



PRAYER
&
FASTING

Pray First

Read: Luke 6:12-13

Choosing the disciples would be one of Jesus' most important decisions. Before choosing them, he spent a whole night in prayer. Before he started his earthly ministry, he spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness fasting. And as he entered into the final hours of his life, facing arrest and torture, he went up to a mountain to pray. No matter what he was doing, Jesus always prayed first. Jesus sets for us an amazing example of priority. No matter what was happening around him or to him, he immediately prayed. Maintaining his connection and communication with the Father was his priority because he knew the Father was his ultimate source. In the busyness of life, it's so easy for us to forget to pray. We often react to life's circumstances by trying to solve problems ourselves rather than stopping to invite God into them. Over time, prayer can become our last resort after we've exhausted every other option. But it doesn't have to be that way. It's possible to build new habits and patterns that draw us toward a pray-first mindset. Give the first few minutes of your day to God in prayer. Before you start your work, take a moment in your car or at your desk and experience God's presence. Before you take a test at school, pray and ask God to help you. Before you have a challenging conversation, breathe out a prayer and invite God's wisdom and peace into the situation. Make a habit of praying first. So, too, Evangel Temple is corporately praying first in this new year by dedicating three weeks in January to God as a time of prayer and fasting. I encourage you to join us on this journey of seeking God and listening to his voice.

Prayer: Father, today I choose to prioritize you. Help me to build habits and rhythms that put you at the forefront of my mind and heart this year.

In the Presence of the King

Read: Esther 3:13,4:8-16

The Jews were in an impossible situation. Through a series of events, Xerxes, the king of a large territory, established a decree that would eliminate all Jews.

Esther, a Jew, and the new queen, was alone but committed to discovering God's plan through fasting and prayer. The answer to the dilemma of the Jews was not immediate. But, the answer did come. An entire nation was spared due to Esther's insistence on seeking the only one who could alter the course of the king's inhumane decision.

What are you facing today that needs an answer?

As Esther did, so should we when faced with life's challenges - "...go into the King's presence to beg for mercy and plead with Him..."!

Esther, chapters 7 and 8, tells of the king's release of the Jews from harm. Your King will do the same for you! Whether 3 days, 21 days, or an undetermined amount of time - you can celebrate freedom with a concentrated time of fasting and praying. For Esther, it was life-threatening to enter the king's presence uninvited, whereas, we are free and welcomed into the King's presence anytime! It is liberating to take our need to the King and leave it with Him to act on in His time. When the king rescinded the decree "...there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating..." (8.17).

PRAYER: We celebrate you today our God and King for receiving and responding to our request. We pray, trust, and wait in your presence as you perfect your plan for us!

Every Generation

Read: Psalms 78:3-4

Every generation has a next generation! Scripture says it like this in Psalms 78:3-4, “things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children but tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.”

Spiritual heritage and legacy are not trendy new phrases, they are historical biblical truths. The philosophy of “be fruitful and multiply”, has been around from the very beginning of creation. It was never God’s intent to create selfish creatures who only cared about the day they were living in. We are created to be sons and daughters, parents and grandparents, both figuratively and spiritually.

Styles and personal preferences may vary from generation to generation. We are not here to fight for or get caught up in personal preferences. We are here to advance the kingdom of God in our everyday lives, and the kingdom of God is the same today, tomorrow, and forever.

When we are building God’s kingdom the natural by-product will be an intentional focus on the next generation. When we are fighting for personal preferences, we will neglect the next generation to protect our comfort.

Working as generations, one after another, building on the goodness of God is how He intended it to be. Together we can accomplish amazing things for His glory!

PRAYER: Lord, thank you that you are not a far-off distant God, that you are so personal and intimate with me. I pray that you will help me to always prioritize the next generation. Help me to have a kingdom mindset in everything that I do.

