

Refreshing Fast Booklet



REFRESH

WIC THEME 2024

In 2024 we are focusing on the theme of “Refresh”.

What is fascinating is the connection between “Refreshing” and “Repentance”.

In Acts 3, the Apostle Peter said: “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus”- Acts 3:19-20

Repentance is about turning away from our sin and self-centredness, and turning towards God in love, worship, prayer and dependency. One of the simplest, most earnest ways to repent is through prayer and fasting.

Many Christians fast during the period of Lent (40 days leading to Easter Sunday) to help them reflect on Jesus’ path to the cross and consider His sacrifice, life, death, and resurrection.

This season of praying and fasting is about turning away from our self-centredness and self-reliance and surrendering ourselves to God. It’s about turning toward Him believing that times of refreshing will come from with His love, grace, presence, promises and power. During this time we want to grow in our hunger, holiness, honour and humility toward God.

As you personally engage with this fast, be prepared that it will not be easy; but be expectant that God will do powerful things in your life and in our congregation.

We believe God will reveal powerful things about who we are, who He is, and how He is leading us forwards.

As we humble ourselves before our mighty God, may He be honoured, may times of refreshing come upon all of us, and may His refreshing touch flow through us to our world.

Love, Ps Andy

Big Picture

Firstly, it's important to focus on the big picture of our fasting journey. Throughout this fast, we pray these **four** things will grow in us and in the church:

1 Hunger

We want to grow a hunger for God above anything else in our lives. Our prayer is that He would be our greatest appetite. This fast will help to grow this hunger for God. Psalm 63 says: "Your love is better than life" and "I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you". That's what we want.

2 Holiness

We want to grow in our holiness towards God. 2 Timothy 2:20 explains that our holiness makes us ready and useful for our Master, prepared for every good work. We want our bodies to be used for God's glory.

3 Honour

We want to honour God with how we treat our bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:19 explains that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that He lives in us. Therefore taking care our bodies is one way to honour God's indwelling presence in us.

4 Humility

Lastly we want to grow in our humility before God. When Daniel fasted and prayed (Dan 10), God sent an angel in response. Why? Because through this act, Daniel was humbling himself before God and ready to respond (Dan 10:12). We want to humbly seek our God and not trust in our own abilities and resources.



Secondly, you will need to choose which type of fast you will engage in. This decision is entirely between you and God. Below are the various **types of fasts** to consider.

Complete Fast

- Drinking only liquids, typically water and/or light juices.
- Broth or soup may be included as options.

Selective Fast

- Removing certain elements from your diet.
- The Daniel Fast - abstaining from meat, sweets, or bread; drink water and juice, and eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Soul Fast

- Common for: anyone new to fasting food; those with health issues that prevent them from fasting food; those wanting to refocus specific areas of life that are out of balance.
- Suggestions: abstain from engaging in social media, shopping, watching television, etc.

Partial Fast (also known as The Jewish Fast)

- Abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon.
- Fast during specific times of the day, e.g. 6AM-3PM, or from sunup to sundown.

It is important to be aware that you may experience fatigue or headaches in the first two to three days of the fast in response to the lack of caffeine and other stimulants. These symptoms should disappear within a few days. If there are medical restrictions to you following a particular fast, please be sure to follow your doctor's instructions.



Thirdly, to help make the most of this fast, these **two tools** will strengthen and encourage you.

1 Devotions

We have written three devotions for each week of the fast to encourage you to grow in your understanding of fasting and inspire you in prayer and action.

Hunger for God

There is a free e-book written by John Piper which will inspire you greatly around fasting. Follow the reading plan of reading a chapter each week and be encouraged. You can access “Hunger for God” here.



May the journey ahead be filled with His love and grace! Amen.



