



# Bethel East Church-Wide Fast Guide

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January 2 - January 22





# Meaning and Purpose

Fasting, in its most simple form is the willing refrainment from eating for a period of time. Often times fasting is done for medical or health reasons, and in many religions fasting is an important part of a religious observance. For us as followers of Christ, God's Word makes fasting applicable to us. It is not for medical or health reasons, it is not to lose weight, nor is it a magical way to manipulate God into doing our will and our plans, but it is for spiritual purposes. Fasting then, for us, is a spiritual discipline. What makes fasting a spiritual discipline is that it is paired with prayer/devotion to God. Intentional, intensive, and purposeful prayer and time spent with God during this period is the goal as God should be the center of our fast. If anything replaces God as the center of the past, then we have missed the purpose. Hence, for a period of time we willingly set aside a little comfort so we can listen and attend to the voice and nourishment of God alone.

While fasting, we are one on one with God, offering him the time and attentiveness we might otherwise be giving to eating, social media, or watching television. Fasting clears us out and opens us up to intentionally seeking God's will and grace in a way that goes beyond normal habits of worship and prayer. It is God's way of helping us focus on matters of the Spirit; it enables us to gain control of our appetites so that we can direct our mental and spiritual energies toward Him. We fast from what we can taste and see, because we have tasted and seen the goodness of the invisible and infinite God, and we are desperately hungry for more of Him, and to give Him more of us. Through fasting, we humble ourselves before God and acknowledge that we need Him more than anything this world has to offer. Jesus reminds us that, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)







It is important to note that prayer and fasting goes together. Prayer is about spending time with God and uniting our hearts with His. It is our love for God and a desire to know Him more that leads us to pray. Fasting reminds us that we care about the things that God cares about. We care about the church. We care about the world. We care about doing God's will. And since we care, we are going to set our hearts and mind on it more during this period of time. Fasting is needed in our personal lives, our families, our church, and the society in which we live in. God-centered fasting has been a practice by God's people throughout history.

Consider these examples:

- The people of God prayed and fasted during a national crisis. Esther called for this fast and it preceded her making a pivotal decision (Esther 4:16).
- Religious leader Ezra proclaimed a fast so that they would humble themselves before God and ask him for a safe journey for them, their children, and their possession as they prepared to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:21).
- Daniel fasted when the weight of his assignment became heavy (Daniel 10:1-2).
- God called for his people to fast for a time of repentance and revival (Joel 1:14)
- Jesus fasted (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Jesus gave instructions about God-centered fasting (Matthew 6:16-18)
- The early church heard from the Holy Spirit during a period of fasting (Acts 13:2-3).
- The early church leaders prayed and fasted before presenting new leaders (Acts 14:23-26).

Friends, it is merely impossible for us as a church to stay on course if we do not faithfully and regularly unite our hearts and voices in prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our decisions and our actions. Prayer changes things, but more than that it changes us, and when we pray it aligns us with God's will and brings about God's will in our family, church, and society.

This time of prayer and fasting is going to benefit you individually, and us corporately.





# 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

Beginning January 2, we are committing to prayer and fasting for 21 days. Fasting should be a response to the prompting of the Holy-Spirit and a desire to align yourself with God's will in submission and obedience, and this fast has been God-inspired and God-ordained.

21 days of prayer and fasting will begin on January 2 and will end on January 22. Beginning Monday, January 2 we will host a Monday-Friday morning prayer call from 7am-7:15am. I want to challenge you to make this prayer call a daily priority. The number for the conference call is: 1-857-357-0254  
Code: 127416

For this fast, there is a scripture and devotional for the morning, and there is a reading and meditation for the evening. These are designed to assist you in your private devotion time during this fast. The scripture and devotional for the morning will be themed around fasting and worship. The reading and meditation for the evening will be psalms (week 1), wisdom literature (week 2), words of Christ (week 3), and the words of James, the brother of Christ (week 3). For the evening reading and meditation, read the selected passage, and spend time meditating on it, reflecting on it, and allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to you and give you application. Set aside at least 30 mins for the reading and meditation in the evening.

Please see the guidelines for fasting from food or other things and the types of fast before participating in this fast. If you do not participate in this fast for health reasons, or any other reasons, please still join us for prayer Monday-Friday, and take part in the personal devotion initiatives.

