Week Of Prayer And Fasting

Devotional Guide

Viva

SZN-02
2022

Greetings,

From Sunday May 1st - Sunday May 8th, please join us in a time of prayer and fasting.

We look forward to seeing you as we gather together on Friday, May 6th at 7pm for a time of worship and prayer here at VIVA Church. We also look forward to having your join us on Saturday May 7th from 9am-6pm here at VIVA Church for prayer. You are welcome to come pray with us the entire day, or drop in when you can for an hour or two to seek the Lord. We are sure you will not regret it.

We are asking that you set some time aside to pray and fast each day of the week. The next pages contain a brief explanation of fasting as well as a devotional guide with a reflection and prayer points that will help you to focus this week.

Thank you so much for joining us this week, and standing with us as we enter this next season here at VIVA Church.

Blessings,

Frank & Chris Deixas

Pastors Frank & Chris

What Is Fasting

Biblical fasting takes a lot of discipline and strength—strength which you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, says Matthew 6. When you give God your first through fasting, prayer and giving at the beginning of the year, you set the course for the entire year.

Why should I fast? Are you in need of healing or a miracle? Do you need the tender touch of God in your life?Is there a dream inside you that only He can make possible?Are you in need of a fresh encounter?Do you desire a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord?Are you ready to have heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?Do you need to break away from bondages that have been holding you hostage?Is there a friend or loved one that needs Salvation?Do you desire to know God's will for your life?

Biblical Fasting Focus

1 Timothy 2:1-2 *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."*

Romans 12:1 *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service."*

Matthew 6:33 *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

Types Of Fasting

There are several types of fasting. The one you choose is between you and God. He will honor your best sacrifice.

Full Fast: Drink only liquids (you establish the number of days).

The Daniel Fast: Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruits and vegetables.

3-Day Fast: This fast can be a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.

Partial Fast: A partial fast is from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sun up to sundown. You can select from three types of fasting —a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.

Scripture References for Fasting: *Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:9-14*

Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word: *1 Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, Nehemiah 1:4, Daniel 9:3, 20, Joel 2:12, Luke 2:37, Acts 10:30,Acts 13:2*

Corporate Fasting: *1 Samuel 7:5-6, Ezra 8:21-23, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16, Jonah 3:5-10, Acts 27:33-37*

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 14:12, 1 Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast!

Fasting Tips

How to Begin: Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible.

Preparing Spiritually: Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

Deciding What to Fast: The type of fasting you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats, and the only liquid he drank was water. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

Deciding How Long: You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

What to Expect: When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

How to End: Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.

DAY 1

What to do when you face an impossible task

Scripture: Mark 6:14–44

Think about a time you felt desperate, distraught, and discouraged. Whatever the situation, it seemed never-ending. Certain words, sounds, and smells probably still trigger the fear and anxiety you experienced.

Christians are not exempt from despair. Even when we're walking with Jesus, we can feel overwhelmed and under-equipped for the tasks at hand. When Jesus asks the disciples to feed 5,000 people in Mark 6, you can hear the despair in their voices:

> *"[Jesus] answered, 'You give them something to eat.' They said to him, 'That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?'" (Mark 6:37).*

The disciples were facing an impossible task, but their reality changed when they put their despair in Jesus' hands. Jesus pulled the disciples through the situation and poured out more blessing than seemed possible, feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

Fear can paralyze us. When we feel desperation or despair, we have to remember Jesus can handle it. Our job, like the disciples, is to bring our situation to him.

Reflect:

- *What are you most afraid of right now?*
- *What can we learn from the disciples' example about taking our fears to Jesus?*
- *Think about a time when Jesus brought you through an impossible situation. What did you learn about Jesus during that experience?*

Prayer Points:

- *Spiritual breakthrough in your life*
- *Pray for your family*

DAY 2

Don t let distraction stop you from seeing the miracle

Scripture: Mark 6:45-56

Living in this broken world can easily harden our hearts to the joy and peace and miracles God gives us each day. Sin is all over the place, and Satan is the ultimate craftsman when it comes to creating distractions that prevent us from seeing God at work in our world. Often, Satan uses distraction and difficulty to take our eyes off of Jesus.

In Mark 6:45-56, we see that even the disciples were easily distracted and oblivious to the miracles that Jesus was performing right in front of their eyes. They were too busy and overwhelmed by the storm to see the miracle or appreciate it for all its worth.

Storms and rough seasons are the best distractions Satan uses to take our eyes off of Jesus and all that He is doing in our lives. The disciples were so focused on the storm they were caught in that they almost missed Jesus walking right by their boat on the water. Can you imagine missing a miracle as incredible as that one?

In order to not miss out on even the smallest of miracles, we must position our hearts to keep our eyes on Jesus even in the biggest of storms. Taking our eyes off Jesus gives Satan the opportunity to distract us and leave us feeling hopeless and hardened. One way to stay focused on Jesus is to constantly remind ourselves of His past miracles and of the ways He has brought us through storms in the past. Jesus always has His eyes on us.

