

MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH

2025

PRAYER & FASTING

GUIDE



2025 Theme:
Renewal, Resiliency, and Relationship



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Mt. Carmel Baptist Church Family,

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that positions us to better connect with God. **The purpose of fasting is to align ourselves with Who God is, what God desires for us, and what God can make possible through us.** As a church family, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church will be fasting together in order to deepen our relationship with God, as well as to get in step with God's plan and purpose for us during this year.

We will be fasting for 21 days from Wednesday, March 5th, through Thursday, March 28, 2025. During these 21 days, **we will replace part of our regular food intake with spiritual disciplines that help us better connect with God—that is, reading and meditating on the Bible, praying, and journaling.** We want to cultivate a genuine hunger for spending time with God. Let's be determined to focus more on the details of connecting with God rather than focusing on the details of the food menu we may be sacrificing during the fast— then we will discover the blessings of fasting! No matter what you have assumed in the past about fasting, try to keep in mind that fasting is about SEEKING GOD; **changing our eating pattern by fasting is one of the ways God designed for us to seek and submit to God's will and God's way for our lives.**

March is often known for being a month of birthing something new as we enter the season of Spring. This year, our focus will be on renewal, resilience, and relationship. Over the next 21 days, intentionally seek God to move in your life or the life of others you're interceding for on their behalf. Fasting is a way of praying in the Spirit to experience the fullness of God's love toward us as we seek direction in our lives. **I believe that as we fast and pray, seek God, and give God our best, God's love will be powerfully manifested through our lives as we continue serving.** And God will honor the sacrifice and bless our individual and collective efforts!



A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Biblical fasting can occur on a variety of different daily or weekly schedules. Select a method you can commit to despite your work schedule, lifestyle, social obligations, and health profile.

You can:

Fast all day for a particular day of the week each week; or

Fast during specific hours during a particular day each week; or

Fast during specific hours every day; or

Fast from a particular meal each day; or

Choose to sacrifice specific food group(s) [like meat and/or sweets] for the entire 21-day fast.

However you choose to fast, **BE SURE TO DRINK PLENTY OF WATER THROUGHOUT EACH DAY!!** Fasting triggers a wonderful response in the human body—it causes your body to get rid of toxins, so you will want to help your body flush those toxins out!

Fasting is, of course, challenging for the human body. If you have any medical conditions or health concerns, please be sure to consult your healthcare provider **BEFORE** beginning this Mt. Carmel Family Fast or making any major dietary changes. In our 2025 Prayer and Fasting Guide, you will find a Daily Devotional Schedule for our church family's fast, including a suggested Prayer Focus for us to share daily, biblical examples of fasts and more details on the various ways you can fast.

Our 2025 Fasting Covenant form is on the guide's last page. The covenant is between you and God; just know I, along with the ministerial staff, will be in prayer with you as we journey together.

“You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.” – Jeremiah 29:13

**Dr. Donald D. Moore, Pastor
Mt. Carmel Baptist Church**

DAILY DEVOTIONAL SCHEDULE

Week One: March 5 – March 10

Fasting Sabbath: March 11

Focus: Renewal



Day 1 | March 5 || Prayer Focus: Renewal. Psalm 46:8–11

Seeing the text: The opening phrase of Psalm 46:10 translates to, “stop your fighting,” “be still,” or “cease striving.” God declares for both God’s people and God’s foes to recognize God’s power and give up struggling against God’s purposes. God stops wars, shatters weapons, and conquers kingdoms without breaking a sweat. Our call and privilege is to know God, to see God high and exalted, and humble ourselves to God’s great, unshakable plan.

Applying the text: So much of our time and energy gets wrapped up in building our own little kingdoms. We work hard to get the promotion, establish our home, gain the reputation, or any number of other achievements. We even let our faith get reduced to an exercise in effort we can control. We falsely believe church attendance, moral choices, and good works earn God’s pleasure. In Psalm 46 God urges, “cease striving! Just be still and know me. Understand how much bigger and higher and greater I am than your preoccupations. Don’t reduce me to a set of rules, make room for ME!”