For health questions, please contact the Health and Wellness Ministry director who will advise you, and/or redirect you to another health and wellness ministry leader.

Health & Wellness Ministry Director: Sis. Tonya Davis-Kennedy 248-470-0311





# Results of Fasting

## Results of Fasting

Fasting is not about dieting even though you will most likely experience some benefits from fasting if you abstain from food for a period of time.

Fasting will cause us to experience God more through an intense and productive prayer life and devotion beyond the norm.

When God's people fasted and prayed, these were some of the results:

- God gave Ezra direction (Ezra 8:21-23)
- Elijah's negative and emotional habits were broken. (1 Kings 19)
- God's people and Esther were granted power and protection for their task (Esther 4:16).
- Revival for the saved and Salvation for the unsaved (1 Samuel 7: 2-11).

Other results:

- Clarity on a decision you have to make
- More attentive to God and the things of God
- Healing and wholeness
- Deliverance from worldly influences
- God moving powerfully in your life and the life of our church.
- Praying for the needs of the church
- A more disciplined life
- Repenting of self-indulgent, addictive, and immoral behaviors.

Fasting will result in God doing something powerful in our lives. God will also do something powerful in the lives of others, in the life of our church, and in our world. Fasting will allow the Spirit of God to take us from our present state of spiritual awareness and responsiveness and lift us to a higher level.





# Choosing A Fast

There are several types of fasting. The one you choose is between you and God. Please keep in mind your health and medical condition before choosing. Furthermore, please give up something that is a sacrifice.

Option 1- Full Fast. Drink only liquids for 21 days.

Option 2- The Daniel Fast. Eat no meat, sweets, or bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruit and vegetables for 21 days.

Option 3- Partial Fast.

- Fast for part of the day (7am-3pm)

or

- Give up at least one item or food that is pleasurable to you for 21 days (ex: meat, sweets, social media, television)

or

- Give up one meal daily and during that period of time, pray, study, and spend time with the Lord.

Option 4- Hindrance Fast. Following Hebrews 12:1-3, which states we should lay aside that which so easily hinders us, you may want to pick several activities to abstain from and use that time to seek God. Even good activities can distract us from the best. You can consider a time away from television, social media, leisure reading, sports, shopping, or anything else you find taking up time in your schedule, and use that time in prayer

NOTE: No matter which fast you choose, limiting leisure activities and spending more time in prayer, devotion, and study should be included with each of the aforementioned fasting options.





# *Suggested Activities*

- Reading the Bible
- Reading a Bible-based book
- Personal time in prayer & worship
- Christian meditation
- Praying with another person
- Small group Bible study
- Replacing secular music with worship music or audio bible







# Fasting Guidelines

“When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don’t make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won’t make you a saint. If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn’t require attention-getting devices. He won’t overlook what you are doing; he’ll reward you well.” -Matthew 6:16-18 (MSG)

- Pray about the type of fast you should engage in during this period
- Don’t fast from food when you are sick, traveling, pregnant, or nursing.
- People with diabetes, gout, liver disease, kidney disease, ulcers, hypoglycemia, cancer, and blood disorders or any other health should probably not fast, and should consult with a doctor/medical expert for direction.
- If you are not fasting from food, consider another alternative that is pleasurable and takes up your time such as watching tv, social media, leisure reading, sports, shopping, or anything else you find taking up time in your schedule, and use that time in prayer, study, devotion, and things of God. Or, you can consider fasting from something specific in the context of food such as “fried foods”, desserts, or something that you frequently have and are pleasurable to you.
- Fasting is not magic. It should not be used to get immediate results regarding some decision.
- Stay hydrated. Always drink plenty of water and fluids, if you are fasting from food.
- Spend time with God you would normally be eating, watching tv, or on social media. You can consider a time away from television, social media, leisure reading, sports, shopping, or anything else you find taking up time in your schedule and use that time in prayer.





# January 2

## Morning Devotional

*It's time to Go Higher*

If you've ever watched the high jumpers in the Olympics, you will realize that there are two kinds. The regular high jumpers jump about seven feet. They run and throw their backs over the bar. But there is another kind of high jumper. This kind of high jumper jumps about eighteen feet. The difference between the two jumpers is that this kind of high jumper has a pole in their hand. They back up, look down the runway, run down the track, stick the pole in a hole in the ground, put all of their weight on that pole, and use that pole to lift them to a level that they could not lift on their own. In life, there are higher heights that await you, but they can not be reached with your own strength and ability, but you need some help. The help you need is accessed through prayer and devotion unto God. Your devotional life will lift you up so that you can go to new levels, reach higher heights, and rise above foolishness, negativity, and temptation.