Be Still & Know

Read: Psalm 46

In the chaos of our daily lives, the gentle whisper of God calls us to a sacred pause. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). These words echo through the ages, a divine invitation to find solace amid life's storms. Here is the place and time we fast noise, distractions, and people to be insolence and solitude with God.

In the silence, stillness, and solitude, we encounter the presence of the Almighty. It is not a call to idleness but an urging to cease our restless striving, release our burdens, and relinquish the illusion of control. In the hushed moments, we discover a profound truth – that God is sovereign, unwavering in His love and power. In the quietude, our hearts are attuned to the divine frequency. The cacophony of worries and anxieties fades, and we are enveloped by the peace that surpasses understanding. Here, in the stillness, we recognize our dependence on God. As we embrace the tranquility of this sacred pause, we open ourselves to revelation. In the silence, God speaks, unveiling His wisdom and guidance. The world's noise may try to drown out His voice, but we discern the gentle whispers that lead us on the path of righteousness in the stillness. Yet, being still requires trust – trust that God is in control, that His plans are perfect, and that He holds our lives in His hands. It is an act of surrender, acknowledging that we are not alone in our journey.

So, in stillness, let us rest, listen, and know that He is God.

Prayer: Jesus, I welcome you into (name the concern), I release (the concern) to you. In silence, stillness, and solitude I know that You are God.

The Power of Fasting

Read: Hebrews 11

Naively, I chose the most difficult topic to research in my first graduate course. When I announced my topic, my fellow students looked at me with surprise. The day came to present my findings, and it was a disaster. Later in the semester, I happened to fast on the day our class met, and while a fellow student was making her presentation, the Holy Spirit gave me significant insight; I raised my hand, shared the insight, and literally saw the Holy Spirit “hit” the professor as I spoke. He was impressed. That event changed the perspective of my professor and the trajectory of my grade. I recorded the heartfelt lesson that God honors fasting. There are many reasons to fast, one of which is for an individual, group, or nation to posture in humility and repentance before a holy and just God as the Ninevites did. Pressing needs are reasons to seek God’s help with a sense of urgency. Fasting offers these and other opportunities. With fasting, for example, we seek healing of broken relationships and petition God to break the bondage of sin. Fasting is an opportunity to draw near to the Creator, to know God more intimately, and to identify with Christ in his suffering. A passage from the book of Hebrews helps us understand fasting, “And without faith, it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” Effective fasting presupposes accurate theology; we pursue the living God who is revealed in the Gospel. We do so because we believe that God is real, and we know that our Father in heaven rewards diligent seeking. Fasting, then, is an act of faith exercised for a variety of reasons.

Prayer: We give thanks to you, Holy Father because you listen and reward those who genuinely seek after you. As the psalmist says, “Because you turned your ear to us, we will call on you as long as we live”.

Love is the Key

Read: John 15:1-7

As Jesus is teaching His followers how they should live out their faith, He uses an analogy of the vine and branches. As we place our focus on prayer and fasting, I want to highlight the similarity in phrasing in verse 5 and 7.

Did you notice that Jesus presents a condition and a result in these two passages? The condition is the same in both verses: Remain in me and I (or my words) remain in you. With this condition in place, Jesus reveals two results: you will bear much fruit, and you can ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. These are two results that are certainly on our minds as we intentionally spend time with God in prayer.

The union between Christ and the believer is critical. Without Christ (the vine), the believer (the branch) has no life, strength, or spiritual power. J.C. Ryle describes abiding as “a habit of constant close communion” with Christ. That is a good description of what we’re trying to do during this season. Let’s lean into what we’re reading and hearing from the Holy Spirit. As we remain in Him, we will produce fruit: evidence that we are in union with Christ. Bearing fruit is the result of our love for God. It’s the distinguishing mark of a Christ-follower. If we love God we will keep His commandments. Love first; then the actions (and fruit) will follow. Just like Christ, we’ll glorify God through our fruit-bearing lives. Let me encourage you to stay in communion with Him so your prayers will succeed. And God will be glorified by the fruit of your prayers.

