines fasting as a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes. It is Christian, for fasting by a non-Christian has no eternal value since the discipline's motives and purposes are to be God-centered. Fasting is voluntary in the sense that it is not to be coerced. Fasting is more than just the ultimate crash diet for the body, it is abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.

FASTING IS EXPECTED

Notice Jesus' words at the beginning of Mt. 6:16-17, "When you fast . . . " By giving us instructions on what to do and what not to do when we fast, Jesus assumes that we will fast.

Compare these words with His statements about giving and praying in the same passage, "So when you give..." (Mt. 6:2-3), "But when you pray..." (Mt. 6:5-7). No one doubts that we are to give and to pray.

Plainer still are Jesus' words in Mt. 9:14-15. The Pharisees asked Him, "'How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?' Jesus answered, 'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while He is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast' " (emphasis mine). That time is now. Until Jesus, the Bridegroom of the Church returns, He expects us to fast.

PURPOSES FOR FASTING

Scripture gives many purposes for fasting. I've condensed them into several major categories. Whenever you fast, you should do so for at least one of these purposes. Notice that not one of the purposes is to earn God's favor. We cannot use fasting as a way to impress God and earn His acceptance. We are made acceptable to God through the work of Christ Jesus, not our work. Fasting has no eternal benefit for us until we have come to God through repentance and faith ([Eph. 2:1-10](#), [Titus 3:5-7](#)).

1. TO STRENGTHEN PRAYER

There's something about fasting that sharpens the edge of our intercessions and gives passion to our supplications.

When Ezra was about to lead a group of exiles back to Jerusalem, he proclaimed a fast in order for the people to seek the Lord earnestly for safe passage. They were to face many dangers without military protection during their nine-hundred-mile journey. "So we fasted and petitioned our God about this," says [Ezra 8:23](#), "and he answered our prayer."

The most important aspect of this discipline is its influence on prayer. The Bible does not teach that fasting is a kind of spiritual hunger strike that compels God to do our bidding. If we ask for something outside of God's will, fasting does not cause Him to

reconsider. Fasting does not change God's hearing so much as it changes our praying. You'll notice that in one way or another, all the other biblical purposes of fasting relate to prayer.

Nehemiah (in 1:4) "fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." Daniel (in 9:3) devoted himself to plead with God "in prayer and petition, in fasting." In a direct command through the prophet Joel, Israel was told, "'Even now,' declares the LORD 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning'" ([Joel 2:12](#)). It wasn't until after "they had fasted and prayed" that the church in Antioch "placed their hands" on Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus and "sent them off" on the first missionary journey ([Acts 13:3](#)).

2. TO SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE

There is biblical precedent for fasting to more clearly discern the will of God. In [Judges 20](#) the other eleven tribes of Israel prepared for war against the tribe of Benjamin. Through prayer they sought the Lord before going into battle. Even though they outnumbered the Benjamites by fifteen to one, they lost the battle and twenty-two thousand men. It wasn't until they prayed and fasted that the Lord told them: "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands" (v. 28).

According to [Acts 14:23](#), before Paul and Barnabas would appoint elders in the churches they founded, they first prayed with fasting to receive God's guidance.

Fasting does not ensure the certainty of receiving clear guidance from God. Rightly practiced, however, it does make us more receptive to the One who loves to guide us.

3. TO EXPRESS GRIEF

Three of the first four references in the Bible to fasting connect it with an expression of grief. As mentioned in Jdg. 20:26, the Israelites wept and fasted before the Lord not only to seek His guidance, but also to express their grief for the forty thousand brothers they had lost in battle.

When King Saul was killed by the Philistines, the men of Jabesh Gilead "fasted seven days" after his burial (1 Sam. 31:13). When David and his men heard the news, they took hold of their clothes and tore them. They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel (2 Sam. 1:11-12).

We may also fast because of grief over our sins. Although it's not a spiritual self-

flagellation, biblical confession does involve at least some degree of grief for the sin committed. And inasmuch as fasting can be an expression of grief, it can serve as a voluntary, heartfelt part of confession. There have been a few occasions when I've grieved so deeply over my sin that words alone seemed powerless to say to God what I wanted. And though it made me no more worthy of forgiveness, fasting communicated the grief and confession my words could not.

Fasting also can be a means of expressing grief for the sins of others, those you know or society in general. When a jealous King Saul was trying unjustly to kill David, Jonathan did not eat for a day, "because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David" (1 Sam. 20:34).