Overall Plan

Week	Date	Devotions	Hunger for God Reading Plan	Suggested Prayer Focus
1	14 - 20 Feb	1-3	Chapter 1 Is Fasting Christian?	Pray to grow in humility
2	21 - 27 Feb	4-6	Chapter 2 Man shall not live by bread alone	Pray for your hunger for God to grow
3	28 Feb - 5 Mar	7-9	Chapter 3 Fasting for the reward of the Father	Pray to grow in holiness
4	6 - 12 Mar	10-12	Chapter 4 Fasting for the King's coming	Pray for Jesus to be honoured in your life
5	13 - 19 Mar	13-15	Chapter 5 Fasting and the course of history	Pray for this city to be transformed
6	20 - 26 Mar	16-18	Chapter 6 Finding God in the garden of pain	Pray for the pain in the city and those around you
7	27 - 30 Mar	19-20	Chapter 7 Fasting for the little ones	Pray for the transformation of our city and our world

Fasting Devotions

1 Fasting for an audience of One

Matthew 6:16-18 (NIV)

16 “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. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 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.

Reflection

This passage comes from Jesus’ famous Sermon on the Mount. The bulk of this sermon is about having an authentic faith that comes from the heart as opposed to a superficial faith focused on what others see.

Jesus describes those who make their devotion very obvious to those around them. Sadly, they will miss out on the reward the Father wants to give them. All they will receive is people’s applause.

Instead says Jesus, make your devotion through fasting obvious to an audience of one: the Father Himself. The Father looks to what is done in secret, He searches our hearts and happily rewards those who are authentic in their devotion.

Action

As we fast in this season, let’s ensure that we are doing this because we want to humble ourselves before our God alone and honour Him above all.

Prayer

Forgive us God when we are proud of our devotion. Help us to be humble before you, and sincere as we seek Your face during this time of fasting and prayer. By your grace would You give us the Father’s reward in the secret place. Amen.

2 Fasting for Holiness

Exodus 34:28 (NIV)

28 Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

Reflection

Moses was called up on the mountain so that God could reveal the laws that the people of Israel were to live by so that they would be holy and show the world that God is love. Moses was in the presence of God and His holiness for 40 days and 40 nights without eating or drinking anything. The result of that fast was Moses' revelation of God's holiness and how to be more like Him. Do we seek to be holy as God is holy?

Action

Today as you fast reflect on God's holiness and repent of all the ways that you fail to be holy as He is holy. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict you if that which needs the forgiveness of Christ to be pure before our great and holy God.

Prayer

Holy God, please forgive me for all the times when I don't even think about being holy as You are holy. Please forgive me of all my sins and especially those that stop the reflection of your holiness to others through me. Lord help me to holy unto You. Amen.

3 Fasting to Remember our True Identity

Luke 4:1-4 (NIV)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

Reflection

Immediately after Jesus was baptised by the Holy Spirit, he was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. During this time Jesus fasted. Even though he was physically hungry He was spiritually “full of the Holy Spirit”.

Sometimes fasting enables us to master our physical urges in order to face spiritually intense or challenging situations. Satan comes to attack our sense of identity in God, but in our case, God’s word together with the Holy Spirit’s affirmation of our identity as children (Rom 8:15-16) strengthens our sense of who we are in Christ!

Jesus responded to Satan quoting scripture: “Man shall not live in bread alone...” the unquoted rest of that verse is “...but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”. Wow! How much more satisfying is God’s word than physical bread!

Action

As you fast today, remind yourself of your true identity- that you are a child of God filled with the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to overcome all attacks of Satan who tries to prevent us from walking in our true identity in Christ. As you read the Bible today, remember that this is spiritual food that goes on nourishing into eternity.

Prayer

Jesus, enable us to overcome the attacks of the enemy, especially on our identity. Fill us with the Holy Spirit, satisfy us with Your word and strengthen us with Your power. Amen.

4 Fasting for a Godly Focus

Daniel 1:11-15 (NIV)

11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” 14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

Reflection

The reason that Daniel and his friends fasted in this passage is because they were choosing to live a holy lifestyle through their diet as God has taught them through the Torah. They did not want to compromise their holiness to God through what they ate. This act of commitment was about holiness to God and trusting God to provide what they needed. As the story unfolds, God blessed their commitment to live a holy lifestyle and provided more than they needed!