Prayer: Lord, help me to stay in constant communion with you and respond to your Word and the Holy Spirit’s leading. Help me to bear fruit that reveals Your love and draws others to You. Help me pray for things that will bring You glory.

Empty vs. Full

Read: Philippians 2:7-8, Colossians 2:10

One of my earliest memories is one I experienced often as a child. Every week my Sunday School teacher would conclude the lesson by inviting all her little students to bow our heads, close our eyes, and sing:

“Come into my heart, come into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus.”

The one thing we understood for sure was that Jesus wanted to live in our hearts. That preaches to adults, too! God’s Word tells us that this Jesus, “in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col. 1:19) loved us so much that He made a way for everyone who believes in Him to live with Him forever (John 3:16). He “emptied himself, by taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men ... [and] he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:7-8). He paid our sin debts in full (Col. 2:14, John 19:30). He is our (living) bread of life, and whoever believes in him shall never thirst (John 4:14, 6:33, 35, 51). He brings his followers to fullness in Him (Col. 2:10, Eph. 1:23)! This juxtaposition of “full” vs. “empty” as they relate to the work Christ does to depict His love for us uniquely unites the two opposites. Christ’s emptying draws us closer to Him, and His fullness restructures priorities. Our full begins to feel gloriously empty as sin-debt, hunger, and thirst disappear! Our emptiness fills up with Jesus and His love for others!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for all the ways you remind us that you want to live in our hearts and everyone else’s. Help us to enter this season of fasting as we empty ourselves of things that are necessary to prayerfully focus on greater things—like neighbors whose hearts need Jesus and perhaps we who need fresh enthusiasm for sharing Him.

Your Will Be Done

Read: Matthew 6:9-10

Jesus expected his followers to be people of prayer and fasting. In the same chapter, verse 5, Jesus instructed his followers saying, “when you pray.” In verse 16, Jesus says “When you fast.” In verse 9, Jesus told them how they should pray. Part of this prayer is a request from the person praying, “your will be done.” Jesus himself made this request of his father in Matthew 26:39. As Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

As we pray, “Your will be done,” just like Jesus, we accept God’s right to rule. We do not pray, “my will be done.” We accept and recognize God’s ways are better than our ways. Asking for God’s will to be done is a demonstration of our trust in the Lord and that He knows what is best for us and the world we live in. Fasting and this part of the prayer is a statement of submission to God’s ways and plans for our lives. When we pray for His will to be done, we are asking for our will to be conformed to His will for our lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching us how we should pray. Like Jesus, we desire for your will to be done in our lives and our world. May your Holy Spirit guide and direct our lives according to your will. We put our trust in you. In Jesus name, Amen.

Rest

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Prayer: Lord, help me to stay in constant communion with you and respond to your Word and the Holy Spirit’s leading. Help me to bear fruit that reveals Your love and draws others to You. Help me pray for things that will bring You glory.

Prayer for Reprieve

Read: Joel 2:12-14

The first few words of verse 12 soberly point back to the preceding verses which graphically describe a coming judgment. But God didn't really want to decimate the Land with hordes of locusts. His goal was simply a right relationship with His People. God always accepts repentance from a sincere heart. And that is the crux of Joel's message which isolates the problem as an issue of the heart. He suggests the truly repentant should come to God with fasting, weeping and mourning. This is the same thinking found in James 4:7-10. Both these men of God agree that true repentance affects who we are, reflected by what we do.

Fasting is the practice of using the time normally spent eating as a time of prayer and repentance designed to bring our behavior in line with our faith. James clearly agrees with Joel that an attitude of weeping and mourning over our sins should prevail as we abandon a normal routine in favor of coming near to God. We must move from where we are to where He is. And as we make the effort, He will respond positively.

