

A Day of Fasting and Prayer :

Seeking God in our Hurting
February 19th 2022

Why Fasting and Prayer?

The story of God's people in scripture shows time and time again that when they desperately needed God, they fasted and prayed. Although we are called to pray without ceasing, there are many examples in scripture of moments of *intense need* when prayers are accompanied by fasting. Sometimes individuals fast, such as Daniel in the example we will see below; and sometimes individuals ask an entire *people* to fast and pray, such as Esther before she goes in to see the king. Fasting is simply a way for us to express and focus-in on our dependence on God as we seek Him in prayer.

FBC family, we need God. Each one of us needs him and we need him as a church family. Whether due to loss or grief, physical illness or simply the chronic stress of adjusting to this pandemic, the emotional and mental health of many, if not all of us, has suffered. One specific and urgent need is for our sister Yesenia Sosa who has been suffering a disabling deep depression for a year. In whatever way you choose to participate in this event, please specifically pray for her healing and pray through Psalm 27 for her. There are also many others in our body suffering from anxiety, depression and discouragement - pray for these needs among our body. Even though there are many things we feel like we may need from Him, above all else **we need Him**. We need God. We need him to draw us closer to himself as He is the fountain of life.

Fasting is never a way for us to earn God's favor or blessing. The Gospel tells us that in Christ, God already loves us, his children, with the same affection that He loves his own son, Jesus. Fasting is simply a practice that trains our hearts to love God and his glory more. Fasting and prayer are means to connect us to God's life-giving power and grace. They are a way for us tune out the noise of the world and focus on the One who sustains all things by the word of his power.

As we experience physical hunger for food, we turn to God in spiritual hunger asking for more of Him. Instead of turning to food to nourish our bodies, our hunger pains prompt us to turn to God in dependence on Him for our nourishment and the nourishment of those who are hurting.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." - Matthew 4:4

Some Basics of Fasting

Taking into account several factors including your own physical health, we would like to invite you to fast with us for 24 hours starting Saturday morning February 19th and breaking our fast Sunday morning February 20th with a light breakfast together.

- ◆ If you are unable to fast the full day, then perhaps fasting from one or two meals would be possible.
- ◆ You may also skip fasting and participate by simply praying throughout the day
- ◆ You must drink plenty of liquids the day of the fast - namely water. You may also drink broth or fruit smoothies if need be. (A normal daily water intake for most healthy people is between 60-80oz daily)
- ◆ It is best to avoid caffeinated beverages the day of the fast. Herbal tea is ok.
- ◆ If you are not feeling well at some point during the fast try broth or fruit juice/ smoothie. If still not feeling well, break the fast and continue to pray.
- ◆ It is best to limit exercise the day of the fast but keeping up with normal daily activities is ok.
- ◆ If you have medical questions, please consult your doctor prior to fasting.

An Overview of FBC's Day of Fasting and Prayer

Preparing to fast: Friday night Feb 18th

- ◆ Eat a well balanced dinner
- ◆ Read Friday evening reading on Daniel 9, following the bolded meditations, confessions and prayers
- ◆ Pray and ask God to reveal more of Himself to you
- ◆ Get a good night's sleep

Day of fasting: Saturday Feb 19th

- ◆ Wake up and begin drinking water
- ◆ Read the scripture meditations on Psalm 27 throughout the day
- ◆ Pray as often as you feel hungry
- ◆ Go about your daily activities while being mindful of staying hydrated

Breaking our fast: Sunday breakfast Feb 20th 9am

- ◆ Come to FBC at 9am for a breakfast and to share your experiences

MEDITATIONS AND SCRIPTURES FOR FRIDAY

Preparing for fasting : Friday evening read Daniel 9:3-19

In Daniel 9:3-19 we see an example of a man seeking God in fasting and prayer during a time of great suffering for his people. As we prepare to fast together tomorrow, let's read this prayer together and make it our own.