Prayer: Ask God to search your heart and reveal where you are striving right now. Are you striving to build your own little kingdom at work or home? Are you trying to control your own faith by following rules instead of experiencing true communion with God? Pray that God would still your heart and show you He is exalted among the nations. Pray you can humble yourself and know Him better today.

Day 2 | March 6|| Prayer Focus: Renewal. Joshua 1:8–9

Seeing the text: In this passage, Joshua has been made the leader of the nation of Israel after the death of Moses. He is stepping into the shoes of a giant leader who has courageously led the Israelites through thick and thin. It would’ve been easy for Joshua to rely on his own knowledge, strength, and experience as he steps into this leadership role. However, God instructs Joshua “to meditate on [the Scriptures] day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it.” Joshua found strength in God’s Word, not in his own leadership experience.

Applying the text: It can be easy for us to turn to our own strengths and knowledge as we overcome the struggles of daily life. This can lead us to feeling disconnected from our God who has given us God’s Word to know God and receive instructions for life. Through our devotion to the Word, we begin to grow closer to God as our Divine Parent and we receive truth like Joshua received in 1:9: “Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous?”

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Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Prayer: Pray for the desire to spend time in God's Word even when it is difficult, or you don't "feel like it." Ask God to show you places in your day where you can redeem the time you have to spend time with God and in God's Word.



Day 3 | March 7 || Prayer Focus: Renewal. Matthew 6:6-8

Seeing the text: In Jesus' day it was common practice for the religious leaders to make a show of praying. They would stand in the synagogues or in the streets and pray in public merely to be seen by people. Jesus refers to these people as hypocrites. The word 'hypocrite' comes from the Greek word which means 'actor'. These people were merely acting – putting on a show. Instead, Jesus tells his disciples to pray in private where they cannot be seen. Why? Because the Father sees in secret. God is omnipresent – present everywhere always! But even more than that, Jesus says that the Father will reward the private prayer of God's people.

Applying the text: Private prayer is difficult because it often seems meaningless. You've experienced this before... you finally set aside some time to pray, but after a few minutes you wonder if your prayers are really accomplishing anything. In those moments, you must believe in faith that God sees and hears you in your private prayers. You don't need to put on a show for God to hear you. Not only that, God actually rewards private prayer! This doesn't mean God answers all private prayers exactly how we want. It means that the Divine Parent is pleased with you when you pray to be heard by only God. This doesn't mean that it is always wrong to pray out loud, nor is it wrong to pray publicly. What it means is that Jesus' primary concern is with your heart. Are you praying to be heard by people, or are you praying to be heard by your Heavenly Father?

Prayer: Spend some time reflecting on your own experience in prayer. Why is it that you don't pray as often as you wish you did? Is it because deep down you don't think you're being heard? Ask God to increase your faith in believing that God sees and rewards you when you pray.

Day 4 | March 8 || Prayer Focus: Renewal. Psalm 63:1-5

Seeing the text: David declares that his every satisfaction is found in God. He was on the run from either Saul or Absalom, away from the tabernacle, but danger did nothing to quench his deep desire for God's presence. David's thirst for God found relief as he praised God. He considered God's favor even better than life itself. Thinking about God's ability to satisfy his every need brought a sense of fullness into David's life. David's

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David's meditation on God overflowed in praise.

Applying the text: We all have holes in our heart and life... longings and desperations that we seek for anything and anyone to fill. If you have lived long enough you know that the created things of this world will always be a temporary band-aid and usually come up short. We will continually run back to dry wells. Allowing God to fill and satisfy us reveals the true love and power of our Creator. When you meditate on these truths, gratitude is produced, leading to praise and worship.

Prayer: Taking the posture of prayer like David, with lifted hands, pray and offer praise to God for all the ways He satisfies your soul. Ask God to remind you of who God is and God's faithfulness in your life. Thank God for revealing Gods-self in your moments of longing and desperation and blessing you with God's presence.

Day 5 | March 9|| Prayer Focus: Renewal. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Seeing the text: A quick glance at these statements might lead one to think that these are cheesy, Christian clichés that have no grounding in the real world. However, Paul is not foolish enough to think that following Jesus won't be difficult and include times when joy and gratitude are not easy traits to display, especially when surrounded by other people. In fact, Paul is reminding believers that we have a choice to make in how we handle all situations, struggles, and seasons of life.

