



# PRAYER AND FASTING GUIDE



**ABUNDANT  
LIFE CHURCH**

## A NOTE FROM OUR LEAD PASTOR

### Psalm 27:8

**“My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “Lord, I am coming.”**

As we kick off the New Year together, we’re setting time aside to SEEK FIRST - to seek God and His will and desire for us. This season isn’t so much about a “new year, new you” but our response to God’s invitation to be with Him, to seek first His Kingdom, and treasure Jesus above all else.

Seek First is our opportunity to start the New Year actively seeking God’s presence and giving Him the first fruits of our year. Seek First is a time of devotion, setting aside distractions and giving more time to be with Jesus, pray, and meditate on His word. It is our vision and hope to consecrate ourselves to the Lord and His purposes at the start of the year as a community of believers.

We’ve assembled this practical and spiritual guide to help you in your personal devotion to Jesus. As we set time aside to seek first our relationship with Jesus, we believe that He will reveal Himself, His will, and grace in a special way.



**Pastor Gareth & Jennie**  
Lead Pastor

## DAY 1 | BREATHE

### Scripture

Genesis 2:7, John 20:21-23, Acts 17:24-25

### Devotional

Air is often taken for granted. While we need air to survive, we do not need to make a conscious decision to breathe. Our bodies are able to do so automatically. Throughout Scripture, breath or air is shown to be among the greatest gifts from God. In Genesis, it is God’s breath that brings life to humanity. In John’s Gospel, it is through Jesus’ breath that the disciples receive the Holy Spirit. As we begin this journey of prayer and fasting today, let us start by simply slowing down, taking time to notice our breathing, recognizing it as the life-giving gift from God, and giving Him thanks for it.

### Action Step

Set aside 5 minutes to be still and breathe. Take three deep breaths (5 seconds in, 5 seconds out). As you breathe, ask God to fill you with His life and Spirit.

## DAY 2 | DRINK WATER

### Scripture

Isaiah 12:1-3, John 4:7-15

### Devotional

Many of us do not drink the recommended 8 cups (64oz) of water each day. As we prepare to fast later this week, it is important to recognize that this is both a spiritual and physical experience. In addition to air, our bodies and minds need water to operate well. Since one goal of fasting is greater concentration and focus, it is essential to remain hydrated throughout the next two weeks. Water is also a prevalent theme in Scripture as a symbol of life, renewal, and salvation.

### Action Step

Commit to drinking 8 cups of water each day for the remainder of your fast.

## **DAY 3 | EXCLUDE JUNK AND SUGAR**

### **Scripture**

Exodus 16:11-18, John 6:5-13

### **Devotional**

God cares about the health of our bodies. We see this everywhere in Scripture, from God's provision of food to the wandering Israelites in Exodus to Jesus feeding thousands in the Gospels. In these accounts, God satisfies the people's hunger. Today, most of us do not eat simply to satisfy hunger. Sometimes it is to satisfy a craving or to treat ourselves. Of course, this is fine in moderation. However, as we prepare our bodies to fast a meal each day, it is important to be purposeful about what we eat for the rest of the day. Hunger is part of the experience of fasting, and we can all too easily look to meet that hunger with snacks and treats rather than with the presence of God.

### **Action Step**

Pack up the junk food and sugar in your home and set them aside until after your fast.

## **DAY 4 | TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR DAY**

### **Scripture**

Psalm 139:15-16, 2 Corinthians 4:15-17

### **Devotional**

Many of us live life on a day-to-day basis. Because new challenges and setbacks occur on a regular basis, we can lose track of our healthy routines and rhythms as we just try to get through the day. This makes it difficult to set regular time aside for prayer and fasting because we may not know what the next day will bring. Over the next two days, we will be looking at parts of our day we can set aside to make time for God.

### **Action Step**

Take an inventory of your day. When do you work, rest, eat, drive, etc.? Taking note of your daily routines (or lack thereof) can give a clear picture of your priorities and how you can reshape your day to place God as the highest priority.