We simply must come to the place where we no longer tolerate sin but hate it as God hates it, and for the same reasons. You see, God hates our sin because it drives a wedge between us and him. He also hates our sin because it renders our prayer life ineffective. Fasting facilitates better results in our times of prayer.

Prayer: God, thank you for your sacrifice on calvary that has opened the way for us to receive not just an Old Testament reprieve for our sins but a New Testament forgiveness with our accounts marked "paid in full by the blood of the Lamb!"

More Than You Think

Read: Ephesians 3:20-21

How powerful is this truth! But for many, we may not feel like God really can accomplish more in us and through us than we can ask or think.

How then do we live this out? The key to experiencing the power of these verses has everything to do with prayer and fasting. If we really believed God is all-powerful and wants to do more than we can ask or think, what kind of prayers would we pray? Many times we're afraid to ask for big things in prayer, thinking it would be inappropriate. And though this is true in human relationships, it's not true of our relationship to God. God is greatly honored when we pray big prayers, because He's an infinitely big God! He wants to accomplish much in and through us, but we settle. We often don't think to pray for things greater than our immediate need because we're not convinced of the truth in these verses.

So how do we settle in our hearts the truth that God desires to do more in us than we can ask or think? The answer lies in Matthew 7:11

He says, "So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, now much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him."

We are given reasons for having an assurance of God's love. Thus, if we can rest in the love and care of our Heavenly Father it will be so much easier to have faith for greater things.

Prayer: Father, I thank you that you're always up to much in my life, though I'm aware of very few of them. Broaden my awareness of your work so that I might have faith for greater things.

The Call to Operate in Power

Read: Acts 1:7-11

I want to zone in on Acts 1:8 and the word “when”. The fact is, it doesn’t say “if”, but rather “when”. I don’t believe Jesus was giving the option to receive the Spirit, but rather informing you that you will. Not only can we be empowered by the Holy Spirit, but we should be.

This is more than just to be empowered with a Heavenly language, but rather for our ability to witness more effectively and with more power. When The Church operates under the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to function beyond our natural abilities and this only happens when we each individually make a choice to be empowered and submit to the Holy Spirit. What about you? Have you been empowered? If yes, when was the last time you’ve operated in the Holy Spirit? Prayed in Tongues? Prayed for healing? Prayed for insight and wisdom? Shared your testimony with a non-believer? These were all things the early church operated in daily and we should be as well.

Prayer: Lord, empower us today with your Holy Spirit, and let us not get lost in the daily grind where we miss the opportunities you have for us. Lead us into a deeper dependence on your Holy Spirit so that we may see your glory come.

A Walk Through the Forest

Read: Isaiah 58:6, Ecclesiastes 3:2

Imagine yourself on a walk with the Lord through a forest of trees. Your leisurely stroll leads you to the edge of the forest where it opens up to a quilted valley of hay fields.

"Do you see these fields?" He asks. "The trees once stood so thick that one could barely pass between them, but with patience and persistence, they were cleared so that the field could be prepared for a harvest of hay. Do you know what it takes to clear a tree let alone an entire field of them?"

"I have no idea." you admit.

"You start by taking an ax to the tree to cut it down. Then you must remove every root that was attached to the tree. If you do not remove the root then planting anything new will not likely last or grow to its fullest potential. Now, cutting down a tree is not easy by any means but it is swift in comparison to extracting that clinging root. That takes time. It takes diligence. It takes patience. It takes strength. It takes perseverance."

Prayer is like the ax cutting down a tree. Fasting is like the process of removing the deep roots the enemy has dug into our world. When we remove those roots not only does he no longer have a hold on that ground but it also offers a fresh and fertile field ready for what the Lord wants to cultivate. As we pray and fast for 2024. The Lord is calling us to prepare more land for the harvest to come. The chains that hold individuals and families captive will not easily be removed; deliverance comes with prayer and fasting. Let us ponder Ecclesiastes 3:2b in light of the kind of fasting the Lord desires as described in Isaiah.