Applying the text: Paul is listing these reminders as the "secret" of how we can love and care for each other well as followers of Jesus. A person who chooses joy, stays in personal contact with God through prayer, and has gratitude in their hearts is going to find it a lot easier to love others well, no matter the situation or circumstance. Joy is a choice. Prayer is a constant reminder that we are never alone, and gratitude says more about our heart condition than our circumstance. Which of these do you find easiest to display on a regular basis? Which did you need a reminder today?

Prayer: Take some time today to reflect back on how God has blessed you over this past year. Thank God for God's rescue, God's provision, God's presence, and God's love and mercy in your life. Commit to God in prayer today that "I will choose joy" and ask God to keep your heart soft and grateful as you love and care for others today.

Day 6 | March 10 || Prayer Focus: Renewal. Philippians 4:7-9

Seeing the text: In this passage, Paul reminds us that those who are in Christ can experience the very peace of God because we belong to the God of Peace! These verses

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demonstrate how a biblical mindset is crucial to experience maturity in our faith journey. This encouraging letter to the church at Philippi serves as a reminder for us today to learn, meditate on, and put into practice the Word of God so we can grow deeper in our love for Him.

Applying the text: Our days are full of incoming messages competing for the attention of our mind and affection of our hearts. In this whirlwind of constant communication, it is easy to become distracted by the worries of our world. This leads to a drift from the valuable truth of God's Word, which ultimately causes discouragement. But Paul reminds us in this passage that we serve a God who is with us and guards our hearts and minds with His peace. When we surrender our cares to God and meditate instead on what is "true, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise," we make room in our hearts and minds to enjoy the peace and presence of God!

Prayer: Ask God to show you what distractions are taking up space in your mind and heart today. Are there any worries you haven't fully surrendered to God? Any lies you need to replace with truth from God's Word? Pray for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as God reveals these things to you. Spend time meditating on God's Word until it resonates in your heart. Practice this throughout your day and ask God to guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

SABBATH | March 11

Meal suggestions: (Cooked vegetables, leafy greens, vegetable juices, raw fruits, bone broth and soups, Healthy fats: coconut oil, olive oil, avocado, avoid eating a huge meal, avoid carb-loaded food items).

Week Two: March 12 – March 17

Fasting Sabbath: March 18

Focus: Resiliency



Day 7 | March 12 || Prayer Focus: Renewal. Psalm 37:3-7.

Seeing the text: Our focus should be on God and not on things of this world. This passage gives us instruction to "trust" and "delight in the Lord", "to commit our ways to the Lord", and then to "be still before the Lord and wait patiently for God". In verse 7, notice that we are not to just wait. Rather, we are to wait with expectation! We can be confident in receiving a response when our "trust" and "delight" are in God.

Applying the text: So many of us will stay busy trying to make the best choices for ourselves and our family. We will search the internet, ask our close friends, get the

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opinions of our co-workers, and maybe even ask a pastor for a recommendation. Once we have gathered all the necessary information, we try to make the best, well-informed decision, even if we still lack confidence. David's encouragement for wisdom is clear in this passage. "Delight yourself in the Lord, and the Lord will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in the Lord, and God will act."

Prayer: Take some time today to be still before the Lord. Remind yourself of God's goodness in your life. Are you trying to solve any problems or make important decisions that you brought before the Lord? Pray for wisdom in those circumstances today.

Day 8 | March 13 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency 1 John 1:5-10

Seeing the text: Genuine authentic faith is based solely on a relationship and fellowship with God. Understanding the nature of God in relation to who we are as creatures of God is of critical importance. God is light; anything that remains in darkness does not have fellowship with God. It is impossible to walk in both darkness and light, yet at times we are in danger of being deceived into allowing religious activities replace the work of confession and repentance. Instead, we walk in light with other believers. This is only made possible by acknowledging our sin and allowing the work of Christ on the cross to cleanse us. God is our advocate and sacrifice for our sins.