Reflect:

- *When was a time when the storm you were in distracted you from recognizing Jesus?*
- *What is one way you can better prepare your heart to be in a position that allows you to see the miracles even in the midst of a storm or rough season?*
- *Take a moment and reflect on past miracles that you've seen God perform in your life or in the lives around you. Celebrate and remember those miracles to open your eyes to the miracles God could perform in the future.*

Prayer Points:

- *Spiritual breakthrough in your life and family*

DAY 3

Why communion is a powerful symbol of our faith

Scripture: Mark 14:12-26

Take some time today to partake in communion

What makes a gift good or memorable? It definitely has to be thought through. It more than likely came at a high cost, either financially or in time spent. It has to meet a specific need or desire to have the intended impact. Every time we think about that gift, it brings back the joy we felt and reminds us of the sacrifice the giver made for us.

No gift can outmeasure the weight, importance, and sacrifice of Jesus' death on the cross. When we celebrate communion, or the Lord's Supper, we remember the gift of salvation Jesus gave each one of us.

In Mark 14:24, Jesus explains that this meal was about to mark the start of a new covenant between God and His people. Before Jesus' death, generations of Jews sacrificed animals at the temple to pay for their sin. Jesus' sacrifice paid the penalty for sin once and for all, and that's why we celebrate communion today. In Luke's version of this story, Jesus tells the disciples, "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

When we take communion, it symbolizes the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. The wine and the bread in communion represent the blood and body of Jesus that was poured out and broken as a sacrifice for our gift of salvation.

Just like some gifts will always remind us of where we were when we received them, communion reminds us of where we were when we met Jesus. Communion is a time when we collectively reflect on the covenant that binds us together. It's also a time to individually reflect on the price Jesus paid for us to be in a relationship with Him.

Reflect:

- *Think back to where you were when you asked Jesus into your life. Where were you? What happened?*
- *What are two ways that communion is a great reminder of the sacrifice Jesus made on your behalf?*
- *What's one way you can show gratitude for the gift of salvation?*

Prayer Points:

- *Revival at Viva (pray for kids, Jr Youth, Young Adults)*

DAY 4

When you are weak, Jesus makes you strong

Scripture: Mark 14:27–42

When was the last time you sat around the dinner table and openly discussed your weaknesses? If you're cringing, it's because admitting our struggles is embarrassing and uncomfortable. But have you ever considered that God, in His perfection, purposefully and intentionally gave us our weaknesses as well as our strengths?

In Christ, weaknesses are not something to be ashamed of but rather looked upon as opportunities for Jesus' power to be displayed through us. He can accomplish more in us and through us than we could ever do on our own.

Like the disciples, who had willing spirits but weak flesh, we also experience times when all the willpower in the world is not enough to withstand temptation. Jesus told the disciples to watch and pray so they would not fall into temptation, and the same is true for us today.

We need Jesus strength. When we follow Jesus' example and ask for His help, we will always have what we need to overcome anything this world throws our way. No matter how weak or tired we feel, the Holy Spirit in us is greater than the problems around us.

Reflect:

- *Think for a minute about your greatest weakness. Thank God for it and ask Him how you can use that weakness for His glory.*
- *What's one area of your life where you need to allow Jesus to be your source of strength?*
- *Can you think of a time in your life where you were overwhelmed and God's strength prevailed?*

Prayer Points:

- *Pray for Salvation of friends and family members*

DAY 5

Are you scared of sharing your faith?

Scripture: Mark 14:43–65

After Jesus was arrested, the disciples scattered. Mark 14:54 records that Peter followed Jesus and the guards at a distance so as to not be associated with Him. The disciples abandoned Jesus, and while it is easy to scoff at the disciples for their betrayal, don't we do the same thing?

Like the disciples, we've all faced that moment where we could show our devotion to Jesus or stop short out of fear of what others will think. We can give money to the poor, volunteer at homeless shelters, and work harder than anyone, but if we never explain the reason for our actions, have we really shared the Gospel? Our lives will either portray Jesus as a liar or Lord. He is either Lord of all or not Lord at all.

Jesus is either Lord of all or not Lord at all.

We have all been slow to proclaim Jesus before others, but as the disciples later discovered, it's never too late to change. In Mark 16, Jesus sends the same disciples who abandoned him out as missionaries. Not only that, Jesus said they would have the power to drive out demons, speak new languages, and heal those who are sick (Mark 16:15-18).

If we're willing to be as devoted to Jesus on Monday as we are on Sunday, He'll do more in us and through us than we could ever imagine. So which will you choose? Will you shy away from sharing what you stand for or will you boldly declare that Jesus is Lord?