## **DAY 5 | SOCIAL AND MEDIA FAST**

### **Scripture**

Psalm 132:3-5, Matthew 22:34-40

### **Devotional**

The average American spends over 12 hours per day consuming various forms of media, including over two hours scrolling through social media. Many of us consume media at work, while driving, or doing other daily tasks. Because of this, you may not have included media in yesterday's inventory. However, it is undeniable that for the majority of us, media takes up the largest portion of our day. As followers of Jesus, time spent in His presence is the highest priority of our day. As we pursue Him, we must constantly work to remove anything that competes for that time.

### **Action Step**

Determine what form of media (TV, digital news, social media, etc.) demands the most of your time and commit to going without it for the remainder of your fast to prioritize your time spent with God.

## DAY 6 | FAST ONE MEAL PER DAY

### Scripture

Matthew 4:1-4, Acts 13:1-3

### Devotional

The fasting of food is one of the oldest practices of the church. Jesus demonstrated fasting while Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. The early church fasted before important decisions. Unlike other practices like prayer and communion, fasting is often overlooked. This is likely because unlike other practices, fasting costs us something tangible. When we fast a meal, we feel hungry, and that is the point! While we experience hunger for food on a daily basis, rarely do we experience a true hunger for God's presence. Jesus identifies Himself as the bread and water of life - the only source that will truly satisfy. As you fast a meal today, take that time to turn your attention to God and allow Him to satisfy your hunger.

### Action Step

Commit to fast one meal each day for the remainder of your fast. This simply means taking the time you would normally spend eating and using it to connect with God through prayer and reading Scripture.

### Tips for Fasting

- Use a physical Bible rather than a device or app.
- Choose a time when you can be alone. A breakroom or busy house is unlikely to help you focus your time on God. You may consider taking a walk if you cannot be alone where you are.
- If your thoughts are feeling cloudy, consider drinking juice or tea.
- Do not overcompensate by eating more at other meals because this will cause more severe hunger during your fasted mealtime.

## DAY 7 | GIVE THANKS

### Scripture

1 Chronicles 16:34-35, Colossians 2:6-7

### Devotional

Most of us recognize that it is important to be thankful. However, few of us take the time to truly express our thankfulness. The New Testament repeatedly refers to followers of Jesus as people defined by thankfulness. This thankfulness is, of course, directed to God for all that He has done for us. It is also directed toward others as we serve and love one another. As we continue our fast today, we take time to express our thankfulness toward God and others.

### Action Step

Write two thank-you notes: One giving thanks to God and one giving thanks to someone in your life.

## DAY 8 | THE LORD'S PRAYER

### Scripture

Matthew 6:9-13

### Devotional

Today we will begin a week of praying through the Lord's Prayer. When Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray, he responded not with instructions but rather with a prayer. While we may struggle at times to find words to pray, it is remarkable to remember that Jesus doesn't just expect us to pray. He gave us actual words to pray. These words are more than just an example for us. They also include rich theological truth to deepen our faith. As we continue to focus our attention on God for the next week, we will also pray the Lord's prayer together each day and give specific attention to each phrase.

### Action Step

Commit to praying the Lord's Prayer daily for the remainder of your fast.

## DAY 9 | OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

### Scripture

Isaiah 55:8-9, Hebrews 1:1-3

### Devotional

The beginning of the Lord's Prayer seems paradoxical. First, we are invited to address God in the same way Jesus does: as Father. When we choose to follow Jesus, we are adopted into God's family and welcomed into a personal relationship. Second, we recognize that God is wholly other, beyond what we can think or imagine. How are we to reconcile these two concepts? Is God a distant father that we'll never get to know? Not at all! This opening phrase reminds us that the holy, infinite God of the universe has come near to us and sees us as family. He has made Himself known through the person of Jesus. When we pray, we recognize God's greatness (all-knowing, omnipresent, almighty, etc.) as well as God's goodness (loving, gracious, kind).

### Action Step

Practice praying a prayer of praise by finishing the following phrases:

- "God, here are the ways I see your greatness..."
- "God, here are the ways I see your goodness..."