Applying the text: Our daily practice as believers should be to evaluate the thoughts and behaviors in our life that are counter to the character of God. "Walking in the light" means we repent daily with desperation to remove anything that would separate us from the Father. When we don't slow down enough for self evaluation, it's easy for busyness of life to cloud our time with the Lord. This ultimately sheds light on the areas of sin that need addressing.

Prayer: Take a few minutes to pause and elevate the Father. Declare God's truths and character. Allow God to bring into perspective who you are: a sinner saved by grace. Ask God to reveal anything in you that is not Godly. Repent and ask forgiveness and truth the power of the cross to Holy Spirit to release that in you to pursue life and godliness.

Day 9 | March 14 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency. Colossians 3:1-4

Seeing the text: In this passage, Paul wants us to understand that we are to set our minds "on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." He then goes on to remind us of our new identity in Christ. "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." As Christ followers, we should shift our focus to have a heavenly perspective regarding how to live here on earth.



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Applying the text: We are faced with a never-ending stream of decisions from the moment we wake up each morning. Most of the decisions are as simple as deciding to get a cup of coffee, checking our phone notifications, or even suppressing a yawn at work. These decisions don't take much thought, and some have become daily habits. As for the bigger decisions we make in our lives, we are called to live and make decisions from a heavenly perspective. We must focus and renew our minds (Romans 12:2). When we can shift our focus, we will make decisions from a kingdom mindset.

Prayer: Take some time today to make a list of big decisions you and your family will be facing this week or even this month. Spend time reading God's Word to renew your mind, focus on a heavenly perspective, and pray for discernment this week.



Day 10 | March 15 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency. Matthew 13:44-46

Seeing the text: Jesus shares two brief parables that demonstrate the joy and dedication discovering the Kingdom of God can activate. The man and merchant discovered something of great worth to them, yet they did not just enjoy the discovery. They were willing to forgo everything in making that discovery a reality and securing it themselves. It is not a purchase of salvation, which is a gift, but as Dr. Tony Evans says, "those who discover and recognize the worth of living life under the rule of God will sacrifice anything of earthly value for participation in God's kingdom." The man and merchant were willing to reorient their lives and priorities to deepen their joy and take ownership of their treasure. Everything they did was focused on that single goal, the treasure they found; nothing less would suffice.

Applying the text: The word "priority" came into the English language in the 1400s with a singular meaning: the very first thing. The word stayed singular for the next 500 years. It was not until the 1900s that it became plural, and we started discussing priorities. We thought we could bend reality to our whim by changing it to a plural meaning, but with many things pulling our affection and attention, nothing gets our complete devotion. Because of this truth of who He is, Jesus cannot just become one of our priorities; with other things, often good things, pulling for our affection and attention, because we know Jesus will always forgive us and is there, He sometimes gets pushed aside. Will Jesus and his God's kingdom be just another item on our priority list today, or will we reorient our lives around discovering and receiving the deep joy that comes from a singular focus on Him?

Prayer: Take some time to sit in silence and ask God to reveal the answer to this question Jesus asks his disciples in John 1:38-39, "What do you want?". Pray that your desires, when not aligned with the kingdom priority, will daily become aligned with the Father's

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heart and will for you. Ask God to show you the joy of making the Kingdom of God and God's love our sole priority.



Day 11 | March 16 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency. Galatians 5:16–26:

Seeing the text: The Holy Spirit is the key to Christian living. In fact, Jesus told His disciples that it would be better for them after He returned to the Father and the Holy Spirit came to lead them in His place. Why? Because in His physical body, Jesus' ministry was limited by proximity. He could only be in one place at one time. The Holy Spirit, however, would indwell ALL believers from the moment of their salvation. We don't have to seek the Spirit out or meet with the Spirit in a specific location or time. The Holy Spirit is available to us 24/7. As our Counselor, the Spirit leads us, speaks to us, intercedes for us, convicts us, and empowers us. Apart from the Spirit of God, we can't live out our faith as Jesus intends. This is why Paul urges us to walk by the Spirit. Otherwise, we will default to the flesh, and the results... well, they are VERY different.