Action

As you fast today, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you in what ways God might be taking you to another level of holiness. Pray deeply about what in which the Lord may be calling you to trust Him for all things.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that your divine power gives us everything we need for life and godliness and it's all because of You. Move in us and transform us as we choose to live a holy life for You and by Your strength. We trust You will provide our every need. Amen.

5 Fasting that leads to Hearing

Acts 13:2-3 (NIV)

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Reflection

The Christians in Antioch were so determined to draw closer to God in devotion and worship that they purposefully abstained from eating. When the hunger pangs hit it simply caused them to pray more passionately and seek the Lord more deeply. It was in this spirit of heartfelt devotion that the Lord chose to speak to them and to reveal His will to them, even though that was not the purpose or intention of the worship prayer and fasting. The unexpected surprise of such worship and fasting is that He spoke to them and revealed His will to them. What an unexpected blessing!

Action

Every time today that you feel a hunger pang, or a desire for food that is not included in the Daniel fast, praise and worship God simply for who He is and for what He has done for us. Don't be surprised if you hear His voice revealing His will for you in growing His kingdom for His glory.

Prayer

Loving God, help me to be completely devoted to You in all that I do. You are worthy of all my praise and worship. Help me to love You with all my heart, mind, strength and soul. May I hear your voice speaking to me this day. In Jesus name, Amen.

6 Fasting in Authentic Commitment

Joel 2:12-17 (NIV)

12 “Even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Reflection

The Lord, through the prophet Joel, called Israel corporately to fast and pray so that the impending judgement, due to their sins, would not come upon them. A corporate fast that allowed people to humble themselves, earnestly pursue God and repent of their sin could have meant that the judgement would have been withheld. What the Lord was seeking from Israel was an authentic commitment to Him. However, due to Israel’s stubbornness of heart and refusal to fast, the judgement that was prophesied came upon them.

Action

As you fast today, check your heart to determine how authentically you are committed to Him. Is Jesus truly more important than everything else in your life?

Prayer

Loving God thank you that you are compassionate and merciful. Help me to be fully and authentically committed to you in all things. Amen.

7 Fasting that is not of the world

Psalm 69:6-12 (NIV)

10 When I weep and fast, I must ensure scorn...

Reflection

In Psalm 69 we see that David fasts and prays because of his passion for God and His ways. David is perplexed when he sees the evil that abounds around him and he fasts and prays in grief and mourning, that sinners will turn away from evil and toward God. Those of the world who do want anything to do with the Lord, mock David when they see him weeping and fasting for the state of their souls.

Those who are not yet children of God, may mock our fasting and passion for Him which can be hurtful and humiliating. They do this because they are blind to the ways of God and cannot see. This calls for yet more fasting and prayer for those around us, for the Holy Spirit to open their eyes.

Action

As you fast today, reconfirm your love and zeal for God and pray that blind eyes will be open to Jesus, and hearts will receive Him. Remember too that Jesus was mocked because of his zeal for God and passion to reach the lost, and know that He has gone before us and suffers with us.

Prayer

Everlasting God, may we be zealous and passionate for you. Help us to forgive those who mock us in our desire to live for You and may you open their eyes to see Your grace and mercy. Amen.

8 Fasting - a word of warning

Luke 18:11-12 (NIV)

11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

Reflection

In the parable of the “Pharisee and the Tax Collector”, Jesus rebukes the Pharisee because of his religious pride and self-righteousness. Jesus was not rebuking the Pharisee for his devotional deeds to God, but rather for his pride in his actions and his critical and judgement attitude of others. On the other hand, Jesus commended the tax collector who was truly convicted of his sin and was pleading for God’s mercy.

Are there times when we may be critical of others who may not be living the Christian life as we think that they should? What is our true motive when we do things for God and His church? It is important that we check our hearts in all activities that are devoted to God, especially fasting. Every devotional activity that we do, should come from a place of humble appreciation of God’s grace in our lives and to reflect our love for Him and others.