Reflect:

- *Do your actions change based on who's around? Why or why not?*
- *What is one thing you fear about declaring your faith in Jesus?*
- *Is there anything in your life that needs to change to proclaim Jesus instead of pleasing others?*

Prayer Points:

- *Pray for our Leaders (Pastors, Ministry Leaders, Small Group Leaders)*

DAY 6

You don t have to make everyone happy

Scripture: Mark 15:1-15

Mark 15 opens with the high priests bringing Jesus to Pilate. The priests wanted Jesus dead and refused to stop until He hung on a cross. Pilate knew the accusations against Jesus were false, and he was amazed Jesus let the priests throw Him under the bus for treason and for crimes He hadn't committed.

"Crucify Him!" the crowd screamed when Pilate offered to let Jesus go free. "Crucify Him!" the crowd roared as Pilate again encouraged them to let Jesus go. As the crowd shouted, Pilate caved and condemned Jesus to death.

We all know how it feels to be caught in the middle. Your spouse wants to take a cruise, but your family is giving you guilt trips about coming home. Your supervisor tells you to set up the display one way, but the memo from your district manager shows the display another way. The stress we feel in those moments comes from a desire to please everyone around us.

Stop trying to please others and live for the one who is already pleased with you. When we make the desire to please others more important than doing what's right, it wreaks havoc in our lives. When we cave to people- pleasing, we sacrifice the ability to influence people. Pilate chose the crowd's opinion over what He knew was right and lost the chance to take a stand.

Few of us know what it's like to be a judge, but we do know what it's like to let friends, co-workers, and teammates dictate what we think, say, or do. Too often, we let what others think determine the careers we choose, the friends we make, or the relationships we break.

It's time to stop trying to please others and live for the one who is already pleased with us. God loves you fully and completely. What kind of change could we make if we started loving others the same way?

Reflect:

- *Do you feel the need to please others in your life? Why or why not?*
- *How can you shift your focus from others' opinions to God's plan for your life?*

Prayer Points:

- *Pray for our Government (Federal and Provincial)*

DAY 7

You are not alone in your suffering

Scripture: Mark 15:16-41

Have you ever felt abandoned by God?

Perhaps you didn't see the suffering coming, but in a moment your world turned upside down and you felt completely alone.

If you've ever felt this way, you are not the only one. As He suffered on the cross, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Jesus had been abandoned by almost everyone who claimed to love Him. And as He felt the weight of humanity's sin, Jesus experienced what separation from His Father felt like as well.

Jesus didn't have to suffer as He did. After all, He was fully God and fully man. Yet, He chose to endure suffering greater than any of us could ever even imagine. Why would He do that?

Jesus endured the worst kind of suffering humans can endure because He is not a distant, far-off God. He is "Immanuel," God with us. In taking the punishment for all of our sins, Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with the Father. Through Jesus' sacrifice, we can experience the same closeness with God that He had while on Earth.

When you face trials and suffering, when you feel like God has abandoned you, remember the price that Jesus paid for you. Whatever you may be going through, no matter how alone you feel, you are not abandoned. Jesus is with you, and He wants to wrap His arms around you and offer you comfort and peace. Call out to Him. Offer Him your suffering, and let Him turn it into rejoicing.

Reflect:

- *Have you ever opened up to someone about the problems on your mind? Why or why not?*
- *Is there any area of your life where you feel abandoned? Tell Jesus about it right now in prayer.*
- *Is a problem or decision weighing you down? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you should do.*

Prayer Points:

- *Pray for the preservation of Unity in families and church*

DAY 8

Some things are more important than fitting in

Scripture: Mark 15:42–47

We all want to be part of the "in" crowd at some point in our life. Maybe you went to extraordinary lengths to be part of the cool table at school, to move to that next income bracket, or to keep up with the latest parenting trends. But what happens when we allow fitting in to become more important than honouring God?

That was Joseph of Arimathea's situation. Joseph was secretly a disciple of Jesus. He wanted to blend in for good reasons. As a member of the Sanhedrin, if Joseph had been open about his true beliefs, it could have easily lead to his death.

When Jesus died, Joseph realized he could no longer keep his faith hidden. He asked to give Jesus a proper Jewish burial even though his actions could have resulted in punishment or death. Joseph was no longer willing to fit in at the expense of his faith.

Risking your reputation for what's right might be scary, but it's always worth it.

Romans 12:2 tells us not to conform to the patterns of this world. When fitting in causes us to make decisions that don't align with Jesus' teaching, it's time to take a cue from Joseph and be bold. That might mean managing our money differently, changing our approach to dating or making less- than-popular decisions at work. Risking our reputations for what's right might be scary, but it's always worth it.

Reflect:

- *On a scale of 1 to 10, how important to you is fitting Why did you pick the number you selected?*
- *Have you ever been in a situation where you had to compromise your faith in order to fit in? What happened as a result?*
- *What's one area of your life where God has given you an opportunity to boldly share your faith?*

Prayer Points:

- *Pray Peace in our World*