Applying the text: One of the great things about Paul's command to "walk by the Spirit" is that it's immediately followed by a checklist to help us evaluate how well we're doing. Read through the two lists: the works of the flesh (vs 19–22) and the fruit of the Spirit (22–26). Which list characterizes your journey in this season? Do you lean more heavily towards one or the other? Highlight or write down areas of concern and begin to seek the Spirit's lead in moving towards health. This can happen by time in the Word, time in prayer, and times of vulnerability with other believers who are equipped with unique gifts from the Spirit to help push us forward.

Prayer: Read Romans 8:26–27. Not only does the Spirit empower us, but He also intercedes on our behalf. Even when we don't know what to pray or how to proceed, the Holy Spirit takes our requests to the Father with just the right words. Take a moment to confess any items in the "flesh list" that are prevalent in your life right now and then request any items in the "fruit" list that might be lacking. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower and lead you towards His way in the days to come.

Day 12 | March 17 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency. Isaiah 40:28–31

Seeing the text: God knows we're going to get tired. God knows that life can be difficult and draining, that our own strength will fail us and we will reach points where weariness overtakes us. But this verse reminds us that our God prepares us for those moments. God steps in and offers God's hand to each of us. The same God who never tires, who created the universe and everything in it, shares his strength with you. When we take the time to sit and rest in God's presence, God provides stability, peace, and strength that you can't find anywhere else.

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Applying the text: In moments of weakness, it's easy to forget to ask God to step in and give us the strength we need. We often think we can handle it ourselves or we turn to distractions that give us a false sense of rest or security. What we need to remember, and what these verses remind us, is that God can (and will!) provide us the strength to face every battle. Whether it's going through a difficult situation or the little everyday battles that wear us down, when we place our hope in God, He provides. When we turn to face our problems with God, He turns our weakness into strength and desperation into peace.

Prayer: Confess to God the areas of your life where you feel drained or defeated and ask the Lord to help you acknowledge your own weaknesses. Pray for humility and ask God to help show you the areas where you need to rely on God's strength instead of your own. Take a few extra moments at the end of your quiet time to meditate on the magnitude of God's power, and dwell in the love God has for you that God so willingly shares God's supernatural strength and peace with you.

SABBATH | March 18

Meal Suggestions: Cooked vegetables, leafy greens, vegetable juices, raw fruits, bone broth and soups, Healthy fats: coconut oil, olive oil, avocado, avoid eating a huge meal, avoid carb-loaded food items.

Week Three: March 19 – March 24

Fasting Sabbath: March 25

Focus: Relationship



Day 13 | March 19 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency. James 1:2-4

Seeing the text: James says "WHEN" not "IF" you meet trials, and often times we are surprised when a hardship comes our way because it interrupts our illusion of control. He calls us to welcome them, because ALL trials and difficulties have the opportunity to produce joy, not because the trials are pleasurable. When we lift our gaze we see the end results (1 Peter 4:12-13). James is not saying that God authors our suffering or trials, but permits such experience, and works with us in the midst of them to produce a deep joy and character that radiates from Christ. To embrace trials and difficulties is impossible on our own, but we have a God who meets us where we are, and walks patiently with us through them. Patient endurance is key, because while we value pleasure, God values a deep character. We want a quick, one-time rescue, God shows up daily to heal and restore us into eternity. Our faith starts to grow when we get tired of trying to save ourselves or avoid hardship, because there, we start to trust God more fully and ourselves less (1 John 5:4).

Applying the text: We don't enjoy trials; most of us do everything possible to avoid them. Trials and testing are profitable to test our faith and reveal where our faith is actually

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placed. When we meet trials with patience, we open ourselves up to the opportunity to become more and more like Jesus— perfect, mature, full-grown, complete, entire, perfect in every part, lacking in nothing, deficient in nothing, wanting nothing. There is an old tale about a man who lived out in the desert about seven miles from water, “he said to himself one day “What need is there for me to endure this toil? I shall come and live near the water.” And saying this, he turned about and saw one following him and counting his footprints. He questioned him saying, “Who are you?” The follower answered, “I am the Angel of the Lord. I am sent to count your footprints and give you your reward.” At this, the old man’s heart grew stout. Renewed, he set his cell further from the water.” This little story and James Chapter 1 are an encouragements that God is still with us, working in us and with us to be “perfect and complete” which is only found in Christ. Do not surrender, for not a single footprint is wasted in the Kingdom of God.

