**What is Prayer?**

Simply put, prayer is communication with God. Real prayer is expressing our devotion to our heavenly Father, inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him.

**Who can pray?**

Anyone can pray, but only those who walk in faith and obedience to Christ can expect to receive answers to their prayers.

Contact with God begins when we receive Jesus into our lives as Savior and Lord (John 14:6). Praying with a clean heart is also vital to successful prayer. We cannot expect God to answer our prayers if there is any unconfessed sin in our life or if we are harboring an unforgiving spirit (Psalm 66:18; Mark 11:25). For God to answer our prayers, we must have a believing heat and ask according to His will (Matthew 9:29; 21:22; 1John

5:1415).

**Why are we to pray?**

God’s word commands us to pray (Luke 8:1; Acts 6:4; Mark 14:38; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; Timothy 2:

1-2).

We pray to have fellowship with God, receive spiritual nurture and strength to live a victorious life and maintain boldness for a vital witness for Christ.

**To whom do we pray?**

We pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When we

pray to the Father, our prayers are accepted by Jesus Christ and interpreted to God the Father by the Holy Spirit

(Romans 8:26,27,34).

**When should we pray?**

God’s word commands us to “pray continually” (1Thessalonians 5:17). We can be in prayer throughout the day, expressing and demonstrating our devotion to God as we go about our daily tasks.

It is not always necessary to be on our knees, or even in a quiet room to pray. God wants us to be in touch with Him constantly wherever we are. We can pray in the car, while washing the dishes, or while walking down the street.

**What should we include in our prayers?**

Although prayer cannot be reduced to a formula, certain basic elements should be included in our communication with God:

Adoration,Confession,Thanksgiving, Supplication. (**ACTS**)

**A**doration – To adore God is to worship and praise Him, to honor and exalt Him in our heart and mind and with our lips.

**C**onfession – When our discipline of prayer begins with adoration, the Holy Spirit has opportunity to reveal any sin in our life that needs to confessed.

**T**hanksgiving – An attitude of thanksgiving to God, for who He is and for the benefits we enjoy because we belong to Him, enables us to recognize that He is victorious in all things – not just the blessings, but the problems and adversities as well. As we approach God with a thankful heart, He becomes strong on our behalf.

**S**upplication – Supplication includes petition for our own needs and intercession for others. Pray that your inner person may be renewed, always sensitive to and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Pray for others – your spouse, your children, your parents, neighbors, and friends; our nation and those in authority over us. Pray for the salvation of souls, for a daily opportunity to introduce others to Christ and to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

**Why should I fast?**

• *Do you desire a deeper, more intimate relationship with God?*

• *Do you want to increase your spiritual sensitivity in regards to the heart of God?*

• *Do you need to break free from bondages that are holding you hostage?*

• *Do you have a friend or family member that needs to know Christ personally?*

• *Do you want to know God’s will for your life?*

• *Is there a dream inside you that only He can make possible?*

• *Are you in need of a healing or a miracle?*

**HOW TO BEGIN**

Set your objective. Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need spiritual renewal, guidance, physical healing, the restoration of a marriage or your family, grace to handle a difficult situation, a financial breakthrough? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. This will enable you to pray specifically and strategically.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our church and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14-15. Make this a priority in your fasting.

It is also important for you to prepare your body for the upcoming fast. Eat smaller amounts of food before starting your fast. Avoid high fat and “sugary” foods. You may want to eat raw fruits and vegetables two days before starting your fast.

**PREPARING SPIRITUALLY**

The foundation of prayer and fasting is repentance. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

• Confess every sin the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. Accept God’s forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

• Ask forgiveness from everyone you have hurt or offended. Forgive all of those who have hurt or offended you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4).

• Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

• Surrender your life fully to the purpose and plan of God (Romans 12:1-2).

• Believe that God “rewards those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

• Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan will usually intensify his efforts when you devote yourself to prayer and fasting (Luke 4).

• Develop an accountability partner who will encourage you in your fast.

• Keep a journal during your fast. Write down specific insights God gives you from His Word, promises that you have claimed and answers to prayer that you receive.

**Make Your Commitment**

The type of fast you go on is between you and God. Jesus implied that all believers should fast (Matthew

6:16-18; 9:14-15). For Him it was a matter of *when* believers should fast, not *if* they should fast. Decide the following up front:

How long you will fast – one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, forty days (beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts)

The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, water and juices, Daniel fast) and/or refraining from Starbucks, eating out, or cutting out all sweets and soda.

