

twenty10

A 10 Day Prayer and Fasting Emphasis

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10 days of prayer and fasting

Instructions for twenty10 day prayer and fasting emphasis...

Examine your life and figure out what areas most need breakthrough. You can use the guide attached to select one or several areas, or you might choose one different from those listed. Remember it is only a guide. You might also want to consider fasting for a family member, a Life Group member, or someone else. Once you select a breakthrough, decide how you are going to fast during the 10 days.

Breakthroughs for which you could fast...

1. Financial Provision
2. Physical Healing for yourself, a family member, or friend
3. Victory over the sin of pride, legalism, or self righteousness
4. The restoration of a relationship
5. To quit a bad habit (like smoking)
6. The overcoming of a drug or alcohol addiction for yourself, a family member, or friend
7. The rebuilding of our Airline Campus
8. The salvation of a family member or friend
9. A promotion or new opportunity at work
10. Wisdom or Direction for a Critical Decision
11. Deliverance from spiritual oppression
12. Growth of a ministry with which you are involved.
13. To have victory over anxiety, fear, depression, or loneliness
14. To have the courage to make a necessary decision
15. Improved communication in your marriage
16. A resurgence of your passion and love for the Lord
17. To develop a devotional time with the Lord
18. Spiritual awakening for your spouse or child
19. To stop living a double life at church and at work
20. To overcome sexual issues like impure thoughts, lust, or pornography
21. That people in your Life Group would become leader

How to fast during these 10 days...

In years past we have encouraged our people to fast in different ways. This year, we are encouraging everyone to fast all meals (or most meals) for three days (January 21st - 23rd), then participate in a “Daniel” fast for the final seven days. A “Daniel” fast would consist of abstaining from eating meat, bread, dairy and sugar products, while focusing on eating vegetables, fruits and nuts. You may also want to fast other “hindrances” during this time such as, caffeine, video games, Myspace or Facebook, television programs, etc...

The purpose is to spend extra time praying to and worshipping the Lord.

7 things you can expect...

1. This will be challenging and difficult. It will take discipline and focus on your part. Disciples are known by their discipline.
2. You should see a great increase in your faith if you stick to your commitment to the Lord
3. You may see answers to your requests during the 21 days; however, there is no way for people to know exactly what God is going to do. We do know that during these 21 days that it is our responsibility to draw closer to the Lord.
4. You will be more sensitive to God's spirit in your life. Removing the necessities and distractions of life will add a new sense of clarity to the voice of God.
5. You will have an increased fellowship with God and have a greater understanding of what it means to depend on Him to meet your needs.
6. You should find yourself praying more small direct prayers throughout the day.
7. You should expect an increase in spiritual tension and resistance from the Devil. The Bible doesn't speak at all on the physical dangers of fasting, but on several occasions mentions the spiritual danger of fasting. Specifically, the pride and acknowledgement of being a devoted, zealous and admirable disciple are dangers we must watch for.

3 Dangers to guard against...

1. The “God will reward me for this” mentality. Fasting is not the “work” that earns blessings from the hand of God. This is a demonic lie from our consumer culture.
2. The Pride and Self-righteous attitude that can come with practicing spiritual disciplines. This is not about you being the best disciple, this is about your desire and hunger to draw closer to God.
3. The idea of breaking your fast because you've already done enough. Several times during the fast you will think to yourself “I can't do this any longer”, and you will try to justify breaking your fast since you've already done more than ever before. Don't quit. Stick to your commitment.

1 Reason why God rewards fasting...

God rewards fasting because when done with the right heart it confesses that we are helpless without Him, and we require Him to give us the Hope we need to press on in the world he created. This brings Glory to God.

A Message to Families about Prayer and Fasting Together...

Your children may hear you speak or they may tell you about what they have been learning in Children's Church about the upcoming 10 Days of Prayer and Fasting. You may wonder if this is something that children can do along with the rest of the family and the answer is YES! Here are some steps to follow that will help you guide your children:

Before your family begins the 10 Days of Prayer and Fasting, decide what time during the day would be best for your family to meet and pray together as a family.