Prayer: Father, would you help to remove the things in my life that are not honoring to you, so I can make room for what you want to do in me.

The Battle

Read: Luke 4:1-2,14

As soon as a person decides to take steps of faith they will also begin to face challenges of all sorts. Isn't this what happened to Jesus? As soon as Jesus is baptized and God speaks affirming His identity, Satan immediately seeks to discourage Jesus during His fasting.

The enemy of our souls lives to discourage you from pursuing God.

It's even quite likely that Satan might use small things as an opportunity to discourage you from continuing in your steps of faith. Think about it. You've decided to fast and pray for 21 days. Not only are you going to grow in your longing and passion for Jesus, but the prayers you'll pray are going to infringe on the enemy's territory. So, watch how getting stuck in traffic is suddenly an opportunity for the enemy to discourage you. You're hungry and haven't quite gotten past the headaches and to top it off you didn't sleep well the night before. And then, having honked and yelled at the car ahead, you begin to feel like a spiritual misfit. You think, "I can't do this whole prayer and fasting thing." Do you think these thoughts have come at this time by happenstance? It's because Satan wants to take you out and keep you from playing your part.

The good news is that Jesus wasn't derailed from His mission by Satan. And consequently, we too have the power to persevere as well.

Prayer: Father, today's reading says that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He was tested. But it also says in verse 14 that after the 40 days, Jesus returned to Galilee filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Let this be true for me as well.

Prayer to Endure Suffering

Read: Acts 16:16-34

When we experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we become empowered followers of Jesus. We often focus on how this type of Pentecost prayer, fasting, and infilling empowers us to be bold. But it cannot be overlooked that it also empowers us to endure suffering. In Western cultures, there is an aversion to suffering. Yet, it cannot be ignored that the disciples who also displayed aversion to suffering, later endured suffering without avoiding it, and are recorded as praying and praising amid tremendous suffering. History and the Word of God show us that suffering is part of the calling of every believer. All who walk close to Christ and in His paths will suffer, and we will need the power to endure. Over and over in the book of Acts, we see suffering as the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit's Power and those powerful acts following those first Christ followers (Acts 5,7,9,12,14,16). Maybe you aren't advancing in your walk with Christ because you fear suffering. Maybe you are afraid to say "yes" to God because you fear it may lead to suffering or sacrifice. The only way to get through these times is the supernatural power to endure. Praise God that the Spirit-empowered life also includes supernatural endurance! You will suffer due to following the Holy Spirit's leading, but when you do, you will be empowered to endure and emerge stronger on every level of your life. You should not seek to suffer for the sake of suffering. Rather, follow the Spirit's leading with an awareness that suffering may result. Take time to fast and pray, being continually empowered to endure and experience the inner comfort and presence of the Holy Spirit when you do face opposition.

Prayer: Lord, would you continue to empower me by your Spirit, so that when suffering comes I am encouraged through the difficulty?

What Worship Should Be

Read: Psalm 103

When you think of worship, what do you think of? Do you think of our Sunday morning services, where we're able to come together and sing praises to God or do you think of the worship music you listen to throughout the week? Regardless of what comes to mind, most of us think of worship the same way: a worship team singing and playing songs up on a stage. For most, that is the only form of worship we see and engage in every week. But worship should be a regular part of our lives.

David wrote in Psalms 103 "Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name." David did not just write "Let some of me praise the Lord" or "Let all that I am on Sunday mornings praise the Lord." David realized that everything that we do should be worship unto God, giving Him praise and honor in every facet of our lives. Paul took David's thoughts a step further when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

So this means that everything, and I mean everything, should be aimed as worship to God. The conversations we have and the work we do are just a few examples where we can worship the Lord! All that we do should bring glory back to God. That means that we, as Christians, have the responsibility to be in a constant state of praise and worship. How can you worship the Lord in the things that you are doing today?

