

# LENT

## A Season of Preparation

# FASTING & PRAYER GUIDE



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## 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

Fasting, is one of the most powerful ways we have of becoming closer to God and finding true joy. Self-denial leads to a greater sense of wholeness. That's why Christians have fasted for thousands of years, and it is why Lent, the 6-week period between Ash Wednesday and Easter (Sundays are not included in the count), is a time of serious fasting. Lent is the Christian season of preparation before Easter. It is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of not only fasting, but repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. The purpose is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ - His suffering and His sacrifice, His life, death, burial and resurrection.

In response to the call from our Pastor, Bishop Joseph E. Simmons, during this **Lent Season**, we will begin to seek the Lord through prayer and fasting beginning Monday, February 23, 2015 through March 22, 2015. The 2015 Lent Season, however, began February 18<sup>th</sup> and ends April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

We will set aside 21 days of fasting, prayer, and consecration. We will begin with the Daniel Fast (Daniel 10:2, 3) and corresponding prayers that will take us through Repentance, Desiring Righteousness, and Intercession for the House. To consecrate simply means "to be set apart".

During this period, we ask that you focus on **how** God is calling you to grow personally, **where** God is calling you to serve, and lastly; **who** God is calling you to **e-v-a-n-g-e-l-i-z-e**, and to invite those persons to our regular Sunday Services.

**Definition:** Fasting is the act of abstaining totally, or partially, from food and fleshly desires for a period of time. The Daniel Fast is designed to bring physical health and healing, spiritual wisdom, insight, and spiritual breakthrough. All 5 of these components will accomplish the goal of GSP becoming a Healthy Church *not only in Mind, but in Soul and in Body.*

### **As a corporate body we should abstain from:**

1. Meat and animal products(Fish, Poultry, Lamb, Beef, Pork)

2. Dairy Products: Milk, cheese, cream, butter and eggs
3. Sweeteners: Sugar, raw sugar, honey, syrups, and canned juice
4. Strong Drinks (Alcohol, Sodas, Caffeinated Drinks, Tea, Energy Drinks)
5. Deep fried foods: For example: Potato chips, French fries, corn chips, fried chicken
6. Solid Fats: shortening, margarine, foods high in fat, bread
7. We will pray corporately three times a day: 6:00am, 9:00am, and Noon
8. **NOTE:** Some of you may have legitimate health reasons why you may not participate in the corporate fast, but you can certainly continue to pray *the prayers along* with us!

Whether you are beginning a private fast, or fasting corporately as we have done here over the years at GSP, we believe you will find these *T-I-P-S* helpful!

### **How to Begin your Fast!!**

1. Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Word of God.

### **Prepare Spiritually**

2. Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

### **Decide What to Fast (the goal is to fast corporately!)**

3. The type of fasting you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats, and the only liquid he drank was water. Remember to replace that time with prayer and GSP Bible study.

## Deciding How Long

4. You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow!

## What to Expect

5. When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And, naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. *Fasting brings about miraculous results.* You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Most Important: **Pray** as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

## How to End

6. Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions.

Listed below are selected Scriptures to direct your prayer focus during your time of consecration.

## Let's Begin!

Day 1: Pray for Repentance (Matthew 4:17, Luke 3:5)

Day 2: Pray for Healing and Deliverances from sins in our lives (Psalm 103:3, Deut. 7:15)

Day 3: Pray for a greater "Spiritual Insight" and Discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10, 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:1)

Day 4: Pray to seek God's will (Matthew 6:33, Romans 14:17)

Day 5: Pray for a divine intervention of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 6:10, Titus 2:11-13)

Day 6: Pray for new resources for new season strategies (Proverbs 8:21, III John 2)

Day 7: Pray for Godly wisdom (Romans 12:2, James 1:5)

Day 8: Pray for humility (James 4:6, Matthew 23:12)

Day 9: Pray that during this season you will “find your place” (John 16:13, Psalm 86:11)

Day 10: Pray that our children’s thoughts will be pure (Philippians 4:8, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:14)

Day 11: Pray for peace in our communities (Hebrews 12:14, Psalm 29:11)

Day 12: Pray for protection for the House (Psalm 91:1, Proverbs 18:10)

Day 13: Pray against satan’s tactics (Ephesians 6:10, Ephesian 6:11 and 12)

Day 14: Pray for commitment to God and the church (Proverbs 16:3, Proverbs 3:5-8)

Day 15: Pray for the right attitude (Ephesians 4:31-32, Philippians 2:3)

Day 16: Pray that you will find your purpose (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim 3:16-17, Romans 12:1-2)

Day 17: Pray that you will hear when God speaks (Proverbs 15:29; 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:14)

Day 18: Pray for those in authority (Hebrews 13:17, Romans 13:1)

Day 19: Pray against the sin nature of pride (Job 41:34, John 8:44, James 4:6, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:5)

Day 20: Pray that GSP will become a church that evangelizes. (Matt 9:37-38, Matt 28-18-20)

Day 21: Pray that you will guard your heart during this season (Proverbs 4:23, Psalm 51:10)

**Receive Exceptional Healing Power:** The list of Scriptures below is also one that is available to you during the 21 day fast.... conducive to the reading of God's Word!

