

PRAYER and FASTING

FASTING

To fast simply means intentionally abstaining from food for a set amount of time for a spiritual purpose. Throughout the centuries, Christians have fasted for various reasons: to dedicate our whole selves to God; to grow in holiness; to strengthen our prayers; to stand in solidarity with the poor. And more.

Our entire church family is being invited to fast for the purpose of strengthening our prayers. This is not meant to be a way for us to make our prayers seem louder or to get God to do what we are wanting Him to do as a manipulative tool; rather, the aim is to enhance our prayer life with intentionality and intensity.

Here's the ask:

On the first Monday of every month, everyone who calls First Woodway home is invited to abstain from any food or drink (except water – drink lots of water) from the moment you wake up until dinner. Every time you feel a hunger pang, offer a prayer for our church and God's will. It's that simple.

Through this spiritual practice, it is our hope that we would seek God by cultivating a culture of prayer that will last through generations. This is meant to be a deep dive into a spiritual discipline that will enhance our spiritual walk with the Lord for years to come.

FAQ

This is my first fast; how do I start?

- If fasting for an entire day seems too large a goal, fast one large meal (i.e. dinner), and you can build on from there.
- Make sure you are getting fluids in your body by drinking water.
- Devote the time you would normally use eating to meditate on Scripture and prayer.
- Break your fast with a light meal.

Is fasting dangerous for my health?

If you are in normal health, a fast should have no ill effect. However, if you have a special medical challenges, or you feel hesitant about fasting, you should always consult a doctor before fasting.

What if I need food for medical or health related reasons?

We acknowledge that this kind of fasting may not be feasible for everyone. For example, if you take medicine that requires food or if you are in some way medically fragile, you probably shouldn't fast in this way. Please do not put your health at risk. However, if you are unable to fast from food, that doesn't mean you cannot participate. There are other things you can abstain from that mimic fasting: sugar, coffee/caffeine, social media, listening to music, etc. If you are unable to fast from food, find something else that you can abstain from and use its absence to amplify your prayers and bend your heart toward greater enjoyment of Jesus.

**This is not a diet plan and should be done in light of medical advice.*

I'm a parent of young children. Should they fast too?

As a parent, you know your kids better than anyone – so, ultimately, it's up to you. In general, we recommend three things for parents with young children:

- Find something other than food that your kids can abstain from (especially if they are attending school outside your home during the day).
- If they are abstaining from something, make sure they understand why. For example, if they usually have a treat in their lunch, and they are going without it on a fast day, teach them to remember to pray for our church when they are wishing they had that treat.
- Whether or not they are participating, be prepared to talk to your kids about why you (as their parent) are fasting. Fasting could (and should) lead to good discipleship conversations with your kids.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT FASTING?

There are many good resources about fasting. Here are some that we, on staff, have found helpful:

Books:

[Spiritual Disciplines Handbook](#) by Adele Aulberg Calhoun

[Celebration of Discipline](#) by Richard Foster

[Fasting](#) by Scot McKnight

[God's Chosen Fast](#) by Arthur Wallis

Sermons:

[Crucified and Consecrated: Fasting](#) by Sam Gibson, Church of the City (Jon Tyson's Church)

[Fasting: Unforced Rhythms of Grace E6](#) by Tyler Staton, John Mark Comer Teachings Podcast

Podcasts:

[Rule of Life Podcast: Fasting 01](#) by John Mark Comer

[Rule of Life Podcast: Fasting 02](#) by John Mark Comer

[Rule of Life Podcast: Fasting 03](#) by John Mark Comer

[Rule of Life Podcast: Fasting 04](#) by John Mark Comer