Scriptures  
Ezra 8:21-23  
Matthew 4:1-11



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Psalm 16*





# January 3

## Morning Devotional

*Fasting is Feasting*

Fasting is humbling yourself before God, and depriving your flesh from something it desires to build yourself up spiritually. It is a time to take your eyes off the things of this world to focus more on God. When you fast and deny your flesh of a meal, television, social media, sweets, or something else that it desires, you weaken the flesh. And when the flesh becomes weak, there is an opportunity to feed the soul and strengthen your spirit through Christ-centered fasting. As you feed your soul and strengthen your Spirit through study and meditation on God's word, prayer, and fasting, you will be able to hear God clear, have a sense of direction/next steps, new perspectives, renewed reliance on God, clarity of thought, a renewed/refreshed mind, and power just to name a few benefits, because you have increased your time with God, drawn closer to God.

Scriptures  
Galatians 5:16  
John 6:35



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Psalm 91





# January 4

## Morning Devotional

*Go beyond the norm*

When former basketball player Kobe Bryant retired and received the Icon Award in 2016 at the ESPYs he addressed his fellow athletes in a speech saying, "We're not on this stage just because of talent or ability. We're up here because of 4 a.m. We're up here because of two-a-days or five-a-days." The equivalent of Kobe Bryant's basketball life of 4 a.m. practices and two-a-days or five-a-days are equivalent to you in your spiritual life fasting and praying. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that pulls you away from the norm, and takes you beyond the norm for a period of time so that you can deal with things in your life that are beyond the norm. You can go to work and pay your bills without praying and fasting, but you can't deal with demonic forces that come against you, your family, or church without prayer and fasting. You will encounter things in your life that are beyond the norm, and you will be ready to deal with those things as you draw nearer to God through prayer and fasting.

Scripture  
Mark 9:14-29



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Psalm 142*





# January 5

## Morning Devotional

*You play like you practice.*

In sports, coaches tell their players they should treat practices the same way they would treat actually playing games. You will often hear motivational speakers emphasizing the importance of practice by saying, "how you practice is how you play." Devotional and Spiritual disciplines are practice for Christians. If we neglect spending personal time with God and God's word, and do not take out time to practice the spiritual disciplines or have a devotional life, we will not be prepared for everything that comes our way. You can't get careless in your spiritual walk and neglect spiritual devotion and discipline, and think you will be a powerful force when you are faced with a situation; it doesn't work like that. Maintain a devotional life, and practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, studying/meditating on God's word, and fasting so that you will be ready when gametime comes.

Scriptures  
Joshua 1:8  
Psalm 63:1-8  
Psalm 119:147-148



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Psalm 37





# January 6

## Morning Devotional

*Tap In.*

When you hear someone on the street say “tap in” they are most likely telling another person to get connected to them or something they have. Christ-centered fasting, studying, and praying is how you “tap in” to God’s power. Christ-centered fasting keeps us fueled by the source. Our power to deal with issues is derivative, which means that it is based on another source! And given that our power is derivative, Christ-centered fasting, prayer, and study keeps us fueled by the source! The seasoned saints would say it like this:

“No prayer, No power. Little prayer, little power. Much prayer, much power.” As you take time to “tap in”, you will become stronger, wiser, and ultimately equipped to fight the good fight of faith.

Scriptures  
Jeremiah 29:13  
Psalm 34:4  
Matthew 7:7-8



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Psalm 121





*January 7*

SLEEP  
REST  
RELAX

SPEND TIME WITH GOD  
SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS  
REPEAT





*January 8*

*Reminder: Church at 10am!*





# January 9

## Morning Devotional

*Yesterday's power is not today's power.*

According to what is written in Exodus 16, God gave Israel daily manna, and if they held onto any of it, the next day it turned to worms. They could not eat leftovers from the day before, nor could they hold on to manna for the day ahead, but each day God gave them enough manna to make it through the day, and God designed it that way so that they would learn to live life trusting and relying on him daily. God has designed our lives similarly which is why spending time with God should be a daily routine. Jesus gives us power, but the power is of Him and not us, which is why in order to be successful, we must learn to daily trust and rely on Him. Yesterday's devotional life was for yesterday. Today is a new day, and a good day to commit yourself to God in prayer, word, and deed.

