

A hand is shown reaching upwards in a gesture of prayer, with fingers slightly spread. The hand is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image. A large, dark gray circle is centered in the background, partially overlapping the hand. The background is a deep, dark blue or black, with some subtle light gradients. The text is white and centered within the circle.

24 - HOUR PRAYER & FASTING

Our Community & Our Country

We are excited to come together as a church family to present our prayers and pleas to God, recognizing and submitting to His sovereignty while seeking His help, guidance, and wisdom. As you move into this 24-hour time of prayer and fasting, please consider using this guide to lift up your requests for our Community and our Country and to engage in a period of fasting. But first, we encourage you to humbly prepare your heart and mind.

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.”

(Joel 2:12-13)

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; blot out my transgressions, wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”

(Psalm 51:1-2)

PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
(1 Timothy 2:1-4)

For Racial Reconciliation and Restoration

Pray for abounding love and repentance, reconciling ethnic division, and restoring marriages and families throughout our community. (Mark 12:31, John 15: 11-17, Jeremiah 29:7)

For First Responders and Medical Professionals

Pray for the safety of and support for our first responders, law enforcement, and medical professionals that they would serve with honor, compassion, integrity, and be covered by the Lord's protection. Ask God to give them wisdom as they serve, guard them from harm, and bless their families. (Deuteronomy 31:6, Proverbs 21:15)

PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY (continued)

For Local Elected Officials

Pray that those elected into office to serve our community would humble themselves before the Lord and seek both His face and His will as they govern. Ask that they would have discernment and perseverance, and follow the Lord's leading. (Psalm 102:15, 2 Chronicles 7:14)

For the Christian Church

Pray that the Christian Churches throughout our community be unified with one heart and one mind, seeking and asking God to transform our city. Ask for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a revival in the Churches across Greater Austin. (Acts 2:17-21, Ephesians 4:13 & 5:27, Romans 12:2)

For People Who are Far From God

Pray for a spiritual awakening and a great harvest among those who are far from God. Ask that all Christians boldly share the love of Jesus and the gospel. (Luke 10:2, Matthew 28:18-20)

For Those Affected by COVID-19

Pray for the losses our community has experienced due to COVID-19 such as the loss of loved ones, loss of jobs, and loss of finances. Ask for peace and hope for those who are isolated, lonely, and dealing with mental health issues. (2 Chronicles 7:13-14, Joel 2:12-17)

PRAY FOR OUR COUNTRY

“Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

For Healing of our Divided Nation

Pray for the people of our nation to be united in compassion and respect for one another. Ask for reconciliation and healing across our nation, changing the hearts of those who still discriminate against others based on race or ethnicity. Pray for all people to be treated fairly and freed from all oppression. (2 Chronicles 7:14; Mark 3: 24-25, Psalms 133:1, 1 Peter 2:9)

For Government Leaders

Pray that the Lord will raise up Godly leaders to serve Him and our country, with humility and justice. Ask that our leaders stand boldly and courageously in the face of evil, without backing down from righteousness. Pray that God's light shines into every government office and meeting, and all plans, deeds, decisions, and strategies will be either exalted or exposed according to the Word of God. (1 Timothy 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:17, Proverbs 2:1-8)



PRAY FOR OUR COUNTRY (continued)

For the Media

Pray for the media to report truth. Ask that Christianity receive fair coverage in all reporting and the message of the media produce hope, not fear. (John 7:18, Proverbs 4:7-8, Ephesians 5:11, John 8:32)

For Political Candidates

Pray that all candidates running for office, both locally and nationally, be brave and stand for righteousness. Ask that candidates be surrounded by godly advisors as they focus on the issues we face as a nation, not on personal attacks on other candidates. (Psalm 102:15, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Philippians 4:8)

For Voters

Pray Christians across our nation take advantage of their God-given right and vote for candidates who stand for Biblical values and who will protect our religious freedom. Ask God to give each voter discernment between truth and falsehood, and to make their choices clear. (1 Peter 2: 13-17, Romans 13: 1-3, Proverbs 11:14)

For Churches

Pray for God to bring repentance and widespread renewal to the church of Jesus, so that believers will boldly share His love and the gospel with others, asking Him to draw people who are far from God across our country to faith in Jesus. (Ephesians 4:13, 5:27, 6:18, Colossians 4:2, Luke 10:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Jeremiah 29:7, Romans 12:2, Matthew 28:19)

A right approach to fasting requires an appreciation for the biblical record of fasting, a clear definition of fasting, and a correct distinction between “religious” and biblical fasting.

DEFENDING FASTING

The biblical record on fasting reads like a “Who’s Who” of Scripture. Moses, David, Jehosaphat, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and many other men and women of Scripture fasted. Though Jesus never commanded His followers to fast, He Himself fasted and assumed His followers would fast. (Matthew 6:16, Mark 2:18-22)

DEFINING FASTING

Fasting is the voluntary abstinence from food for a limited time for the purpose of expressing to God one’s desires, dependence, and/or dedication. The normal fast was the total abstinence of food (but not water), and it could last anywhere from one to forty days. Abstaining from food and caloric drink is an accurate picture of fasting and represents the approach taken by the leadership of Hill Country Bible Church.

DISTINGUISHING FASTING

Many world religions practice fasting as one of many “good works” done in the hope of earning God’s acceptance and forgiveness. Biblical Christianity, however, recognizes that man cannot earn salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Instead of man working his way up to God, Biblical Christianity teaches that God has reached down to man by graciously offering the free gift of eternal life to anyone who places their faith in Jesus Christ. Biblical fasting, then, is not something done in pursuit of a relationship with God, but is in response to a relationship with God (Isaiah 58).

In addition to requiring a good definition, a right approach to biblical fasting also necessitates a clear understanding of purpose.





In God's Chosen Fast, Arthur Wallis wrote, "The man who prays with fasting is giving heaven notice that he is truly in earnest."

A study of each of the passages in Scripture on fasting reveals two primary reasons for fasting and one significant result of fasting.

Two of the primary reasons for fasting:

To petition God intensely
To pursue God intimately

One of the primary results of fasting:

Dependence

What we know to be true in theory becomes crystal clear in experience. Without food, we begin to waste away physically, and apart from a growing relationship with Christ, we wither spiritually. When David compared his hungering and thirsting for God to physical hunger and thirst in the wilderness, he concluded that worship was the only thing that satisfied him (Psalm 63). Fasting moves us to humble worship of our Provider and promotes a craving for deeper fellowship with our Savior. Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily bread." (Job 23:12b)

With a clear understanding of definition and purpose, all that remains are some helpful suggestions on what to do while fasting. A suggested agenda follows some common-sense warnings.

AWARENESS

Before fasting, it is good to consult your physician where there may be implications for any existing health conditions. For example, those on prescription medicines or with chronic illnesses like diabetes should definitely seek the advice of their doctor. However, everyone should expect some physical discomfort while fasting. Common sense and wisdom should also be exercised regarding how to break a fast, especially extended fasts.

AN AGENDA

During fasting, hunger pains can serve as a reminder to pray and worship. If at all possible, commit the time that is normally spent in the preparation and eating of three meals to prayer and worship. Following is a suggested guide to spending an hour in prayer and worship.

Begin with worship by singing favorite praise choruses and hymns
(10 minutes).

Continue by responding to God in prayer, acknowledging dependence upon Him
(15 minutes).

Move to a time of personal reflection and confession of sin
(5 minutes).

Allow time for Scripture reading
(10 minutes).

Express your desires, longings, and concerns to God in prayer
(15 minutes).

Close with a time of thanksgiving for God's goodness and provision
(5 minutes).

NOTES



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