Next, help your child decide what they would like to fast for the next 10 Days. Remember that a child's body needs the proper nutrition, activity as well as rest to keep them healthy and whole. They don't need to fast complete meals or healthy food choices. Pray with them as they ask God what would be something they could fast. Here are a few suggestions.

For the next 10 Days, they can fast...

- A favorite cartoon or TV program
- "Fast Foods" for 10 days
- A special treat or snack (candy, cookies, sweets, etc.)
- A favorite activity or electronic game/computer game
- Fighting or arguing with their friends/family
- Complaining or whining

Explain to your children that there will be times when they will find it hard to fast and may even want to change their minds in the middle of the fast. As parents or other significant adults in their lives, you can gently encourage them and help them keep the commitment they made to the Lord and see how He answers their prayers.

Explain to your children that during their 10 Days of Praying and Fasting, they will grow stronger and grow closer to Jesus.

The weekend of January 30th & 31st is TEAM Weekend; we will celebrate our 10 Days of Prayer and Fasting with a special celebration party in KidZ-Town. The children will share what the Lord did in and through their lives during the last 10 Days!

Day 1 – Praying for Guidance from the Lord **Manley Miller (East Jefferson District Pastor)**

David - *“O LORD, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I will never pray to anyone but You. Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my request to you and wait expectantly. . . . Lead me in the right path, O LORD, or my enemies will conquer me. Tell me clearly what to do, and show me which way to turn.”* (Psalm 5:1-3, 8)

Waiting for the Lord to give direction has been a great challenge in my relationship with God. I often secretly wish He would just let me know all the details of His plan for my life so I would not be anxious about what might arrive next. But this would require less than half a mustard seed of faith. I would never bring my requests to the Lord each morning if I knew the unforeseen circumstances of the future.

David wrote Psalm 5 to reflect the transformation that takes place when we get our focus off of ourselves and target God’s direction for our lives. Most believers pray like David prayed in verses 1-3, desperately wanting God to hear them. The better way to pray is as David did in verse 8, when his focus moves from asking God to listen to him, and focusing instead on listening to the Lord. When our focus is on hearing from the Lord, it’s a sign of maturity in our lives.

We must learn to embrace the discomfort of patiently waiting on the Lord. Patient waiting is the secret to hearing God clearly.

APPLICATION - Today and through this 10-day fast, focus as much on listening to the Lord as you do on talking to the Lord, and write down what the Lord communicates to you. Write down what the Lord saying to you today?

Day 2 - Praying for Forgiveness

John Frady (Celebrations Coordinator)

David – *“Have mercy on me, O God, because of Your unfailing love. Because of Your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. . . . Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from Your presence, and don’t take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of Your salvation, and make me willing to obey You.”* (Psalm 51:1-2, 9-12)

Have you ever accidentally spilled gasoline on yourself? It’s irritating, isn’t it? The last time it happened to me, I pulled the pump out from the tank too fast and drenched my hands with gasoline. I ran into the station to wash them but the restroom was out of order. So, I wrapped some napkins around my fingers and drove home, where I scrubbed my hands in white foamy soap. But when I rinsed my hands, the smell was still there. Frustrated, I drove to the hardware store and learned about a hand cleaner called Goop. Right there in the store, I rubbed it on my hands and was finally free of the stench.

In many ways, sin is like the smelly gasoline that spilled on my hands. We don’t mean to get so involved with it, but somehow, we find ourselves soaked completely with its stench and realize that is noticeable to everyone around us. We try to cover it up with temporary fixes, but they don’t last. Finally, at the end of ourselves, we come to the realization that the only sin cleaner that totally frees us from the stench of our own sin is the cleansing blood of Jesus.

When sin completely overwhelms you, cry out to the Lord like David did. Confess your sin to Him. Ask Him to forgive you of your sin, to create a clean heart within you, and to remove the stain of your guilt. You will be amazed at the forgiveness and freedom He will extend to you.

APPLICATION – Ask the Lord to help you identify and write down the sins and strongholds in your life. Then, ask the Lord to forgive and cleanse you from those sins one by one.