Commitment to God is not a one-time thing, but it is an ongoing commitment. Don't try to live off yesterday's power and mercies, but access all that you need for today, today in devotion.

### Scriptures

Exodus 16:1-20

Proverbs 30:7-9

Matthew 4:4

Matthew 6:11



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Proverbs 11*





# January 10

## Morning Devotional

*God does not hire actors*

We get the word "hypocrite" from a Greek word that refers to an actor, someone who plays a role. The formal name given to Greek actors was hypocrites. Interestingly enough, Jesus used that word to describe people of faith whose devotion is not a genuine act unto God, but rather an act to be seen by others. Your praying, your fasting, your giving, your community service, and ultimately your actions should not be for the applause and attention of people, but for the worship and glory to God. There is no need to make a big scene when you do something unto the Lord and the Lord's glory because God sees you, and God sees your heart.

*Scripture*  
*Matthew 6:16-18*



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Proverbs 12*





# January 11

## Morning Devotional

*Set the Right Goals when you fast*

Christ-centered fasting is not about a transformation in the physical, but it is about a transformation in the spiritual. There are benefits to fasting such as losing weight, improved physical health but your goal in Christ-centered fasting should not be weight-loss and improved physical health. If your goal in this fasting is losing weight, clearer skin, improved physical health, people's approval or praise, time off social media, turning the tv off for a while, or giving up fast food, then those things will not only be your goal, but will also be your only reward. All of these aforementioned things are natural results of fasting based upon the type of fast you do, but they should never be your goal. Just because you deprive yourself of a natural benefit such as food or tv or social media is not in and of itself God-centered fasting, but we must devote ourselves to God and worship Him! Unless there is the devotion of the heart, there may be other benefits, but there are no lasting spiritual benefits. Don't use your time of Christ-centered fasting to make it all about you but use your time of Christ-centered fasting to make it all about Him! And when you make it all about Him, everything else will follow and other rewards will be gained.

*Scriptures*

*Zechariah 7: 4-5*

*Matthew 6:25-34*



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Proverbs 14*





# January 12

## Morning Devotional

*You are about to get exposed.*

*We are able to cover up what is inside us with food and other things that comfort our flesh, but in fasting these things surface. If lust controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. Anger, pride, jealousy, strife, fear, bitterness—if they are within us, they will surface during fasting. At first we will rationalize that our anger is due to our hunger for what we are depriving our flesh of; then we will realize that we are angry because the spirit of anger is within us. The same is true for the other aforementioned things. When you get exposed during fasting, such knowledge is not something to mourn about, but rather rejoice about because healing and help is available through the power of Christ. And as you fast, God is able to produce the Spirit fruit of self-control in you so that the Spirit of God will be in control on the inside rather than other spirits.*

*Scripture  
Galatians 5:19-26*



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Proverbs 15*





January 13

## Morning Devotional

*The secret place*

Scripture calls us to worship God in community, but a genuine relationship with God is not one that is only intimate in public, but also intimate in private. When no one else is watching, and when no one else is around, there is a secret place that you can meet God and spend time with Him. There is a secret place that you should meet God and spend time with Him. Make some time away from everyone and everything else to just spend with God in devotion. And when you are away from the noise, it is then that you can truly hear the small, still voice of God that God will speak to you in, and you will receive a reward for your genuine commitment to God.

*Scriptures*

*Mark 1:35*

*Mark 6:46*

*Luke 5:16*

*Luke 6:12*



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Proverbs 16





*January 14*

SLEEP  
REST  
RELAX

SPEND TIME WITH GOD  
SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS  
REPEAT





January 15

Reminder: Church at 10am!





# January 16

## Morning Devotional

*Running on Empty to Get to Full.*

When my mother is cooking Sunday dinner, I am sure to go over to her house on an empty stomach. I go over to her house with an empty stomach because the food she has prepared is going to fill me up, and if I eat before I get there, I won't have room for what she has prepared. There are some things God has prepared for you that God can not give you when you are full—full of pride, lust, anger, bitterness, jealousy, television programming, social media, and more. Christ-centered fasting is like a spiritual detox that flushes you of the toxins that you have from this world, so that you can be filled with the Spirit and all the blessings that God has for you. There will be times throughout your fasting period when it feels like you are running on empty in the flesh, but be reminded that you are running on empty in the flesh so that you can get to full in the Spirit.