4. TO SEEK DELIVERANCE OR PROTECTION

One of the most common fasts in biblical times was a fast to seek salvation from enemies or circumstances.

After being notified that a vast army was coming against him, King Jehoshaphat was afraid and proclaimed a fast for all Judah. People from all over Judah came together to seek help from the Lord (2 Chron. 20:3-4).

We've already read of the fast called by Ezra when he led a group of exiles back to Jerusalem. There we noticed that they fasted in order to strengthen their praying. But notice from the larger context of Ezra 8:21-23 that they prayed with fasting for God's protection: "I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions."

The best-known cooperative fast in Scripture is the one in Est. 4:16. It was called by Queen Esther as part of her appeal to

God for protection from the king's wrath. She planned to enter the court of King Xerxes uninvited to appeal to him for the protection of the Jews from mass extermination.

When our church has a day of fasting to grieve for the sins of our country, we also include prayers asking the Lord to protect and deliver us from enemies that might result from our sins. We realize that He often disciplined Israel for her sins by allowing national enemies to gain advantage over her militarily or economically. Perhaps we don't think as often of the reality of national sin as we should, and how Christians will experience part of any national judgment that comes, even though we did not contribute directly to the national sin.

Fasting, rather than fleshly efforts, should be one of our first defenses against "persecution" from family, schoolmates, neighbors, or coworkers because of our

faith. Typically, we're tempted to strike back with anger, verbal abuse, counteraccusations, or even legal action,

Instead of appealing to God with fasting for protection and deliverance.

5. TO EXPRESS REPENTANCE AND A RETURN TO GOD

This is similar to fasting to express grief for sin. But as repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change of action, fasting can also signal a commitment to obedience and a new direction.

The Israelites expressed repentance through fasting in 1 Sam. 7:6 when "they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, 'We have sinned against the LORD.'"

In Joel 2:12, the Lord specifically commanded His people to signify their repentance and their return to Him by fasting: "'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.'"

Not only can fasting express repentance, it can be in vain without repentance. As with all spiritual disciplines, fasting can be little more than a "dead work" if we have persistently hardened our hearts to God's call to deal with a specific sin in our lives. We must never try to immerse ourselves in a spiritual discipline as an attempt to drown out God's voice about forsaking a sin. It is a perversion of fasting to try to use it to balance a sinful part of life we want to continue feeding.

6. TO HUMBLE ONESELF BEFORE GOD

Fasting, when practiced with the right motives, is a physical expression of humility before God, just as kneeling or prostrating yourself in prayer can reflect humility before Him.

One of the most wicked men in Jewish history, King Ahab, eventually humbled himself before God and demonstrated it by fasting: "When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly." As a result, God resolved to delay His judgment (1 Kings. 21:27-29).

One of Israel's godliest men humbled himself before the Lord in the same way. King David wrote, "I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting" (Ps. 35:13).

Remember that fasting itself is not humility before God, but should be an expression of humility. There was no humility in the Pharisee of Lk. 18:12, who bragged to God in prayer that he fasted twice a week.

7. TO EXPRESS CONCERN FOR THE WORK OF GOD

Just as a parent might fast and pray out of concern for the work of God in a child's life, so Christians may fast and pray because they feel a burden for the work of God in a broader scope.

A Christian might feel compelled to fast and pray for the work of God in a place that has

experienced tragedy, disappointment, or apparent defeat. This was the purpose for Nehemiah's fast when he heard that despite the return of many Jewish exiles to Jerusalem, the city still had no wall to defend it. After his fast, Nehemiah then went to work to do something tangible and public to strengthen this work of God.

8. TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION AND DEDICATE YOURSELF TO GOD

Ask Christians to name a fast by a biblical character and most will probably think of the supernatural fast of Jesus prior to His temptation in Mt. 4:1-11. Verse two of that familiar passage tells us that Jesus fasted "forty days and forty nights." In the spiritual strength of that prolonged fast He was prepared to overcome a direct onslaught of temptation from Satan, the strongest He would face until Gethsemane. It was also during that fast that He privately dedicated Himself to the Father for the public ministry He would begin soon thereafter.

Nowhere in Scripture are we asked to fast for forty days, or for any specific length of time. But that doesn't mean there is nothing from Jesus' unique experience for us to apply to ourselves. One principle is this: Fasting is a way of overcoming temptation and of freshly dedicating ourselves to the Father.