Day 3 - Praying for Protection for Ourselves and Others

Ruth Hatfield (East Jefferson Community Pastor)

David - *"I am praying to You because I know you will answer, O God. . . . Show me your unfailing love in wonderful ways. By your mighty power you rescue those who seek refuge from their enemies. Guard me as you would guard your own eyes. Hide me in the shadow of your wings. Protect me from wicked people who attack me, from murderous enemies who surround me. . . . Arise, O Lord! Stand against them, and bring them to their knees!"* (Psalm 17:6-13)

King David's life and kingdom were constantly under attack from others. He understood what it meant to fear for his life, his family, and his throne. Who better to learn from when it comes to praying for protection for our lives and the lives of others?

In verse 6, David begins with a cry to God, recognizing that his pleas would not fall onto deaf ears. In his life David cried out to God many times, and we read in the Bible of how God rescued him from opponents sent to kill him or overthrow his throne.

The protection of God is greater and stronger than any visible force the world has to offer. No law enforcement officer, security system, or weapon can provide the supernatural covering that God can. David knew that even though he had one of the greatest militaries known at that time, it was God who would be the strongest defense he utilize against any opposing enemy.

What are we to take away from David's prayer?

- David sought after God in the good and the difficult times.
- David walked in righteousness as we read in the first 5 verses of Chapter 17.
- David knew he shouldn't face opponents in his own strength and military power.
- God can overcome any opponent whether it is man or demon.
- God is not a respecter of persons. What He did for David, he will do for us.
- God wants to cover us with his Wings because we are the apple of His eye (vs. 8).

APPLICATION – Tell the Lord 2-3 ways in which you and others close to you need His protection. Ask Him to intervene, protect and provide in supernatural ways.

Day 4 - Praying for Spiritual Wisdom and Power

Shawn Johnson (Westbank Community Pastor)

Paul – *“I pray for you constantly, asking God . . . to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future He has promised to those He called. I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance He has given to His people.*

I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of His power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. . . .” (Ephesians 1:16-21 NLT)

When I was younger I loved riding GoKarts. My only complaint was not enough speed! Later on I learned that these karts had something called a “governor”. Its whole design was to limit the amount of power that the engine could output or in my case - my top speed. At the beginning of a New Year, I often look back to see how I lived and loved God. Am I a year further along in my walk with Him? Does He have more of me than before? In Ephesians 1:16-22 we are challenged by Paul to NOT LIMIT what God wants to do in and through us. Today, I have as much of God in my life as I want! So do you! Just like that “governor” on the GoKart, limiting the amount of its input and output, so we daily decide how much of US God can have or how much of His Life we want in us! If we are not careful we can make excuses that keep God out of our lives. I remember when Dad took the “governor” off our GoKart. We went faster and further than ever before. May this be the year when you and I go “further and faster with God” than ever before.

APPLICATION - What are the Limits that you have placed on God? Identify them, write them down, and give them to God and Pray for Him to give you the Spiritual Wisdom and Power that He has promised! Pray for those around you to do the same!

Day 5 - Praying for Faith and Discernment

Julie Boudreaux (Children's Pastor)

“When Elisha’s servant woke up and saw the enemy surrounding them, he cried out to Elisha for direction and Elisha answered . . . ‘Don’t be afraid!’ Elisha told him, ‘For there are more on our side than on theirs!’ Then Elisha prayed, ‘O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!’ The LORD opened his servant’s eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.” (2 Kings 6:15-18 NLT)

Have there been times in your life when it seems like you are surrounded on all sides by struggles that leave you feeling discouraged and disheartened? You have no idea how you are going to make it until tomorrow much less to the end of next week? Perhaps the troubles are with your family, work, finances or your health make you feel like your situation is hopeless and there is no way out but to give up?