## DAY 10 | HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

### Scripture

Exodus 3:13-15, John 14:11-15, Acts 4:8-12

### Devotional

The name of God itself is a significant theme in Scripture. In Exodus, before Moses accepts his mission from God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he asks for a name to refer to God. This name is acknowledged and honored throughout the Old Testament and directly used by Jesus in the Gospel accounts to identify Himself as more than just a messenger from God, but truly God incarnate. Jesus told His disciples to call on and pray in His name. The names that we use to refer to God—Father, Creator, Savior, Lord—have a deep impact on our spiritual life. Today, we recognize that God is both personal and holy. God gives us a name to call Him by and invites us to experience the power of that name.

### Action Step

Make a list of the names you use to refer to God, and prayerfully consider what each name means to you and your relationship with God.

## DAY 11 | YOUR KINGDOM COME

### Scripture

Luke 17:20-21, Luke 22:39-44

### Devotional

The Kingdom of God is at hand! The beautiful news of the Gospel is that the Kingdom is not just a future paradise in the presence of God; it is also a present reality. Jesus came to establish a new way of life; one that reflects the ways of heaven. This way of life is full, fruitful, and life-giving. It is also counter to the way the world around us operates. Because of this, we will feel tension as we live out Jesus' ways. Jesus not only recognizes this, but He also experienced it Himself. One of the clearest examples of this is in Luke 22, as Jesus anguishes over the path God has for Him. Even in that moment, though, Jesus chose to follow the will of God.

### Action Step

When you pray today, think about the tension you feel in your own life as you pursue the way of Jesus. Ask God to meet you in that tension, and for His will to be done in every area of your life.

## DAY 12 | GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

### Scripture

Nehemiah 9:19-21, John 6:32-35

### Devotional

Without having a regular rhythm of prayer in our lives, it can be easy to reduce prayer to just asking God for the things we want. Hopefully, praying through the Lord's Prayer has helped you recognize that prayer is more than asking for things. It connects us with God and helps us to set our eyes on Him as we are formed into the image of Jesus. However, God still desires to hear the things that we want and need, just as any good parent would. The beautiful idea around asking God for "daily bread", or the things we need today, is that it assumes we're having daily conversations with God. We don't need to ask for tomorrow's bread because we'll talk about that tomorrow. As you pray, try focusing on the things you need just for today.

### Action Step

As you near the end of your fast, plan for how you will maintain and grow your daily rhythm of prayer. Write down your plan and commit to it.

## **DAY 13 | AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS**

### **Scripture**

Colossians 3:12-14, 1 John 1:5-10

### **Devotional**

Sin is a reality of the world in which we live. Each of us commits or participates in sin each day. It is easy to believe that our sin is individual and only affects us, but the plural tense of the Lord's Prayer reminds us that sin is a mutual experience. In other words, whether we sin, are sinned against, or are living in the consequences of someone else's sin, we experience the weight of sin together. This truth serves to make the work of Jesus all the more powerful, meaningful, and beautiful. When we are forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the impact is far beyond our own list of wrongdoing. Relationships are restored, and communities are transformed as we receive this forgiveness and extend it to others.

### **Action Step**

In your prayer time today, confess the things for which you need forgiveness. Then, confess the things you need to forgive in others. Make a plan to communicate your forgiveness to the people you have forgiven.

## **DAY 14 | LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION**

### **Scripture**

Matthew 4:1-11, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 1:10

### **Devotional**

In Matthew 4, we read about Jesus being tempted by Satan after fasting for 40 days in the wilderness. As we end our fast today, we must recognize that temptation and spiritual opposition are to be anticipated as we press into our relationship with Jesus. We follow a God that not only delivers us from temptation and evil but also lived through temptation and experienced the evil of the world Himself. Again, the plural tense of the Lord's Prayer reminds us that we are not alone. We are led and delivered together. Today may be the end of this fast, but we are hoping and praying that this is the beginning of an incredible journey of prayer and experiencing the presence of God in your daily life.

### **Action Step**

As you continue your journey of prayer, consider who you will ask to walk with and support you. It may be someone in your Life Group or serve team. Ask them to partner with you as you pursue a life of prayer together.