There are times we struggle with temptation, or we anticipate grappling with it, when we need extra spiritual strength to overcome it. Perhaps we are traveling (or our spouse is traveling) and temptations for mental and sensual unfaithfulness abound. At the start of school or a new job or ministry there may be new temptations, or it may seem appropriate to dedicate ourselves anew to the Lord. Often we face decisions that place unusual temptations before us. Do we take a new job that will mean much more money but much less time with the family? Do we accept the promotion and transfer that would end a significant ministry in our local church? In times of exceptional temptation, exceptional measures are required. Fasting to overcome temptation and renew our dedication to God is a Christlike response.

9. TO EXPRESS LOVE AND WORSHIP TO GOD

By now you may have associated fasting only with dire circumstances. But the Bible also says that fasting may be an act of sheer devotion to God.

In Luke 2 there is an unforgettable woman

whose entire eighty-four years are flashed before us in three verses. Her name is Anna. The summary of her life is found in Lk. 2:37: "She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying." Although Anna's story is significant

primarily in the context of Mary and Joseph presenting the newborn Jesus at the Temple, how she lived from day to day is what concerns us here. Anna was married for only seven years before being widowed. Assuming she married as a young lady, this godly woman devoted at least half a century, night and day, to a worship of God characterized by "fasting and praying."

Fasting can be an expression of finding your greatest pleasure and enjoyment in God. Fasting honors God and is a means of worshiping Him as such. It means that your stomach isn't your god as it is with some ([Philippians 3:19](#)). Instead it is God's servant, and fasting proves it because you're willing to sublimate its desires to those of the Spirit.

Christians throughout history have fasted in preparation for the Lord's Supper. In addition to the elements of repentance and humility before God in this kind of fast, it is also intended to help the person focus on adoring the One who is represented in the Supper.

Another way of fasting to express love and

worship to God is to spend your mealtime in praise and adoration of God. A variation is to delay eating a particular meal until you have had your daily time of Bible intake and prayer. Just remember that your fast is a privilege, not an obligation. It is the acceptance of a divine invitation to experience His grace in a special way. If you can't fast with the faith that you will find more satisfaction and joy at that time than in delaying a meal, then freely eat in faith ([Ro. 14:22-23](#)). But may we yearn for days when God will cause us to crave the spiritual banquet of worship more than any smorgasbord.

Before we fast we must have a God-centered purpose. But even at our best we do not deserve what we desire, nor can we force God's hand. Having said that, however, let's balance that truth with the incontestable promise of Jesus in Mt. 6:17-18 that God will bless a biblical fast by any of His children. And whether or not you receive the blessing you hope for, one thing is sure: If you knew what God knew, you would give yourself the identical blessing that He does. And none of His rewards are worthless.

READY, SET, BEGIN

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT FASTING

- Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras. For example, Moses fasted at least two recorded 40-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast, “when you fast,” not if you fast.
- 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 (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, “I humble myself through fasting.”
- Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance and a transformed life.
- The Holy Spirit will 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. If you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. You will discover more time to pray and seek God’s face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sin, you will experience special blessings from God.

HOW TO FAST

As you prepare to fast, it is important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. While this section provides some general information about different types of fasts, as well as some suggestions on how to create your own fasting plan, it is important to mention that there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do.

Fasting can include food, social media and entertainment, among other things. It should be something you are accustomed to so that it stretches you to give it up. Giving it up for a period of time enables one to focus on God. For example, when those hunger pangs happen, turn to prayer. When you usually watch your television shows, open your Bible to read and pray instead. Fast from social media or watching sports so you can focus on God.

Don’t let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. Our focus should be on drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God.

Tips to keep in mind before getting started:

01 START WHERE YOU ARE:

We are all at different places in our walk with God. Likewise our jobs, daily schedules and health conditions are all different and place various levels of demand on our energy. So most importantly, whether you've fasted before or this is your first time, start where you are. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but it's very important to know your own body, know your options and, most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what that Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Remember, the goal of fasting is not just to do without food or Facebook. The goal is to draw nearer to God.

02 MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus encouraged us to fast (Matthew 6:16-18). For Him it was a matter of when believers fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, we encourage you to decide up front the type of fast God wants you to undertake and how much time each day you will devote to prayer and reading God's Word. Making these commitments ahead of time will help sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

You may choose to fast every day this week. Or you may choose to fast certain times or days out of the week. This is your personal decision and should be prayerfully considered as it applies to your circumstances.

It is important to fast in a way that works for you. The goal is that you choose a fast that will be challenging for you but will work within your life. You should choose a plan that will cause you to rely on God and will create space in your life for Him to work.

