



## WHAT IS FASTING?

To put it simply, **Fasting is Feasting**. Before Jesus began his public ministry, the Spirit led him into the wilderness where he fasted for forty days and forty nights. During this time, the devil tempted him. One of the temptations was for Jesus to turn a stone into bread. Jesus responded, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, saying that **“Man must not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”** In our fasting, we recognize that food is not what ultimately sustains us, nourishes us, and gives us life. We recognize that God’s word sustains us. During our fasting, we feast on the good word of God that saves us and upholds us.

Additionally, **Fasting is Longing**. In Matthew 9:14-15, John’s disciples come to Jesus and ask, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast? Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.” Today, we are in an in-between period, where Jesus has saved us and given us the Holy Spirit, but we long for him to come and be with us forever. Especially in times like these, where people are dying, and our foundations are shaken, we want to cry out with John in Revelation 22:20 “come, Lord Jesus!”

Lastly, **Fasting is repentance and receiving**. In the book of Daniel, Daniel, an Israelite determined to stand for the Lord, finds himself in captivity with the Israelites in Babylon. This captivity was a result of the Israelite’s sin against God. In chapter 9, Daniel is fasting and praying to God, repenting for the Nation of Israel’s wickedness and rebellion against God. During this prayer, he is recalling the Lord’s faithfulness in past times and pleading with the Lord to restore the people of Israel. A notable verse in his prayer is Daniel 9:18-19 where Daniel prays, **“Listen closely, my God, and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations and the city that bears your name. For we are not presenting our petitions before you based on our righteous acts but based on your abundant compassion. Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and act! My God, for your own sake, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your name.”** In response, the Lord sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel to give him wisdom. While the visions Daniel receives are a bit confusing, the promise he is given at the end is simply this:

**“But as for you, go on your way to the end; you will rest, and then you will stand to receive your allotted inheritance at the end of the days.”** Daniel 12:13.

## HOW TO FAST

As you consider fasting, there are a few simple suggestions that we want to make:

- Fasting is an act of showing greater dependence on God and trusting Him.
- Fasting is giving up a meal or meals with the purpose of spending that time praying instead of eating. Should you fast longer than one meal, every time you feel hungry, use that as a reminder to pray and ask God for strength and for His provision.
- If you have medical issues or have a history of struggling with eating disorders, consider removing something else from your life such as media or cell phones.
- Fasting is not for show. Jesus said in Matthew 6:16-18, “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” At the same time, if someone asks you why you are not eating, you do not need to lie about it either. Instead, use the opportunity to point someone to Christ.
- Fasting is not about getting something from God but rather it is about drawing near to Him. However, when we humble ourselves and draw near to Him, we also have His promise that He hears our prayers and answers them!

## WAYS TO PRAY

1. Pray that many will come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior and that the kingdom of God would expand.
2. Pray that our leadership team will have wisdom and unity on how to best continue to serve our church family and our community.
3. Pray for financial provision for those who are not able to work right now and are wondering how they are going to provide food for their family.
4. Pray for the spiritual growth of our church family during this season.
5. Pray for physical health and protection.
6. Pray for financial provision for our church.
7. Pray for those from within our church that are on the frontlines through health care and public transportation jobs.