**Week 1: Repentance & Cleansing**

Repentance: 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14

Reverence of the Lord: Psalm 30:4

Subduing the flesh: Romans 8:1-17

Renewing of the Mind: Romans 12:2

Cleansing from All Unrighteousness: Psalm 51:2

Healing of the Natural and Spiritual: Psalm 103:3

Restoration for the House: Acts 3:19

**Week 2: Desiring Righteousness**

The Desire of the Righteous: Proverbs 11:23

Seeking the Kingdom of God: Matthew 6:33

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: Matthew 5:6

Delight thyself also in the Lord: Psalm 37:4

With my whole heart have I sought Thee: Psalm 119:10

Purpose in the Kingdom: Matthew 28:19

You will seek me and find me: Jeremiah 29:13

**Week 3: Intercession for the House**

That GSP Becomes a House of *PRAYER*: Isaiah 56:7

Protection for the House: Psalm 34:7

Salvation in the House: 1st Timothy 2:1

Restoration for the House: Acts 3:19

Sanctification for the house: Romans 12:1,

Praying at All Times in the Spirit: Ephesians 6:18

Pray for One Another: James 5:16

**In the list below, write down seven people (may include family members) that you want to *specifically pray for and/or evangelize during this season.***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

Below you will find 7 suggestions that will help assist you, **if** and **when** you feel God is silent during this season of your life. Consider the story of Elijah. Elijah had been used of God to hold back rain from the people for over three years, because of their sins. Obviously, he was not well liked as a preacher. Imagine **you** had been faithfully serving...God is using **you**, **you** are in constant communication with Him....and then suddenly, EVERYTHING IS QUIET...What do you do?

<sup>1st</sup> Kings 18:1 states: After a long time, **in the third year**, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.

### **What Do You Do When God Is Silent?**

**Don't ignore the silence** – Some of the biggest moves that God can make may come after a period of spiritual dryness... Stay very close to God and watch for Him to eventually display His power. He will in the fullness of time.

**Confront known sin in your life** – This wasn't the problem of silence for Elijah, but the problem for the Israelites was that they were chasing after other gods and living lives in total disobedience to God. Sin may not be the reason you don't sense closeness to God right now, but if you have known sin in your life it will affect your intimacy with God.

**Go back to what you know** – Get back to the basics of the faith that saved you. You'll do it 100's of times in your life, but you must remind yourselves of the basis of faith... which is the very character and promises of God. God is in control. He really is... even when it doesn't seem that He is anywhere to be found. He loves us!!

**Make a decision...** Choose sides – You can't adequately serve God and the world. (Consider Joshua 24:15.) Something happens in life, often sin, busyness, boredom, or a tragedy... but if we are normal, we have periods where we grow away from our close relationship with God. God hasn't moved, but if you've shifted in your obedience, get back securely on the right side.

**Trust More... Not less** – Times of silence may be filled with fear but, ironically, these times require more faith. Times come in our spiritual life when our enthusiasm isn't as real as when we began our walk with God. That's not an indication to quit... it may be that God is using that time for something **bigger** than you could have imagined... but whatever is next will most likely require a deeper level of trust.

**Listen and Watch closely** – Someday God is going to make His plans known to you. Don't miss them. He may come to you personally, through His Word, circumstances, or another person. You'll need to be in a position to know that God is moving.

**Get ready to receive** – God will break the silence someday... and when He does it WILL be good. If you mope around in your sorrows, you'll be less prepared to receive the good things to come. Not because of your circumstances, but because of your faith, clothe yourself in joy as you wait for God to bless you after the period of silence.

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES YOU CAN CONSIDER DURING THE DANIEL FAST

**Fruits Include:** Fresh apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, and watermelon.

**Vegetables Include:** Fresh artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini.

**Beverages Include:** Spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

*Note: Should you absentmindedly or intentionally violate the fast by eating what you vowed not to eat during the fast, you can repent and return to the fast, remaking your vow to God.*