
DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER ~ 22-DEC-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>

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

REJOICE! JESUS THE MESSIAH IS BORN.

This month we will be focusing on praises and prayers surrounding the birth of Jesus, the Christ

Luke 1:46-55 records Mary's song of joy and wonder. It is interesting that it happened when she was visiting her relative, Elizabeth. It's almost like Gabriel's message suddenly sunk in. Mary became aware of what was about to happen to her, and an eruption of praise is what followed.

- Notice the predominant focus on humility and God's good attention to those who are humble and acknowledge their need of God's help and presence – as opposed to those who are proud, arrogant, and self-sufficient. Which tendency do you notice in your life?
- How does this passage compare with James 4:6-10? (Do you remember who James' mother was? Interesting family connection.)

Luke 1:67-79 gives us the prophecy of Zacharias, the father of John. His tongue is set free, and he bursts into praise and prophecy under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:69-72

- I find these verses encouraging. Often, we talk about God being a God who keeps His promises. However, we also need to see that He is a God who makes us promises in the first place. He wouldn't have to, yet He does – and then He is always faithful to keep them.
 - What promises has God made to me (particularly this past year) that I have seen Him fulfilling? What ones am I still waiting on? How can I find personal encouragement in the Christmas story and in Zacharias' prophecy as I wait?

Luke 1:74-75

- What is the difference between the word "fear" in 1:50 and the word "fear" in 1:74?
- How can I have both in my life as a Christian today?

Luke 2:21-38 introduce us to the last two people we will look at today. Their names are Simeon and Anna. We meet them as Jesus is brought to the temple when He is 8 days old.

Luke 2: 29-32

- What was it that brought Simeon such incredible Joy?
- How do you relate to this joy and it's source?

Luke 2:38

- What was Anna's two-part response to the birth of Jesus?
- This year, what is my response to the birth of Jesus?

PRAYER CONCERNS

Here are some prayer concerns that you can be praying for...

International

- God's church around the world as we celebrate the birth of Jesus – May the message be clear and unclouded.
- The outbursts of new strains of Covid and the stresses that it is putting on people all around our globe.

National

- Salvation for our federal leaders.
- God's glory in this country through His people and His church this holiday season.
- Continued recovery for those hit hardest by the severe weather events this winter.

Provincial

- New Covid-19 concerns

- Salvation for our provincial leaders

Local

- Salvation for our local government leaders
- Strathcona County charities that are trying to help out those who don't have a place to stay or enough food, clothing, etc.
- "the cowboy church"
 - Wisdom and discernment in our leadership
 - Finances
 - Congregants who may be suffering, with physical health, mental health, loneliness or other concerns this holiday season.

Personal

- I would encourage you to ask the Lord how He would like you to share the message of His birth with those around you this year – How can we be like Anna this holiday season and minister to those around us?

Closing Praise

- Remember, ***"...I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people"***! May this be a season of hopeful praise, even amidst the circumstances and situations we see around us.

I pray that your celebrations this year will be filled with His Love, Peace, Joy and Hope! God bless and Merry Christmas.

Pastor Orban