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# DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER ~ 27-OCT-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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## **SCRIPTURE MEDITATION**

This month we have a time of Biblical meditation around the theme of “The Blessing of Forgiveness”. We will also have our usual prayer times. ***One new addition will be an opportunity for communion.*** With that in mind, on the last page there is an additional (optional) meditation focused on communion and the new covenant. Your participation in communion is totally up to you. I am happy to lead you through communion or simply provide the elements. This does not replace our monthly, Friday night celebrations of communion. This is simply one more opportunity for you to sit at the LORD’S Table.

This month, our meditation focus comes from Psalm 32.

**Psalm 32** is a Psalm written by David. It is a beautiful and vivid portrayal of the blessedness of God’s forgiveness. It shows the stark contrast between hiding our sin (refusing to admit it or repent from it) and confessing that sin and receiving forgiveness. As David says in verse one: “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,…”

### **Psalm 32:1-2**

- David begins with some broad statements of the blessedness of Divine forgiveness.
  - Have you ever experienced this joy at being forgiven?
  - When was the last time?
  - What do you remember most about the experience of “being forgiven”?

### **Psalm 32:3-4**

- These are some very vivid images of “...keeping silent about my sin...”
- Have you ever fought God on the issue of your sin(s)?
- 1 John 1:5-10 offer some New Testament perspective on hiding our sin and resisting repentance.

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### Psalm 32:5

- What action(s) did David take in seeking forgiveness from the LORD?
- What did he receive from the LORD?
- Do you have the common tendency of making repentance more complicated than God does? If so, what do you add that you think God expects? Is this Biblical? (once again see 1 John 1:5-10)

### Psalm 32:6-7

- What are the differences in David's life and interactions with God as recorded in verses 3-4 and verses 6-7?
- Which verses characterize your relationship and interactions with the LORD?

### Psalm 32:8-9

- These verses are in the LORD's voice. What is He saying to you personally?

### Psalm 32:10-11

- We have come full circle. Verse 10 contrasts the wicked with those who trust the LORD.
  - Are you trusting the LORD with your confession and forgiveness or are you holding onto sin in your life? (See also Psalm 66:16-20)
- May you be blessed with the forgiveness of the LORD as you walk in His light and forgiveness. ***"Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."*** Psalm 32:11 (NASB)

## PRAYER CONCERNS

### International

- God's glory in His world and grace and strength for His people around the globe.

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## National

- New Federal Cabinet
  - Peace and stability to facilitate God's worship and God's message being proclaimed across our country, and the salvation of our elected officials.
- National Church
  - God's glory in this country through His people and in His church

## Provincial

- Ongoing Covid-19 concerns and wisdom for our provincial leaders
- Regional Church
  - Alberta Parkland District (our district in the Evangelical Free Church of Canada)
    - The APD conference on Nov. 6 – District finances, God's direction, and the selection of a new superintendent.
    - God's glory and witness in and through our churches

## Local

- Your newly elected local government – in whichever community you find yourself...
- Local Church
  - Wisdom and discernment for our leaders, finances, health concerns of our people
- Strathcona County
  - That God would be visible in and through His churches in this community.

## Personal

- Whatever requests the LORD has laid upon your heart.

## Closing Praise

- Revel in the forgiveness given by God and rejoice in His divine embrace.

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## **COMMUNION MEDITATION**

**If** you would like to participate in communion, feel free to use the following thoughts. You can use them before in preparation and then come and let me know you would like communion and I will lead you in a celebration of communion. **OR** You can come and get the elements, take them back to your seat and have a personal time with Jesus (with or without the meditations below). **OR** something different... Either (any) way you choose, I trust you will encounter the risen Lord Jesus and be blessed as you sit at His table.

### **Matthew 11:28-30, Revelation 3:20**

- A couple of invitations from Jesus to you as a Disciple of Christ. The first involves coming to Him, leaving behind our agenda, etc. and submitting to His will and authority over our life. The second shows Jesus waiting for our acceptance of His invitation to relationship and time spent with Him.
- How have you responded to these invitations today?
- Are they a regular part of your life?

### **Colossians 2:8-18**

- This is an amazing description of the blessings and benefits that are included for all who accept the new covenant that Jesus purchased with His death, burial, and resurrection.

If you have questions regarding these invitations from Jesus or you don't know if you have accepted the "terms" of the new covenant, don't hesitate to contact me. I would be happy to chat with you about them and any questions you might have.

May the LORD bless you this day as you focus on Him and His forgiveness in your life.

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