

Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.'" – Joel 2:12 (ESV)

Devotional:

Fasting is a sacred invitation to intentionally draw near to God. In Joel 2:12, the Lord calls His people to return to Him with all their hearts, pairing fasting with an attitude of repentance and a longing for His presence. This kind of fasting goes beyond abstaining from food; it is about a focused, wholehearted pursuit of God. When we fast, we purposefully set aside the distractions and comforts that often compete for our attention. In doing so, we open our hearts to hear God more clearly, feel His presence more deeply, and align our lives with His purpose. Fasting becomes a declaration: "Lord, You are my greatest desire, above all else."

This purposeful seeking requires humility and surrender. It may involve repenting of sins, asking for God's guidance, or interceding for others. It is in this place of intentional focus that God meets us. He promises in Jeremiah 29:13, "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

As you fast, ask yourself: What is keeping me from fully returning to God with my whole heart? What am I seeking from Him in this season? Let fasting be an offering of your time, energy, and desires, surrendered to the One who alone can satisfy the deepest longings of your soul.

Prayer:

Father God,

We long to seek You with intention and purpose. Thank You for the gift of fasting, which draws us closer to You and reminds us of our need for Your presence. Help us to set aside every distraction and fix our eyes on You. Search our hearts and reveal anything that hinders us from fully returning to You. As we fast, fill us with Your Spirit and guide us into deeper intimacy with You.

In Jesus Name, Amen

- Pastor Cheryl Andrews.