

## “21 Days of Prayer And Fasting” “Why Fast?”

As a church, we are preparing for “**21 Days of Prayer and Fasting**.” People throughout history have fasted for various religious and even health purposes. Fasting is taught in the Bible and has a long, meaningful tradition in the scriptures. Fasting is the practice of abstaining from certain foods or meals for a given period of time.

Biblical fasting can be defined as “**abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.**”

In other words, simply going without food because it is not available or for medical reasons is not biblical fasting. There needs to be a **spiritual motivation** behind it. There are three key reasons we should fast.

### **1. We should fast, because fasting helps us get into healthy rhythms.**

**Biblical fasting helps us to do a number of things, like:**

- **Slow** down.
- **Quiet** the noise of the culture.
- And, to make time and space in order to **listen** and **reflect**.

Fasting allows Christians to turn their hearts toward God.

### **2. We should fast, because we have great examples from the Bible.**

**The Bible Is Full Of People Who Model This Practice:**

1. **Jesus** fasted to acknowledge His dependence and to gain spiritual strength through reliance on the Holy Spirit and God’s Word.
  - Luke 4: 1-2 informs us that Jesus fasted before He began His public ministry.
2. **Nehemiah**, in the Old Testament, fasted for confession, repentance, and favor in the sight of the king to get permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4).
  - Nehemiah fasted to fulfill his calling from God!

3. **David** humbled himself, asking God to intervene because of injustice (Psalm 35:13).
  - In 2 Samuel 12:17-23, David fasted for healing and miraculous intervention.
4. **Mordecai** and the **Jews** fasted upon hearing the news of Haman's wicked plot for their extermination (Esther 4:3).
5. The **early church** fasted while worshiping and committing their ministry to the Lord.
  - Passages like Acts 13:2 and 14: 23 tell us that the early church also sought the Lord through fasting for **guidance** and **confirmation** over critical matters like selecting their leaders.

### 3. We should fast, because Jesus expects us to.

#### Jesus says in Matthew 6: 16:

“**When you fast**, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

While fasting is not explicitly commanded, Jesus clearly communicates in Matthew 6 that he expects His **disciples** to fast.

#### To Wrap Up:

#### We should fast:

- Because it help us get into healthy rhythms with our lives.
- We have great examples from scripture.
- Jesus expects us to.

These are just three reasons we encourage you to participate in the upcoming “**21 Days of Prayer And Fasting**” at Poplar Ridge. Please visit the “20 Days of Prayer And Fasting” page at: <https://www.poplarridgechurch.com>.