Action

In the moments of self-denial today, thank God that there is absolutely no way you can earn His love and salvation - it is a free gift of grace. Check that your fasting is not about achieving or being better than others, but truly humbling yourself before a mighty God who has given His all for us.

Prayer

Merciful God, please forgive me for every moment that I have been self-righteous and proud. Remind me always that I am completely and utterly dependant on Your grace and help me to walk humbly with You in every moment. Amen.

9 Fasting to humble ourselves

Daniel 9:3-5 (NIV)

3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

4 I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed:

“Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.

Reflection

Daniel anticipated that the time would soon come for his people Israel to be restored to their homeland. Jeremiah had prophesied over 70 years prior, God’s people would call out to him in prayer, and He would hear and restore them to their land.

So Daniel fasted and clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, an expression of intense mourning and repentance for his and his people’s sin (this was the reason they were exiled in the first place). So Daniel prayed declaring of God’s greatness and covenant of love for His people, and then admitted that he together with his people had sinned; asking for God’s mercy.

Action

As we fast and pray together let’s declare the greatness of God and His love, and let’s also humble ourselves for our sins against God, and our gratitude for His forgiveness through Jesus.

Prayer

God, there is no one as great and awesome as You! Your love for us is so great and we know that because of Jesus. Cleanse us of our sins and heal us for Your glory. Amen.

10 Fasting in communal repentance

Jonah 3:5-9 (NIV)

5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

6 When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

Reflection

When the king of Ninevah eventually heard the prophets Jonah's half-hearted sermon, he was immediately convicted. He humbled himself and called the nation to express humility before God, urgently pray to Him and give up their evil ways. The king's hope was that God would see this act of humility and repentance and turn His fierce anger away from the people and the land. Thankfully for this Gentle king and his nation, God was moved by their humble and repentant response, and withheld the punishment for their sins.

Action

During this time of fasting and prayer let us pray for our nation Australia. Let us pray that our nation would turn away from sin and to God. Pray that our Lord will be merciful, gracious and compassionate to this nation and cause this land and its people to flourish and bring glory to Him.

Prayer

Jesus, please move powerfully across this nation. Cause our leaders and our people to humble ourselves before you, turn away from sin, and call your Name. Pour out grace and favour on us and lead us forwards. Amen.

11 Fasting for communal renewal

Nehemiah 9:1-3 (NIV)

1 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. 2 Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. 3 They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the Lord their God.

Reflection

Nehemiah had rebuilt the broken walls of Jerusalem; Ezra had re-established the Mosaic law and on this very day, the people gathered and humbled themselves before God. Through fasting, sackcloth, dirt upon their heads and prayer.

This whole day was about worshipping God declaring his greatness and faithfulness; confessing their sins and the sins of their ancestors and reading God's law together. At the end of this time the people renewed their covenant promise to God that He would be their God and they would be His people and follow after His ways.

Action

Throughout this fast let's corporately continue to confess to God our sins and the sins of those who have gone before us. Let's declare God's faithfulness and greatness. Let's personally recommit to being fully devoted followers of Jesus together!

Prayer

"You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships". And so do we God. Thank you for cleansing us of our sins and thank You for Your faithful love for us. We belong to You. Be our God and we Your people. Amen.

12 Fasting for healing

Psalm 35:13-14 (NIV)

13 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth
and humbled myself with fasting.

When my prayers returned to me unanswered,

14 I went about mourning
as though for my friend or brother.

I bowed my head in grief
as though weeping for my mother.

Reflection

In this passage, David recounts a time when someone he knew was overcome with sickness. He responded by putting on sackcloth, humbling himself, fasting and praying for healing.

Sometimes in desperate situations God's people humble themselves in this way in hopeful and earnest desire for God to intervene and heal someone from sickness. At times we experience miracles and breakthroughs. At other times such as in this psalm, healing may not come in the way we expect it. Be inspired however that God hears our prayers and He works for our good and His glory, even when we don't understand. No fasting or prayer for another goes to waste in the spiritual realm.