Prayer: Take a few minutes to sit in silence and reflect on the man from the desert and ask God to reveal to you what areas in your life you feel that you are “enduring a toil”. Pray that the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to see the God who loves you and is not letting a single footprint in your life go to waste. Ask God to work with you in developing the patience and perspective you need as God develops your joy in His kingdom.



Day 14 | March 20 || Prayer Focus: Resiliency. James 4:1-10

Seeing the text: Three negative influences are given that entice and cause separation from God: our own passions, friendship with the world, and the devil. These hindrances to holy life cause sin, conflict, pride, and hostility toward God. Thankfully God’s grace is more powerful than any of these competitors for our affection. James promises that submission to God causes the devil to flee from us. Beautifully, if we draw near in humility, God meets us where we are and gifts His pure and holy presence.

Applying the text: According to verse 8, we are called to approach God with clean hands and pure hearts. This cleansing can only be found through forgiveness in Jesus. Each of us must search our hearts, repent of our sins, and humble ourselves before the Lord. Only in this submissive posture, washed clean by the blood of Jesus, are we able to approach the throne of God. What a beautiful invitation! In His presence we are free from the evil and chaos in the world. If we truly understood the joy found with God, drawing near would be the deepest desire of our hearts.

Prayer: Confess the words of James 4:8 out loud today, “Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you.” Repeat them until you believe it. Ask God to reveal the negative influences in your life and then humbly surrender them over. Pray to be single-minded in your pursuit of the presence of God.

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Day 15 | March 21 || Prayer Focus: Relationship. Romans 12:9-10

Seeing the text: Paul says our love for one another must be without hypocrisy. In other words, believers are to display a love that genuinely seeks the spiritual, physical and holistic well-being of others. In his book to the church at Corinth, Paul describes for us what love looks like in a believer's life. Paul writes to the church in Corinth –“Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.” If we are to live the faithful Christian life God is calling us to live, we must be focused and faithful to obey God's instruction through Paul in these 2 potent and powerful verses. Loving brothers and sisters in Christ isn't optional for mature believers, but is a command for all followers of Jesus. Let us be people who love well.

Applying the text: Make a plan to do a kind act of love for someone this week. This could be as simple as writing a personal note to a spouse, coworker, or friend or doing something like inviting a friend to lunch to check-in on how they are doing. Whatever you decide, make it your goal to be intentional this week to show genuine love to someone in your life.

Prayer: Take a moment to pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the confidence and courage to take steps to show God's love this week. Ask God to show you how to love those in your life who aren't easy to love.

Day 16 | March 22 || Prayer Focus: Relationship. Hebrews 10:24-25



Seeing the text: The writer of Hebrews is exhorting these believers to not forsake gathering together as a community of Christ-followers. This source of community between these believers should spur on love between them, holding one another up during times of hardship and abundance. As they continue to do life together, they are to encourage one another to be steadfast alongside each other.

Applying the text: Pastor Jonathon Pokluda once said, “Community is forged, not found.” Being a part of a community of believers is not always easy. It takes effort on our part to be intentional in finding our people who will be with us through both the valleys and mountaintops of life. When we forsake the community of believers, we lose the connection with other believers that God designed us for. Although it may not always be easy, it is essential for every Christian to be engaged in biblical community for their own (and others) spiritual growth!

Prayer: Pray that you would be intentional in finding the community of believers that God has for you. Ask God for the courage and boldness to step out and find your people! If

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you already are a part of a community, ask God to have open eyes to see the needs of the people in your circle.



Day 17 | March 23 || Prayer Focus: Relationship. John 13:34–35

Seeing the text: The commandment to “Love God” wasn’t new to those to whom Jesus was speaking. In fact, many of them knew and could recite the Old Testament passage in Deuteronomy that mandated to love God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength. However, Jesus took this idea to a new level. To be a follower of Jesus, you can’t just “Love God”, but are called to “Love one another just as Jesus loved us.” It would now be the identity of a Christ follower: not rules, not knowledge, not even going to church on a regular basis.

