

Preparing our Hearts for Easter
Reflective Scripture Reading

WEEK 1: Repentance (Acts 3:12-26)

- _____ Mon. 2/23 - Acts 3:12-15
- _____ Tue. 2/24 - Acts 3:16
- _____ Wed. 2/25 - Acts 3:17-18
- _____ Thu. 2/26 - Acts 3:19-20
- _____ Fri. 2/27 - Acts 3:21-22
- _____ Sat. 2/28 - Acts 3:23-25a
- _____ Sun. 3/1 - Acts 3:25b-26

WEEK 2: Limitations (2 Corinthians 5:1-12)

- _____ Mon. 3/2 - 2 Cor 5:1
- _____ Tue. 3/3 - 2 Cor 5:2-4
- _____ Wed. 3/4 - 2 Cor 5:5
- _____ Thu. 3/5 - 2 Cor 5:6-7
- _____ Fri. 3/6 - 2 Cor 5:8-9
- _____ Sat. 3/7 - 2 Cor 5:10
- _____ Sun. 3/8 - 2 Cor 5:11-12

WEEK 3: Brokenness (Psalm 51)

- _____ Mon. 3/9 - Psalm 51:1-2
- _____ Tue. 3/10 - Psalm 51:3-4
- _____ Wed. 3/11 - Psalm 51:5-6
- _____ Thu. 3/12 - Psalm 51:7-9
- _____ Fri. 3/13 - Psalm 51:10-12
- _____ Sat. 3/14 - Psalm 51:13-15
- _____ Sun. 3/15 - Psalm 51:16-19

WEEK 4: God's Love (1 John 4:7-21)

- _____ Mon. 3/16 - 1 John 4:7-8
- _____ Tue. 3/17 - 1 John 4:9-10
- _____ Wed. 3/18 - 1 John 4:11-12
- _____ Thu. 3/19 - 1 John 4:13-14
- _____ Fri. 3/20 - 1 John 4:15-16
- _____ Sat. 3/21 - 1 John 4:17-18
- _____ Sun. 3/22 - 1 John 4:19-21

WEEK 5: Waiting on God (Lamentations)

- _____ Mon. 3/23 - Lamentations 1:1-3
- _____ Tue. 3/24 - Lamentations 1:11-14
- _____ Wed. 3/25 - Lamentations 2:19
- _____ Thu. 3/26 - Lamentations 3:16-21
- _____ Fri. 3/27 - Lamentations 3:22-26
- _____ Sat. 3/28 - Lamentations 4:22-5:1
- _____ Sun. 3/29 - Lamentations 5:15-22

WEEK 6: The Reality of Suffering and Pain

- _____ Mon. 3/30 - Romans 8:1-4
- _____ Tue. 3/31 - Romans 8:9-11
- _____ Wed. 4/1 - Romans 8:12-15
- _____ Thu. 4/2 - Romans 8:18-23
- _____ Fri. 4/3 - Romans 8:26-30

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

40 days of prayer & fasting

**A season of preparation
as we look towards Easter**



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Here at the Valley Vineyard, we invite you to join us in preparing our hearts for the greatest day of the year, Easter. Here is what we will be doing...

1. A 40-day daily reading plan

As we fast, we want to feast on the Word of God. Take a few minutes each day to read Scripture and then meditate throughout the day on the portion that the Spirit of God highlights to you.

2. A season of fasting

We are calling everyone to fast on one level or another for 6 weeks. That may be daunting, but here is some helpful information about fasting. We truly want this to be a Holy Spirit-inspired journey.

Throughout the Bible, fasting is almost always the decision to abstain from food for a set period of time. In Matthew 4 we find that Jesus was "led by the Spirit" to go without food for 40 days. It also tells us that he got really hungry! It was an uncomfortable and challenging process, even for Jesus, but it produced powerful results. He not only resisted temptation, but His Spirit-led fasting resulted in three power-packed years of ministry.

3. Good Friday Service

Make plans to join us on Friday, April 3 at 7 PM for our Good Friday service.

What should you fast?

Begin by asking Jesus what his Spirit is leading you to abstain from. It might be more beneficial for you fast from things that feed your mind, body, soul, or imagination: television, sports, social media, alcohol, the news, shopping, or political discourse. You can also seek to abstain from certain foods, fast every morning or evening during this season, or fast a day or certain days of the week. You may not hear an audible voice, but you will have a sense of what the Spirit is targeting.

It's vital to understand that fasting is not an end in itself, but a spiritual discipline. Just like a physical discipline, you engage in it with a goal in mind. You don't diet just to diet, but to get healthy and lose weight. In the same way, as you fast, you should have a spiritual goal or purpose in mind.

As you look through the goals below, which one might Jesus be calling you to pursue?

- **A greater dependency on Jesus**

As you experience the discomfort of denying yourself something you enjoy, it can be a constant reminder to turn to the Lord for strength. Fasting can help us stay centered on Jesus. 2 Cor. 12:9

- **More time in prayer and the Word**

Imagine what would happen if all the time we spend looking at screens or eating meals was devoted to prayer and meditation on Scripture? Fasting can be a way of feasting on the Lord. John 4:27-38

- **Fasting for revival**

Fasting is a great way to revive your own spiritual life. It says you are serious about living a Spirit-filled life with Jesus. Jonah 3:7; Joel 1:14 & 2:12,15

- **A deepening in your walk with Jesus**

You may choose to fast because you hear Jesus calling, "Come away, my beloved!" He's calling you to quiet your heart and go deeper. Song of Solomon 8:14

- **Reliving the Passion of Jesus**

In the 40 days leading up to Easter, you may want to simply meditate on the last few weeks of Jesus' life by daily studying the various accounts in the Gospels. Mt. 21-28; Mk. 13-16; Lk. 21-24; Jn. 11-21

- **Spiritual Warfare**

Fasting can be a way of releasing God's power to overcome evil. Mt. 17:18-21

- **Ministering to the needs of others**

When you fast from food and other pleasurable activities, you identify with those who are hungry and needy. This is the meaning of Is. 58:6-9. Fasting can produce compassion and a desire to do something about the oppressed.

- **A season of mourning**

It was common for those who were grieving to abstain from food for a season. Perhaps you need to mourn a loss. 2 Sam. 12:23; Neh. 1:4.

- **Facing a great challenge**

In 1 Chron.. 20:3 the king called a fast when facing overwhelming odds in battle. The Lord gave him a great victory, v. 24. Also see Esther 4:16.

Some fasting Do's and Don'ts

- Don't fast to look spiritual by telling everyone you are fasting. Mt. 6:16, 18
- Don't go around being miserable and cranky. Is. 58:4-6; Mt. 6:17
- Don't try to manipulate God. It doesn't work!
- Don't try to be a hero and overdo it. If you are new to fasting, you might start with one meal a day or one full day a week. If your fast is media-related, you might try five days a week and give yourself a break on the weekend or vice versa.
- Don't expect it to be easy.
- Don't expect instant results. Often, the fruit of fasting is seen after your fast is over. Therefore, don't be disappointed if you don't have an immediate breakthrough or if you feel, "It's not working." Trust the Lord.
- If you are married, don't fast from sexual intimacy unless you both agree. 1 Cor. 7:5

Finally, although Jesus calls us to fast in secret, (Mat. 6:16), He didn't mean you can't tell anyone. His intention was to stop us from bragging about how spiritual we are. We suggest you find someone to share with about your fast. If you are in a Connect Group, you should share with the group and ask them to pray for you. It will help you follow through.

"Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a source of sustenance beyond food."

- Dallas Willard