Action

As you fast today, pray deeply for those you know in our congregation and beyond who need healing of any sort.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, fill us with compassionate hearts for desperate situations around us. As we call upon You, may You release your healing and restoring power. Amen.

13 Fasting that leads to advocacy

Isaiah 58:6-7 (NIV)

6 “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Reflection

Through the prophet Isaiah, God rebukes his people who are fasting with the wrong attitude. The people were fasting and expecting God to bless them, but in their personal lives they were still oppressing others and neglecting those in need. They were focusing on the external religious actions, and ignoring their day-to-day lifestyle which offended God in the sub-treatment of the needy.

In this passage, God gives a fresh perspective on fasting where it includes an active commitment to releasing the oppressed and sharing generously with those in need. God promises that when they do, their light will break forth, their healing shall spring up, their righteousness will go before them and God’s glory will protect them. What a powerful promise!

Action

As you fast today, pray about how we might reflect God’s deep compassion for the needy in our communities and beyond.

Prayer

Jesus, throughout this fast we don’t want to focus on the external religious activities and neglect the lifestyle change that you want to make in us. Re-orient us to be increasingly compassionate to help the oppressed experience freedom and restoration! Show us the way. Amen.

14 Fasting for salvation

Esther 4:16 (NIV)

16 “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

Reflection

Esther asked the Jewish people to fast, which is the most intense and passionate form of prayer, so that God would save herself and them. If God did not intervene, then thousands of Jewish people would have been thoughtlessly and mercilessly annihilated.

Are we as concerned for the eternal state of those around us who have not come to put their trust in Jesus is Lord and Saviour? The trust is that eternity without Jesus, is far worse than the situation that Esther and her people were facing at the time.

Action

As you fast today, pray more intensely for all those that you know have not put their trust in the shed blood of Jesus for eternal life.

Prayer

Merciful God, forgive us that we so easily fail to desperately seek You and pray to You for the salvation of souls. Give us Your passion for the thousands in our world, who are still lost.

15 Fasting for the Persecuted Church

Nehemiah 1:4 (NIV)

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Reflection

Nehemiah fasted and prayed when he heard about the desperate state of God's people as well as His holy city Jerusalem. Nehemiah's fast intensified his prayers for those who were suffering because of their faith. The result of the fast was that the Lord granted Nehemiah favour to go and help his brothers and sisters and to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

In our day, there has never been a time in history when the persecution of Christians has been worse. Many are being imprisoned, treated unjustly and even being killed due to their faith in Jesus. Are we crying out for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ with the same passion that Nehemiah had for the Jewish people? Are we doing anything practically to help those who are not free to worship Jesus as we are?

Action

As you fast today, pray deeply for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering tremendously for their faith. Find out about the persecuted church by visiting the websites of "Open Doors" and "Voice of the Martyrs".

Prayer

Lord, today we weep with you over those who are suffering for the sake of Christ. We pray that in their struggle they would never renounce their faith in Jesus. Please provide for their needs and strengthen them to be able to witness those who have not yet come to know the eternal hope that we have in Jesus. Amen.

16 Fasting in repentance and request

2 Samuel 12:16-17 (NIV)

16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

Reflection

This was a very difficult time for David. Confronted with the reality that his son was the result of an extra-marital affair; and then seeing his son stricken with illness; he responded by fasting and pleading with God for his son's condition.

The prayer and fasting was probably a combination of David's confession of his sin and the consequences of it, as well as prayer of God's intervention for his son to be healed.

Sadly David's son dies yet David makes a great statement of faith: "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). This was a declaration that David believed in the resurrection, and knew confidently that one day he would see him again.

Action

Today as you fast, ask the Holy Spirit to be revealing sin in your life that may have led to unwanted consequences. Pray for forgiveness and for the Lord's will to be done in your life.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for your great love and grace towards me. I confess my sins to You and thank You for Your forgiveness. I also pray You would heal and restore the consequences of my sins. My hope and trust are in You. Amen.

17 Fasting for God's protection

Ezra 8:21-22 (NIV)

21 There, by the Ahava Canal, 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. 22 I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him."