Scriptures  
Matthew 11:28-30  
John 4:14  
John 6:35



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30  
minutes reading,  
reflecting, and meditating  
on Matthew 5





# January 17

## Morning Devotional

*Just say No.*

If you were alive in the 80s and 90s, you most likely saw on your screen Nancy Reagan reciting the three-word mantra "Just Say No." This mantra turned movement was a strategy by the U.S. government to revisit and expand the war on drugs. As you take this time out to fast depriving your flesh of something that it desires and is used to having, you must learn to "Just Say No." Your flesh will dominate you if you let it, but you must learn to keep your flesh in check. Fasting is a practice that will ultimately help you in the long run because when you can say no to food for a period, you can say no to your flesh when tempting time comes. Fasting at times will feel like you are being torn down, but in actuality you are being built up and developing the discipline needed to fight your battles. We do not fight our battles in the physical or win our battles in the physical, but we fight in the Spirit and win in the Physical and Spirit. As you fast, you are reclaiming surrendered ground, gaining back control, and positioning yourself to be a winner.

*Scriptures*

*Daniel 1:8-15*

*Matthew 4:4*



## Evening Reading and Meditation

*Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Matthew 6*





# January 18

## Morning Devotional

### Real Worship

In this age of technology and social media, there are people who go around with a diamond tester to test if a celebrity's diamond jewelry is real or not. When the diamond tester is applied to the jewelry, the tester will make a continuous beeping sound if the jewelry is not real. One way to test if your worship and fasting unto God is authentic or not, is revealed in how you treat others. If you claim to worship God, but do not treat your neighbors with love, then your worship is fake and nothing more than a cover-up. True fasting and worship is not a cover up for sin, but it is a confrontation of the sin in your life. And when you confront the sinful ways that you have and bring them before the Lord, the work of liberation takes place in many ways. True fasting and True Worship is not about going through the motions, but it is about going through a transformation. One of the best rewards there is, is the reward of being changed. God can change you, and God will change you. You are coming out of this talking and walking more like Jesus.

### Scriptures

Isaiah 58: 1-11

Philippians 1:6



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on Matthew 7





# January 19

## Morning Devotional

*God has Chosen Your Fast*

There are many different types of fast that you can choose, but it is best to choose the fast that God chooses. The fast that God chooses is to love your neighbor as yourself. Prayer, fasting, and worship should be part of our lives as believers. Prayer, fasting, and worship should be connected to everything you say and do.

True prayer, worship, and fasting is not independent of what you say or do, but it should inform everything you say or do. As you devote yourself to God, you are devoting yourself to be conformed to the image of Christ. Your prayers, your fasting, your devotion, and your worship are not pious acts that earn you brownie points with God, but they are acts that bring you closer to God, and conform you to the image of Christ. I know you want something from God, but don't neglect what God wants for you, and has chosen for you.

### Scriptures

Isaiah 58: 1-11

Matthew 22:36-40

Romans 13:8-10

Galatians 5:14

1 John 4:20



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on James 1





# January 20

## Morning Devotional

*A New Rhythm*

As your fast comes to a close, do know that you are coming out of this fast anew. There are some things that God has revealed to you during this fast that will help you going forward. There are some things that God has blessed you with during this fast that will help you going forward. You may return to eating more normally and other normal activities, but whatever you do, don't go back to the way things used to be. I am sure by now you don't want to go back to the way things used to be, but now you are strengthened to go forward. You will never be the same in Jesus' name. Don't rush into your old habits and routines prior to this fast, and don't even ease back into how life was prior to this fast. You now have a new rhythm to go about life. You have slowed down the pace in your life, and now are moving at a Godly rhythm. Take these lessons with you, and build upon this. Fasting is for a period of time, but that period of time will change the rest of the time that you have to live.

*Scriptures*

*Ephesians 4:22-24*

*Philippians 3:13-14*



## Evening Reading and Meditation

Spend at least 30 minutes  
reading, reflecting, and  
meditating on James 4





*January 21*

SLEEP  
REST  
RELAX

SPEND TIME WITH GOD  
SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS  
REPEAT





January 22

Reminder: Church at 10am!





*Humbly Declared by,*  
*Pastor Stephen Herrod*