
DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER ~ 25-AUG-21

INTRODUCTION TO “DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER”

If you are new to fasting and prayer, the following introductory material may be of help.

However, if you have been doing this with us for the past few months, and are comfortable with fasting, feel free to jump to the next page.

Welcome to “the cowboy church’s” day of fasting and prayer. I trust that as you engage with the LORD in this way that you will grow deeper in your relationship with Him.

Often, we approach fasting as a way of showing God how serious we are about the things we are asking from Him. We think that because we are giving up food, time, etc. that He will pay closer attention to us and our requests. Not True. Fasting is not a means of manipulating God to give us what we ask for. Really, it isn’t even about asking for things in prayer. It is about sitting with God, in His divine presence, and allowing Him to lead and guide our time. It is a time for praise and worship, for scripture meditation and for prayer according to His desires and His will. Through the time of fasting, our prayer focus should be one of aligning ourselves with the will of God and deepening our relationship with Him. In this way, He can lead us into His thoughts, attitudes, and possible action plans in our daily and community (church) life.

Here are a couple of articles that may give added information along with some practical tips for fasting. I may not agree with everything on these sites but there is a wealth of practical information that can be helpful when you add fasting to your life regularly.

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html>

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/7-steps-to-fasting.2.html>

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This month I am blending our time in the Word with our time in prayer. This guide will lead us through some Scriptures and then directly into prayer focussing on the concerns raised by the Word.

We will primarily be focusing on two areas today. In the first section of Scripture, I want us to sit in the Lord's presence and allow Him to guide us in some personal reflection and repentance. Following that we will spend time with a more global focus.

James 4:1-10 is where I would like us to start. Last Friday we spent some time discussing this passage and its demands on us as Followers of Jesus. It is important to take James' instruction seriously. As I prepared for the message last Friday on these verses, God led me through a time of personal reflection and repentance based in the actions in verses 7-10. It was an incredible time of blessing and refreshing of my soul. Whatever, the Lord has for you from these verses, I pray that you would be willing to engage with Him and with His agenda for you. Feel free to use this prayer from Psalm 139 to help set a healthy frame of mind as you work through the following thoughts from James 4.

*"Search me, O God and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way."*

Psalm 139:23-24

Pray through the following actions words/phrases. Are there ones that God seems to keep coming back to? Are there issues in life that I need to deal with?

Two things to remember as you do this:

- 1- Psalm 139:23 (above) says, "Search me, O God..." Don't spend excessive time in trying to find things to confess, deal with, etc. Let God lead and guide you through this time.

2- This is a time for reflection and repentance. This is not a place/time to live. Remember what Ecclesiastes 3:4 says, “a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”

Submit and Resist – v7

Are there some places of my life that remain un-surrendered to the Lord? Are there areas in my life where I resist His claim to “ownership”, (i.e., “my time”, “my entertainment” etc. ...)?

Do I resist temptations when they come along? Do I look for the ways of escape talked about in 1 Corinthians 10:13?

Draw Near v8

...

Cleanse your hands (actions) v8

...

Purify your heart (thoughts and attitudes) v8

...

Be miserable, mourn, weep v9

Do I hide behind a façade of supposed joy, happiness, “spiritual strength”? Do I run from looking inside? Do I ignore or deny what I should be grieving about instead of acknowledging it? *(If you need help dealing with something that brings these negative emotions, feel free to contact me.)*

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Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord v 10

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Our next section deals with our Lord, the World, and our place in it. We will pray for world events, current and upcoming but with an eye on the Lord's perspective and our involvement.

Psalm 2 is what we will use to help us.

Psalm 2:1-5

- How does this relate to some of the current events going on in the world today?
- Ultimately what is the Lord's perspective on the "nations" plotting against Him and His "anointed"?
- How does remembering this affect how I pray for them?

Psalm 2:6-7a

- What should be my response be according to v6
- Is the Lord and His sovereignty evidenced in my conversations about these events or is He silent and absent?
- Do I need to change the way I think and talk about world events?

Psalm 2:7b-9

- This talks about Jesus and His coming reign of absolute authority. One day He will reign over the world with absolute authority. Until then, well...

Psalm 2:10-12

- How should these verses affect how I pray for the nations (including ours)?
- Spend some time praying for world leaders with these verses in mind.
- Remember our upcoming federal and local elections. Pray through these verses with our leaders (current and future) in mind.
- Add any other requests you have at this point.

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Psalm 146 is what we will close with.

Spend some time praising God through this Psalm. Remember, God is the one who is worthy of praise. It is as we focus on Him and place our unwavering faith in Him (Isaiah 26:3-4) that we can lift our eyes above our circumstances and those we see in the World.

“The LORD will reign forever... Praise the LORD.” Psalm 146:10

May the LORD bless you this day as you focus on Him, His glory, and events in His world.

Pastor Orban

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