Different Types of Fasts:

- **Specific Food or Activity Fast:**

In this type of fast you omit a specific item(s) from your meal plans. For example, you may choose to eliminate all red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. Most people can incorporate this type of fast relatively easily. It can also prove to be a great solution for people with specific dietary needs or medical conditions that may cause certain limitations.

While fasting typically refers to refraining from specific food items, you may also find it extremely beneficial to fast from a regular activity or habit. This might include things such as television, social media and the like.

Prayer and fasting are about both connecting to God and disconnecting from the world.

Try to tune out some of the regular distractions from your day as much as possible.

Replace that time with things that will nourish you spiritually.

- **Daniel Fast:**

The Daniel fast is a great model to follow and one that is extremely effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline and purification of the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred-to fasts; however, within the Daniel fast there is room for broad interpretation.

In the book of Daniel we find two different times where the prophet Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he ate only vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods, as well as no red meat or wine. So based on these two verses, we can see that either of these, or combinations of the two, constitute a Daniel fast.

Again, it is important to mention that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

If you are interested in learning more about the Daniel fast, be sure to check out one resource at the web site <https://ultimatedanielfast.com>

- **Juice Fast:**

A juice fast is simply consuming vegetable and fruit juices and water instead of solid food. Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan as well. Even if you choose not to make your entire fast liquids-only, substituting one or two meals for liquids could be a great alternative.

Fasting Safely:

As you begin your fast, you may hear from concerned loved ones and friends who urge you to protect your health. And they are right. You should protect your health. But we want to encourage you that if done properly, fasting will not only prove to be a spiritual blessing, but a physical blessing as well.

You may, however, have a physical problem that would make fasting unwise or dangerous. This could include tumors, cancer, blood diseases, diabetes or heart disease. If that is the case, include your doctor in your decision on how to fast. Also, if you are under any type of medication, you may want to talk with your doctor before changing your regime.

- **Fasting While Nursing or Pregnant**

Strict fasting while nursing or pregnant is not recommended. If you are in this season of life, here are some great options for you to consider – with the approval of your physician:

- A modified Daniel fast including whole grains, legumes, whey protein, calcium and iron supplements
- Fasting from sweets and desserts
- Fasting from red meat
- Fasting from non-food activities like television, Facebook/Twitter, movies, etc.

• Fasting and Eating Disorders

If you have struggled with an eating disorder, this situation is a battle that you can win through Christ. Remember, fasting is a tool used to get closer to God, and it actually should keep us from being preoccupied with food. If your method of fasting is going to cause you to obsess about what you eat in any way, you will either need to change your approach or your mindset.

If giving up food is a stumbling block to you, then consider fasting of TV, Facebook, reading (other than the Bible), or shopping. There are many distractions and ways that we use to stay in control that we could eliminate from our daily routine. If you can identify such other things, maybe you can give those up instead of food. Remember that you are covered by God's grace. God will show you what to do and give you His peace.

03 BEGINNING AND ENDING YOUR FAST WELL:

Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Remember that God is your Father and He loves you and is for you.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from people whom you have offended, and forgive those who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to his command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17).

Final Fasting Tips:

- Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with the items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give into temptation.
- Make it a priority to talk with other believers who will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.
- If you are fasting with others, you may want to meet together in a small-group setting. You can share what God is showing you in your devotional time as well as spend time in prayer together.
- If you mess up, don't get discouraged. Just get right back on track and keep going. God's mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23). He wants you to finish, and He will give you the grace and strength to do it! If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Our prayer is that this will be a significant time in your life where you experience God's presence like never before!

PRAYER REMINDERS

1. Prayer is a conversation with God.

Talk with Him in openness and honesty. He is close to the brokenhearted.

2. Be thankful.

Praise God and thank Him for his grace and mercy and for all He has done.

3. Ask for direction.

Ask The Holy Spirit to guide you in your thoughts and actions. Be sensitive to His voice. Say Yes to God!

4. Ask for forgiveness

Pray for clean hands and a pure heart and confess any hidden sin in your life to God. He is faithful to forgive. (Psalm 24:3-4, 1 John 1:9)

5. Tell Him what you need.

Be specific. Tell God what you want Him to do in your life and in the lives of others.

6. Pray Scripture. Memorize Scripture.

Speak the Word of God in prayer. There is something about proclaiming the truth of God's Word in prayer. (Psalm 119:11)

Material of the previous pages are from articles adapted from books by NavPress
"Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian" Life by Don Whitney, "Your Personal Guide to
Fasting and Prayer" by Bill Bright, and Crosswalk.com.



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