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# DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING ~ 20-DEC-22

**W**elcome to “the cowboy church’s” day of prayer and fasting. I trust that as you engage with the LORD in this way that you will grow deeper in your relationship with Him. *If you are new to our “fasting and prayer” day, there is some introductory material included on the last page that you may find helpful.*

## **2022-23 – A “YEAR” IN GOD’S HOUSE OF PRAYER**

Christmas is just around the corner. For a lot of us this is a busy season with lots to get ready for, lots of activities, etc. For some it is quite the opposite. In either case, I think we can benefit from a few minutes of quietness in our own soul. That is what I would like to offer as a guide this month. Not a long session with lots of questions and introspection. Rather, just sitting in quiet wonder at the gift God gave to humanity. Let the glory of this Gift wash over your soul.

## **SCRIPTURE MEDITATION ~ LUKE 2:8-20, 25-38 & MATTHEW 2:1-12**

**T**he birth of Jesus is one of the most momentous moments in all of human history. As such it was accompanied by a variety of announcements and reactions. I would encourage you to sit with these three passages and look at the responses, outbursts of song and praise, and various actions of those who encountered Jesus in those early days. Read through each passage a few times and see if any word, phrase, thought, or idea leaps out at you. Sit and ponder that thought. Ask the Lord why He has drawn your attention to this particular aspect of the passage. Here is a final question to consider this Christmas, “This year, what is my response to the birth of Jesus, the Christ?”

### **Luke 2:8-20 - Day One**

- The angelic messenger, the angel choir, and the shepherds.

### **Luke 2:25-38 – Day Eight**

- The righteous and devout Simeon and the prophetess named Anna

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## Matthew 2:1-12 – Early Years

- The Magi (wise men) and King Herod

### PRAYER THOUGHTS

**H**ere is a prayer that I think is very appropriate for us all as we interact with the Lord and with others this Christmas. It was written by the Scottish writer and poet Robert Louis Stevenson. May the words in his prayer find an echo in our own hearts this season.

*Loving Father,*

*Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds and the wisdom of the wisemen.*

*Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.*

*Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.*

*Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Your children and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,*

*For Jesus sake, Amen.*

*Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)*

### PRAYER CONCERNS

**S**pend time in Lord's presence with the requests He brings to your mind. He entrusts each one of us with specific burdens, people and requests. Take time with each situation, person, or request in thanksgiving, praise to the Lord, and prayer for His interventions.

May you experience the closeness of the Lord this day and may you be assured of His presence with you as you respond to the glorious news of His birth. **IMMANUEL ~ God is with us!**

Thanks for praying with us and **Merry CHRISTMAS!**

Pastor Orban

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## **THOUGHTS AND TIPS CONCERNING FASTING**

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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