What physical or social activities you will restrict

How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God’s word

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life’s pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Here are some options:

• **A Normal (Full) Fast** – Abstain from food, drink only liquids (water and / or specific juices).

Should you choose to drink juices during your fast, the best juices are from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery or leafy green vegetables. Avoid any liquids containing caffeine, as they will stimulate your appetite and make fasting more difficult.

• **The Daniel Fast** – Abstain from meats and sweets, drink only water. (Unseasoned vegetables and most natural fruits are acceptable.)

• **Combination Fast** – Begin the first three days with a **full** or **normal fast.** Observing the remaining days of the fast with the **Daniel Fast**.

**Note:** If you are on medication or have a medical condition, you may want to consult your doctor before beginning your fast. Also, anyone engaging in a prolonged full fast should consult with their doctor.

Deciding on **what kind of fast** you will observe ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life’s pressures tempt you to abandon your fast.

**DANIEL FAST RECOMMENDED FOODS WHOLE GRAINS:** Brown Rice, Oats, Barley

**LEGUMES:** Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas

**FRUITS:** Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon, etc

**VEGETABLES:** Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Ginger Root, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

**LIQUIDS:** Water (as much as possible), Unsweetened Soy Milk, Herbal (caffeine free) Tea, Natural Fruit Juices

(no sugar added)

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil (small quantities), honey

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability as your body withdraws from caffeine and sugars. Naturally, you will experience hunger pains. Most individuals also experience bad breath. Avoid chewing gum or breath mints, as they will stimulate your appetite.

Limit your physical activity. Exercise moderately. Take time to rest.

Fasting can position you to experience miraculous results. You are following the example of Jesus when you fast.

**IMPORTANT:** For maximum spiritual benefit, it is important that the time normally devoted to eating be given to prayer, Bible study and being alone with God. Pray often throughout the day. Spend time in Bible Study. Make personal praise and worship a priority. Spend time in solitude and get away from every distraction possible (television, radio, cell phones, computers, etc.) The more time you spend with alone God, the more effective and meaningful your fast will be.

**While You Fast**

Your time of fasting and prayer has come. You are abstaining from certain foods and have begun to seek the

Lord. Here are some helpful suggestions to consider; Exercise moderately. Take walks us this time in prayer

Rest as your schedule will permit, remember your not eating the way your body is use to so you may be fatigued in the beginning.

Prepare yourself for some temporary mental discomfort, such as impatience, crankiness.

Expect some physical discomforts, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness, or the “blahs”. Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches. Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness.

The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

**Get on a schedule**

**For Personal Growth:**

For maximum spiritual benefit set aside ample time to be with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him the more meaningful your fast will be. Below is an example of a routine that if followed throughout our 40 days will become a lifestyle for you.

**Morning** (spend at least 15 minutes) Begin your day in praise and worship.

Read and meditate on God’s word preferably on your knees.

Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to Philippians 2:13. Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, your church, your

community, your country and beyond. **Noon** (spend at least 15 minutes) Return to prayer and God’s word

Take a short prayer walk

Spend time intercessory prayer for your community’s and nation’s leaders, for the world’s unreached millions, for your family or special needs.

**Evening** (spend at least 20 minutes)

Get alone for an unhurried time of “seeking His face.”

Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

**For Corporate prayer growth:**

If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer. This could be your family, small group, your church.

Sign up for an hour of prayer with the 40 days of prayer and fasting and follow through with it. As a church when we join together for our families, city, God’s church, the nations we bring spiritual and physical unity and strength to press in and gain breakthrough in every area that individually and corporately we want to see change.

When possible, begin and end each day on your knees for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. If you are married take this time together.

**Breaking Your Fast**

When your designated time for fasting is finished in this case 40 days spend time in praise and worship, you will begin to eat again. How you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well being.

How to end you fast

. *…* When you begin eating, begin eating gradually. Do not overeat. Suddenly reintroducing solid foods to your digestive system will probably produce negative results. Introduce solid foods gradually. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day if you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

**MAKING THE COMMITMENT**

1. My purpose or reason for fasting is:

2. I will observe the following kind of fast:

3. I will observe this fast for this period of time:

4. My accountability partner during this fast will be:

5. Why is this the right time for me to fast:

*I believe that God is the only answer to my request and that prayer without fasting is not enough to get an answer to my need. Therefore, by faith I am fasting because I desperately need God to work in this matter.*

*God being my strength and His grace being my basis, I commit myself to the above fast.*

**Recommended Reading:** *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Prayer and Fasting* by John Piper; *God’s Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis; *The Beginner’s Guide to Fasting* by Elmer Towns; *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough: A Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts* by Elmer Towns