

## 21 DAY PRAYER AND FASTING GUIDE

When was the last time you entered an extended time of prayer and fasting for spiritual, relational or missional breakthrough? Throughout the history of God's people, great leaders reached out to God for a fresh encounter or divine intervention.

Moses, in seeking a spiritual breakthrough, spent 40 days alone with God without eating or drinking until he received The Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:38).

King David sought a personal breakthrough as he fasted to keep himself humble (Psalm 35:13).

Ezra was seeking a breakthrough as he called God's people to fast and pray for protection against their enemies (Ezra 8:21-23).

Daniel fasted and prayed as he sought a restorative breakthrough for the exiled people living in rebellion against their God (Daniel 9:3-4).

The apostle Paul fasted as he pondered his breakthrough encounter with the risen Lord Jesus and what it meant for his life (Acts 9:9).

The leaders of the church in Antioch worshiped, prayed and fasted together as they sought missional breakthrough for their thriving church (Acts 13:1-3).

Our Saviour, setting the supreme example, entered 40 days of fasting before launching his public ministry (Matthew 4:1-2).

What breakthrough are you seeking?

God's people all over the world have been seeking spiritual breakthroughs through prayer and fasting since the birth of the church.

What is the great matter in front of you? A loved one far from Christ? A critical decision in the life of your family? A relationship that is falling apart?

What great matters are in front of your church or ministry? An evangelistic outreach? A financial crisis? A leadership transition? Missional expansion?

Take time to write down each needed breakthrough and lift them up to God in prayer.

### What is fasting?

Fasting is deliberately abstaining from the normal routines of life. Its purpose is to spend focused time in prayer and the study of God's word, seeking to align our lives with God's will.

Ultimately, fasting is more about replacing than abstaining. It is filling our lives with God's word instead of with food, social media or entertainment. It is finding satisfaction and enjoyment in God and in God alone. Fasting helps us humble ourselves before the Lord and positions us to experience spiritual breakthroughs in our lives.

Mathew Henry writes, "Fasting is of use to put an edge upon prayer." Have your prayers lost their fervour? Has your devotional life become dull? Fasting has a way of mystically sharpening our souls and making us more sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

As Alex Gee said, “Fasting is not about changing God. It is not a mystical exercise to gain God’s approval. Fasting is not about changing my world, but about letting God realign my heart toward his purposes.”

We recognise as we begin this 21-day fast and prayer commitment that as God’s people we need to boldly ask him for breakthroughs in any heartbreak, challenge or opportunity facing us individually and corporately.

## How to get started

### 1 Pick your fast

Full Fast: Drink liquids only. Please consult your doctor first.

Daniel Fast: Eat only vegetables, fruit, water and juice (minimal amount of carbohydrates).

Partial Fast: Not eating one or two meals on a specific day or days or abstaining from certain kinds of food.

All-day Food Fast: Abstaining from food one day or multiple days per week.

Activity/Media Fast: Forgoing a time-consuming activity such as entertainment, hobbies, television, internet, sports, etc. (Not a fast by definition, but a great place to start)

### 2 Set goals & write them down

Begin with clear personal goals as well as breakthrough goals for your church. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of your marriage or resolution of family issues? Are you facing difficulties? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Write these requests in a journal or a notebook, or create a digital journal using your favourite note-taking program or app. Keeping a journal throughout your fast is a great way to track and remember all God does during your fast.

### 3 Feast on the word of God

Fasting is ultimately an expression of humility and dependence on God. It is about replacing the daily intake of food, entertainment and human contact with focused times of prayer, spending large amounts of time feeding on the Word of God and spiritual listening. You can use the recommended readings in this guide or continue your normal Bible reading program. The YouVersion Bible App and bible.com have a variety of 21- day Bible reading programs.

### 4 Open your life before God

One of the great benefits of spiritual fasting is a heightened awareness of God’s presence and power in our lives. It is not that God has moved but that we have. Fasting has a great way of moving us towards a deeper spiritual dependency and away from willful self-dependency. The greatest breakthrough will take place when you make time to examine your life and discover what areas most need breakthrough. We ask that you fast for

spiritual breakthroughs for your church family and its mission endeavours as well as for yourself.

## 5 Expect God to move

Enter your fast by faith. The Word of God says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, for anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Spiritual fasting is a supernatural endeavour that has shaped and transformed God’s people for centuries. If you have doubt, ask God to meet you in your doubts and lead you in overcoming them, just as the apostles prayed, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:5).

Our prayer for you during the next 21 days is that you will experience a deeper craving for the beauty of the Lord and for the wonder of his leading in your life, and that you will know the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the favour of the God of heaven.

Our prayer is that you will realise you are not alone on this journey. You are joining with your immediate and extended church family in seeking God for significant breakthroughs. These will ripple out and turn into a tidal wave of revival and spiritual awakening across our country.

Our prayer is that you will acquire your own prayer-and-fasting testimony. And that God will overwhelm you with his goodness as you seek his power, presence and provision in every step of your journey.