Like Elisha, when you feel as though you are surrounded by overwhelming circumstances, ask the Lord to “open your eyes” so you can see that you are indeed surrounded, but surrounded by the army of the Lord Himself! Unlike Elisha’s servant, who merely looked with human eyes and saw the odds stacked against him, Elisha looked with spiritual eyes and, by faith, saw the Lord coming through with His promises of protection and provision. It may LOOK like the enemy has the upper hand, but KNOW that the Lord’s hand is able to bring you out of your circumstances and on to victory!

Perhaps you know someone who can only see what is instead of what could be. What a great way to show the hope you have in the Lord and the faith to believe His word by interceding on their behalf, like Elisha did for his servant, and ask the Lord to “open their eyes” to see that they are surrounded by an army that is far stronger and much bigger than any of their problems!

APPLICATION – Ask the Lord to show you whom you need to be praying for (besides yourself) during this time of fasting and prayer. Begin praying for others “eyes to be opened” and for the Lord’s provision, protection and peace in their lives.

Day 6 - Praying for the People of our City/Region

Tony Leverett (New Orleans Community Pastor)

Nehemiah – “For days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. Then I said, ‘O LORD . . . listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people . . . I confess that we have sinned against You. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, laws, and regulations that You gave us . . . You told your servant . . . `If you sin, I will scatter you among the nations. But if you return to Me and obey My commands, even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for my name to be honored.’ . . . O Lord, please hear my prayer!” (Nehemiah 1:4-11)

In this time of prayer and fasting, Nehemiah first acknowledges who God is, and then he confesses his sin and the sin of the people. From there Nehemiah lays his petition before God, asking the Lord to restore the city of Jerusalem and the Israelite nation.

Nehemiah “mourned and fasted” for days and in a similar fashion to what we as a church body are doing, positioning ourselves to be in a place to hear from God. Through this time of our sacrifice and fasting, we draw nearer to the Lord, and are in a better position to hear the heartbeat of God for the people of the Greater New Orleans area.

The God of Nehemiah is still the God of today, and his unfailing love still reigns through all our circumstances and that which we are dealing with. Just like He was able to restore the broken city of Jerusalem, He can restore our broken city as well – and will when the people of God repent, fast and pray.

APPLICATION - Take time to acknowledge who God is, and to seek forgiveness for the sin in your life and family and in Greater New Orleans area. Also ask Him to rebuild and restore our city in specific ways (educationally, morally, spiritually, etc.), making it far better in the future than it has been in times past.

Day 7 - Praying for Spiritual Growth for Ourselves and Others

Dave Jochum (River Parishes Campus Pastor)

Paul – *“I pray that from His (God’s) glorious, unlimited resources He will give you mighty inner strength through His Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” (Ephesians 3:16-19)*

I’m not much of a gardener. Sometimes I water plants too much and other times not enough. I tend to trim them at the wrong times and fertilize insufficiently.

In this passage, Paul uses the analogy of plant roots as he prays that believers will be firmly and deeply rooted in the soil of God’s love. When you become a believer, it is God’s intention for you to grow and mature. The good news is that you don’t have to be a Master Gardener to grow in your relationship with God or to help others to grow, because God has “glorious and unlimited resources” to help us walk in the Spirit. That means that we have all we need to live and grow by God’s strength and effort and not our own. In verse 17, Paul reminds us that Christ lives in us. That means that we can be assured that he is always there to help us in our growth when we need him. And in verse 19, Paul reminds us of the greatness of Christ’s love. He says it is so great that we can never fully understand it. So, the opportunity for growth in the Lord is limitless!

APPLICATION - On a scale of 1-10, where would you rate your spiritual growth over the past year? Identify some steps can you take to grow deeper in your knowledge of and relationship with the Lord?

Day 8 - Praying for People to Acknowledge God

Julie Troyer (Minister to Youth)

Elijah - *“Answer me so these people will know that You, O LORD, are God...” Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven & burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, & the dust. It even licked up all the water in the ditch! And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces & cried out, ‘The LORD is God!’” (1 Corinthians 18:36-39)*

“Elijah’s petition had lasted less than a minute but produced spectacular results. The difference lay in the ONE addressed” (Patterson and Austel). This passage reminds us that:

O – Only God Can Answer by Fire - Often we put our trust in our careers, relationships, finances, talents, etc. The reality is all of those things have the potential to let us down and create heartache in our lives. When we find ourselves in hopeless situations, remember...God answers by fire! The prophets of Baal had a lot in common with the believer. They had passion, commitment, devotion to their god, and they were sincere. What they didn’t have was a God in heaven who answers by fire.