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Prayer and Meditation:

***We turn our face to you, God,
asking for mercy as we fast and pray***

I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

Prayer and Meditation:

We affirm that you, God, are great and awesome, that You are faithful to keep your promises and that Your love is steadfast

we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.

Prayer and Meditation:

***We confess that we have all sinned against you, God,
we don't listen and we turn away to other things.
(Confess your sin to God)
We remember that you, God, offer us mercy and forgiveness***

As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.

Prayer and Meditation:

***We confess that we fail to seek you first, God.
We remember that you, God, offer us mercy and forgiveness***

Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

Prayer and Meditation:

***We acknowledge, God, that all of Your ways are righteous,
even when it's hard for us to understand
We remember, God, the ways Your mighty hand has delivered
us in the past***

“O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

Prayer and Meditation:

***We ask you, God, to listen, to lean in and to hear us
We ask you, God, for mercy
We ask you, God, for You to shine your face upon us
We ask you, God, to forgive us
We ask you, God, to act and deliver us from sin and
suffering: (we can ask for specific requests here)
We ask that you, God, would get the glory
We affirm that we are Your people, called by Your name***

MEDITATIONS AND SCRIPTURES FOR SATURDAY

Saturday Morning Meditation

Psalm 27:1-5

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.

Remember, Prayer and Meditation:

Remember who God is. He has saved us. He has brought us out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light. He is our stronghold. He is greater than any other stronghold that seeks to steal our joy, our life, our peace. He will hide us in his shelter. He will lift us up out trouble through His presence. Remember that He offers us fullness of joy in His presence.

Pray that those who are suffering would remember and experience God in this way. Pray through your fears. Pray for confidence and courage as we face our fears and trials and suffering. Pray that we would see His beauty and experience joy in His presence. Pray for His protection in the day of trouble.

Meditate on some of these verses as you continue to pray throughout the morning.

Saturday Afternoon Meditation

Psalm 27:6-10

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me!

You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you,
"Your face, Lord, do I seek."

Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger,
O you who have been my help. Cast me not off;
forsake me not, O God of my salvation!

For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
but the Lord will take me in.

Remember, Prayer and Meditation:

Praise God this afternoon. Listen to worship music and sing out to God. Choose some songs that speak to you and sing them back to God in worship.

Check out these songs on YouTube as some inspiration:
Egypt, Waymaker, Famous For, In the Name

Remember that God does hear us and answers us - although we do not always perceive it. God does not weigh us down with heavy requirements, He simply asks that we seek his face. God will not turn his back on us. God is our ever present help. God will always take us in and welcome us home as His children.

Pray that God would lean in and hear us as we worship and pray. Seek Him and ask Him to show himself to you and to those who are hurting. Ask Him to be our help. Thank Him that in Jesus we will never be forsaken or forgotten. Thank Him that we can depend on Him as a perfect and good Father to always take us in.

Meditate on God our help, God our Father with open arms. Meditate on the song lyrics you have sung.

Saturday Evening Meditation

Psalm 27:11-14

Teach me your way, O Lord,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.

Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they breathe out violence.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living!

Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!

Remember, Prayer and Meditation:

Remember that God is good, even when we can't see it or feel it. Remember that His timing is perfect even when we don't understand. Remember that His Word is a light to our path and He will teach us, guide us and lead us even through the darkest valleys. Remember that our courage is not in ourselves, but in God's power and strength.

Pray that those who are suffering would hold onto God's hand on the paths that are rocky and painful. Pray that God would teach us in our painful circumstances. Pray that the voice of our adversary, the devil, would not be the voice we listen to. Pray that those who are suffering would believe that God is working and that we will look upon His goodness in these days. Pray that we would wait for God to provide - that we would trust that He will provide - that we would be courageous as we wait - that the strength of those waiting on Him would be renewed.

Meditate on God leading us. Meditate on what it is to be strong and courageous in the face of waiting and unanswered prayers.

Breaking the fast :
Sunday morning breakfast together at 9 am
at the FBC Watsonville Youth House