

In summary what am I asking us to do as a church in regard to fasting?

Why I am asking us to fast and pray as a church?

We are seeking God's specific will and direction regarding calling a new pastor. As you fast and pray, please incorporate the following:

- ◆ **Have an intense and passionate desire to know the heart of God.**
- ◆ **Humble ourselves-** and seek His guidance and protection.
- ◆ **Repentance** – Ask God to reveal sin in your life that needs to be confessed to God.
- ◆ **Intense prayer** - This is to be an intentional time of prayer.

Duration and Type of Fast

I am asking that we fast from Monday morning, March 13th through Saturday evening, March 17th

I fully realize that many of us have medical and dietary constraints that would prevent us from a complete fast of restricting food and drink. I am not asking for that type of fast. If you have any medical and health questions regarding fasting please consult with your physician. In a setting such as a corporate fast when I am asking the entire church family to fast, there is no one way to fast because of the many different factors involved. The intent is that we would intentionally deny ourselves in order to seek God's heart.

Thus, I am suggesting a **partial fast**, the following are **some examples** for you to consider:

Daniel Fast:

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. Daniel 10:2

- ◆ No meats, No sweets, No Bread –
- ◆ Eat fruits, vegetables and drink water.
- ◆ Giving up one food item, such as caffeine or sweets.
- ◆ Giving up one meal and replacing that time with prayer. Ensure that the value of omitting the one meal is not offset by making the other 2 meals increased intake.
- ◆ Fast from sunrise to sunset, 6am to 4pm.
- ◆ You may also consider a different type of fast such as going without television, Facebook, smart phone, entertainment, etc. For example use the time that you would normally be scrolling Facebook to spend in prayer.

Thank you in advance for your participation as we collectively humble ourselves and seek God's will and direction for our church.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Clyde

Fasting and Prayer

... thoughts from Pastor Hamer

There are many different thoughts regarding fasting. Even unbelievers are familiar with the Word and the concept of going without food for a period of time. People use this to cleanse or gain some physical health benefit.

I am not talking about that type of fast. I want to share with you a few thoughts regarding fasting combined with prayer that we find in God's Word which treat fasting as a **spiritual discipline**.

The bible has many passages regarding fasting and praying, contained both in the Old and New Testament. There are some passages that remind us that if we fast for the wrong purposes, that God is not pleased with our fasting nor do we gain any spiritual benefit from a fast that is undertaken for the wrong purposes. From these many passages we have some principles and applications of fasting for us as followers of Christ.

Fasting is a voluntary Spiritual Discipline that followers of Christ are expected to participate in. There are examples of both **private fasting** with an individual believer and **corporate fasting** with a group of people. I want to focus my comments in regard to **corporate fasting involving a group of believers for a common purpose**.

The biblical examples of fasting are wide ranging in duration from one day to forty days. In its purest definition, it would mean going without food for a period of time for a spiritual purpose.

But biblical fasting does go beyond just abstaining from food. It doesn't mean that you skipped lunch because you were too busy to eat. **Fasting in the Bible is never merely a physical act – it is always connected with some spiritual purpose.** So, we could further define Biblical fasting like this:

Biblical fasting = abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.

If we apply some biblical fasting principles and apply a measure of grace, I believe that a practical application for a corporate fast could be something like the following which admittedly is a definition that goes beyond biblical example.

“Fasting means to lay aside any pleasurable and/or vital activity for a period of time in order to intensely pursue God and know His mind with the intent of obeying His revealed will.”

This application of fasting is then similar to what many understand the season of Lent to be.

The biblical examples of fasting are wide ranging in regard to purposes.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. Acts 13:2

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:23

Some Biblical Goals of Fasting

One of the primary goals of fasting should be that we have **an intense and passionate desire to know the heart of God.** We are seeking His will and direction. We are seeking to have a deeper more passionate walk with God.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Psalm 42:1-2

To humble ourselves and seek His guidance and protection

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. Ezra 8:21

Repentance

Throughout the bible there are examples of God's people wandering away from God and a call to return to God. I am not talking about salvation as God through faith in His son Jesus Christ has forgiven us for all of our sins. Although we are sanctified saints, as Paul talked about in our study of 1 Corinthians, we can become carnal Christians. We need to repent and have a desire to put Christ first in our lives.

“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. Joel 2:12

Intense Prayer

Jesus prayed and fasted for 40 days. Paul prayed and fasted for 3 days and nights after his Damascus road experience.

And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”¹¹ So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. Acts 9:9

Fasting should **not** be an external display of spiritual discipline but rather an **internal** act of spiritual discipline. Words from Christ regarding fasting.

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:16