N – Never Assume it’s by Your Own Might - It’s very easy to look back on our lives & think, “Wow! Look at all I’ve accomplished,” which is where pride begins to kick in. In this face off Elijah could have easily demonstrated his “manhood.” Instead, he demonstrated his servanthood by saying, “Answer me so these people will know that YOU are God...”

E – Expectations Exceeded - When the fire of God fell, His work was beyond expectation. It would have been enough for merely the fire to fall, but God wanted more than simple justification - He wanted to glorify Himself among the people! God wants to be glorified through our lives, but we have to be willing & ready to receive God’s great blessings & expect Him to blow your mind!

APPLICATION: 1. Identify and write down struggles in your life that need to be removed by God’s all consuming fire. 2. Confess areas of pride that you have not given God the credit for. 3. Acknowledge that God is your source for EVERYTHING, & be ready to receive His blessings.

Day 9 - Praying for our Partners in Ministry

Dennis Watson (Lead Pastor)

Paul – *“Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. I always pray for you . . . because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.*

You have a very special place in my heart. We have shared together the blessings of God . . . God knows how much I love you and long for you . . . I pray that your love for each other will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in your knowledge and understanding . . . , so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.” (Philippians 1:3-11)

Who are you thankful for, and why are you thankful for them? Paul was thankful for the Christians in Philippi who had “partnered” with him in sharing the “Good News” about Jesus Christ. He communicated to those believers that they had a special place in his heart, and prayed for some specific blessings to be experienced by them in their lives (verses 7-11).

When I first became a Christian, I primarily focused on praying for my needs and desires. But the more mature I become in the Lord, the more I find myself praying for others rather than myself. Believing that God hears and answers the prayers of His people, and works mightily in response to our prayers, let’s prioritize, during this Prayer and Fasting emphasis, praying for others as much or more than we pray for ourselves. When we do, God will be honored, people will be blessed, and we will be blessed as we observe what the Lord does in the lives of others.

APPLICATION – Identify people and Christian leaders you’re thankful for, and communicate to them why you’re thankful for them. Also, commit to praying for them in the future similarly to how Paul prayed for the Philippians.

Day 10 - Praying for Personal Blessings Craig Ratliff (St. Bernard Campus Pastor)

“Jabez who was more distinguished than any of his brothers. . . . He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and extend my lands! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!’ And God granted him his request.”
(1 Chronicles 4:9-10)

“And God granted Jabez’s request.” This phrase alone tells us so much about the life of Jabez and his relationship with God. God is not commonly in the business of answering the prayers of those who do not live for Him or who are disobeying His principles in life. The Scriptures also tell us frequently of how God delights in and responds to the prayers of his Holy people who are living for Him and are pursuing His will for their lives.

What would it be like to have said about you what the Scripture says about Jabez. “And God did what (Your name) had asked.” God wants to bless our lives by meeting our needs and even some of our wants, but often times it is our disobedience and faithlessness that barricades the work of God in our lives.

Spend the next few minutes in prayer asking the Lord to reveal to you areas of your life where your faith could be stronger. Knowing that our faith and obedience are keys to the work of the Lord in our lives you then may want to ask the Lord, “Lord, are there any areas of disobedience in my life where I am not living up to your standard for life?”

APPLICATION – 1) Make a list of different areas in your life where the Lord has revealed that you need to grow in your faith and obedience, 2) Make a list of five things that you desire to see God do in your life over the next month.

Now with both lists completed, take a few minutes to pray again, asking for the Lord’s strength and help in growing your faith and obedience to His word. Then take a few moments to pray for the area you listed where you want to see the Lord work in your life. May what was said about Jabez be said about you, “God did what Jabez had asked.”

Notes