Reflection

Ezra had been given the green light by the Persian king to return back to Jerusalem with a large group of God's people to re-establish the laws God had revealed through Moses. What a miracle!

This was a very large group of people with women and children as well as many animals, goods and valuables and the four-month journey back to Jerusalem would be fraught with dangers and bandits. Therefore, Ezra called for a public fast before they set off. It was an act of humility before God, a declaration of their trust in Him, and a prayer for God's protection. During the fast they prayed that God would show Himself to be faithful and powerful to the Persian king as Ezra said he would.

Action

Today as we fast, let us pray that God would protect us individually and communally as He leads in His purposes and plans for us. Pray that everyone around us will see God's faithfulness and power!

Prayer

God, we look to You to protect us and lead us forwards. We long for Your ways to be established in the broken cities and nations of this world, to the glory of Your name. Amen.

18 Fasting to understand

Daniel 10:3 (NIV)

3 I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

Reflection

In Daniel 10:1 we read that the Daniel performs a three-week fast in response to a vision of a “great war”. Daniel was so disturbed by the vision that he denied himself all luxuries to pursue God for understanding.

Daniel’s pursuit of the Lord for understanding in prayer and fasting, was well received by God. God was pleased that Daniel humbled himself to seek understanding from Him and not to try and figure the vision out with his own intellect (Daniel 10:12).

The Lord was so delighted with Daniel’s fasting that He immediately sent the Angel Gabriel to bring revelation regarding the vision.

Action

Today as you fast, ask God for an understanding of Scripture or life circumstances that don’t quite align with your concept of God.

Prayer

Almighty God, as I turn my mind towards You today in prayer and fasting, please help me to see and understand that which up until now has been confusing or perplexing. May I see and understand all things from Your perfect perspective. Amen.

19 Fasting for ministry leaders

Acts 14:23 (NIV)

23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders[a] for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Reflection

Paul and Barnabas knew the vital role that Godly leaders play in the spiritual growth of the sheep under their watch. They therefore sought the Lord's choice of leader through prayer and fasting which served to intensify their prayers. Following the appointment of the leaders they then committed them once again to the Lord in prayer and fasting. The appointment and dedication of the leaders was viewed as so important that fasting to seek the Lord and then to commit them to service was seen as a prerequisite.

Do we value God-directed appointment and commissioning of our Christian leaders so much that we are willing to fast and pray? Do we pray deeply for God to guide our leaders in all things and to protect them from the attacks of the Enemy?

Action

Today as you fast, pray for all those in position of leadership and authority in the church. Pray that all leaders will be humble before the Lord and anointed for the task to which He has called them. Pray for the protection of leaders and their families and that God will be guiding the church in the selection and appointment of future leaders.

Prayer

Sovereign God, please help and protect all of our spiritual leaders within the church. Protect them from all attacks of Satan and give them Your wisdom, discernment and power as they seek to guide us into deeper relationship with You. May all selection of leaders within Your Body, be done in a spirit of humility and an active seeking of Your divine will. Amen.

20 Fasting for God's Promises

Luke 2:37 (NIV)

37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

Reflection

Anna was a woman devoted to prayer and fasting. She believed God that one day He would fulfil His promise of sending a saviour to the nation of Israel. When Jesus was presented at the temple as a baby, she knew that God was fulfilling His promises.

Our great God has promised us not only a glorious eternity in His presence when we put our faith in Jesus and His death on the cross for our sins, but also that Jesus would come back to earth to make all wrongs right. Do we long for that time crying out to God for His final promises to be fulfilled? Or are we so distracted by the empty and temporary things of this life that are of no lasting consequence?

Action

As you fast today, thank God that He is a God of His word and promises. Pray that you will see God's kingdom promises come to fulfilment.

Prayer

Faithful God, I thank and praise You that You are a God who keeps Your Word. Thank you that all your good promises will be fulfilled for those who love You. Help me to keep focused on your eternal promises and turn from temporary and fleeting distractions.

