

“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>.