Prayer: Lord, remind me daily that all do should be done as worship unto you. May I give you glory in my work, my leisure, and my relationships.

In the Storm

Read: Matthew 8:23-27

Jesus told his disciples to cross the lake, but as they were traveling a violent storm brewed. The disciples, who were seasoned fishermen, panicked and feared for their lives. In contrast, Jesus was sound asleep in the boat. The disciples were convinced that they would die, but Jesus was taking a nap!

This showed the disciples that they did not know Jesus like they thought they did. They did not know that He had authority over nature. He rebuked the storm and it died down. The storm they thought would end them was silenced with the words of Jesus.

Storms come to challenge God's direction and purpose in our lives. The storms of life shout to us, "You are alone," "God doesn't care about your suffering," and "There is no hope." But we must listen to the voice of God's unchanging character. Don't listen to the storm. Instead, lean on Jesus, who is greater than any storm you will face!

Is there a situation you're dealing with where you feel like God has abandoned you? Ask God to open your eyes to see His power over your specific situation. Know that Jesus is with you today, commanding your storm to be still.

Prayer: God, you are the God for whom nothing is impossible. You even conquered death. I trust that You have power over my situation and that You are for me.

Revive

Read: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Hopelessness is what boils up within me when I turn on the evening news or scroll through social media for a few minutes. My heart is saddened by the pain that is occurring regularly around the globe. I often ask the Lord, “Is there any hope?” Ezekiel encounters what appears to be a hopeless scene when he is given a vision of a valley of dry bones.

Like Ezekiel, we’ve all stared at situations that feel hopeless - the addiction, a barren womb, a wayward child, or a scary diagnosis. Yet Ezekiel put all doubts aside and prophesied. Bones come together and are filled with breath. The final vision is of a great army for the Lord.

What happens to the dry bones in this passage, also happens to us when we come to Christ - He gives us life! Do you believe that God can breathe new life into you? Into your disappointment, brokenness, or grief? Ezekiel models for us what it looks like to trust the Lord, even when the outcome looks impossible, “Lord only you know” (v.3). The question for us today is the same that God asked Ezekiel about whether these bones could live: “Do you believe this?”

Prayer: God, I trust that you can bring life to my barren situation. What seems impossible in my eyes is possible in your hands. I thank you for the life that you’ve brought to my own heart and know that you can bring life to the situations I am facing today.

Ask Again

Read: Luke 18:1-8

God is like an unjust judge who doesn't care about anybody but himself. At least that's the comparison that Jesus makes in the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke 18. God is both like this judge and unlike him. This judge neither feared God nor cared about men. The widow kept coming to him asking for justice against her adversary. The widow probably had little to no money and no power. But what did she have? Persistence. Luke does not bury the lede here. Verse 1 says the point of this parable is that we should always pray and not give up. Eventually, the judge says, "Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice." Does that mean if we bother God enough with our prayers, he will eventually get tired of us and give us what we want? No. Instead, if persistence can persuade a self-centered judge, how much more will our persistent prayers move the hand of our God who does care about us? Instead of putting us off, Jesus says God will grant justice "quickly."

You may think it's a lack of faith to keep asking God in prayer. He heard you the first time and will answer you when he's good and ready. But Jesus teaches that persistent prayer demonstrates our faith. Jesus ends this teaching with the question, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Is there something you have given up praying about? What are the things you used to pray about but you haven't for a month, a year, or even a decade? Today, let's ask again.

Prayer: Father, thank you that you are not like this judge. You love us deeply and care about the things we care about. We trust you. And today we demonstrate that trust by asking you again. Asking for healing, provision, and restoration.

The God Who Takes the Night Watch

Read: Psalm 121

Psalm 121 is a poem of trust and assurance. It opens, “I will raise my eyes to the mountains; “from where will my help come?” This psalm is in a collection (Pss 120-134), which has been called, “The Pilgrim Psalter,” and this collection is connected to the annual festivals for which the people would travel to Jerusalem. So, perhaps, the psalmist describes lifting one’s eyes to Zion—to the mountain in Jerusalem where the temple sits. The place of corporate worship and where the presence of God is celebrated serves as a reminder of the One who is our help. Or the psalmist’s mention of the mountains could have been a reference to the high places that served as pagan worship sites. In this case, the question and answer communicate that help does not come from places where the world searches for it; rather, it comes from Yahweh.

The rest of the psalm recites examples of Yahweh’s care. He is mindful of His people. We can sleep in peace because He takes the night shift. Remember His track record. He has sustained His people generation after generation; He is not going to lose track of you. He will keep and watch over you. The Lord is your protector and a ready resource. He is mindful of you. What if we not only knew this is true but trusted God and lived in the confidence that it is true?

Prayer:

Yahweh, I turn to you. I surrender every worry and concern that steals my sleep. I yield my desire to be self-sufficient, outsource solutions, and design contingency plans. My help comes from you, the Sovereign God, the Keeper of Israel. Lord, you are my ever-present help. Keep me faithful and teach me to more faithfully trust you. I lift my eyes to you.

Pray About Everything

Read: Philippians 4:6-7

There's so much to be anxious about, from personal struggles to global conflicts. And yet God challenges us to take these worries and concerns to him. Verse six says we're to take our requests to God in "every situation." No matter what's happening in our lives, we should pray about it all, and have confidence that God cares about it all.

Sometimes our prayers are quickly answered, and that is wonderful. But often, our prayers are followed by hoping, believing and trusting as we wait on God to intervene. Interestingly, verse seven says his care for us isn't shown in how he immediately answers all of our prayers, but in how his peace comes to cover our hearts and minds in the midst of our situation.

As we conclude 21 days of fasting and prayer with our Evangel Temple family, don't stop praying. In fact, let this experience launch you into deeper places of prayer. Pray even more. Pray about everything, in every situation, over every need. And when you do, receive the peace of God that reassures you that God's got the situation under control. He's going before you and working on your behalf.

Prayer: God, I have so many things to worry about today. I make the decision to give them to you instead of carrying them myself. I trade you. I give you all of my problems and, in exchange, I receive your peace. And now I walk in trust and confidence that you're working things out for my good.

21 Days of Prayer and Fasting: January 11-31, 2024

Chisholm Assembly of God



What is Fasting?

The goal of fasting is to draw closer to God. Biblical fasting involves eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose. When we fast, we abstain from something — typically food — in order to gain a greater awareness of our need for God.

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:9-14, Acts 27:33-37, Nehemiah 9:1-3

Why We Fast:

Seeking Fast: fasting to seek God with more intensity and more intentionality

Favor Fast: fasting for a situation where you need the favor of God

Discernment Fast: fasting for a major decision you have to make

Gratitude Fast: fasting to express thankfulness to God for His love

Dream Fast: fasting to receive God-sized dreams for your future

When To Fast:

Throughout our 15 Days of Prayer and Fasting, we invite you to join us in our corporate fast as we look forward to the promises of God for our church! We're asking people to sign up to fast a meal(s) or day(s). Please sign up on our calendar if you plan to participate in our fast over the next 15 days. We encourage you to spend time with the Lord and pray about how you can participate in fasting throughout the next 15 days.

Prayer:

Here are a few ways you can begin a powerful and personal daily prayer time with God.

1. Pick a time and place.

Pick a consistent time and place — whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch or in the evening — and faithfully keep it!

2. Listen before you speak.

When you sit down to pray, let God have the first word.

3. Prioritize the spiritual.

Spend as much time praying for our hearts, for the salvation of our loved ones, and for the spread of the gospel as we pray about anything else.

4. Ask for anything.

God invites us to make our requests known to Him. Don't be afraid to pray and ask Him for anything!