Applying the text: What does it mean to “Love one another just as Jesus loved us?” What are the characteristics that we see demonstrated in the love of Jesus? 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us what love looks like on display. Love is patient, kind, sacrificial, serving, and delights in generosity. Sometimes in our culture the idea of “love” is captured by feelings, romance, or physical attraction. While love may encompass some of those things, the reality is that God’s love for us is deeper than anything this world has to offer and our love for one another is to be defined by this same type of sacrificial love. What could you do today to love your spouse with a sacrificial love? How could you display a patient love with your children or grandchildren today? What would love look like to a neighbor today? A stranger in the store? Commit today that the greatest thing you could do to tell others about Jesus is to love them well!

Prayer: As you read over John 13 and 1 Corinthians 13 today, ask God to show you ways where you might need to grow in displaying love to others. Ask God to highlight and celebrate areas where you usually do well loving others. Thank God for life and the reminders of what love looks like and commit to loving others as God first loved us.

Day 18 | March 24 || Prayer Focus: Relationship. Philippians 2:3–4

Seeing the text: Verse 3 describes two contrasting attitudes. The first attitude should be discarded from your life, the other developed. The verse begins with the charge to, “... do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit.” The word ‘conceit’ comes from the Greek word *kenodoxia*. *Kenodoxia* is the combination of the two Greek words “empty” and “glory”. It refers to those who have an exaggerated perception of their own self. They are all about their personal “glory”, but in reality are “empty” of true spiritual health. This attitude should be destroyed in us all. The attitude to develop is humility – considering others better than yourself. The supreme example is, of course, Christ. He is the opposite of *kenodoxia*. He has true glory beyond measure, yet He emptied Himself because of his love for us.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL SCHEDULE

SABBATH | March 25

Meal Suggestions: Cooked vegetables, leafy greens, vegetable juices, raw fruits, bone broth and soups, Healthy fats: coconut oil, olive oil, avocado, avoid eating a huge meal, avoid carb-loaded food items.

Day 19 | March 26 || Prayer Focus: Relationship. Exodus 20:8-11

Seeing the text: Moses received these instructions, a portion of what is commonly known as the “Ten Commandments,” on top of Mount Sinai during the Exodus. In the midst of smoke, thunder, lightning, and earthquakes the Lord met Moses and gave him the core of what would become The Law for God’s people. God’s command was to “... remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” The day itself was reserved for the Lord, and during this time the Israelites were instructed to abstain from work. They were to rest and honor the Lord, following the example demonstrated by God at the creation of all things.

Applying the text: It is very possible that we find ourselves burned out, overwhelmed, and stressed because we do not make room for protected time each week and keep it holy. It becomes easy to discount the importance of the Sabbath when things need to get done, people are waiting, and life is happening. Often, we forget two important points: 1. “Remembering the Sabbath” is a command, not a suggestion. God has told us exactly what God’s intends for that blessed day— rest, worship, devotion. 2. We are designed to need the Sabbath. We are only truly restored and equipped in the presence of God. May we return to honoring this divine rhythm in our lives.

Prayer: Honor the Sabbath this weekend. Keep it holy by seeking the Lord in constant prayer. Keep a dialogue open with Him, listening and sharing thoughts and emotions all day. Reflect on the previous week and how the Lord was faithful to you. Ask to be equipped for the week ahead.



Day 20 | March 27 || Prayer Focus: Relationship. Luke 10:38-42

Seeing the text: The story of these two sisters and their interactions with Jesus teaches us the immeasurable value of fellowship with God. While Martha was distracted, Mary was devoted. Jesus’ response to Mary’s posture invites all of us to lay everything else down, sit at His feet, and enjoy a deep relationship with Him. Jesus is our most wonderful treasure, worthy of our full praise. Nothing can compare to Him!

Applying the text: There are countless things, both good and bad, that we could spend our time on throughout the day. The very best thing is to sit at the feet of Jesus. We have received an incredible opportunity to walk intimately with the Creator of all things who promises to be with us always! But far too often, we forsake His invitation for lesser things. The way we spend our time reveals the treasure of our hearts. Each day presents a

DAILY DEVOTIONAL SCHEDULE

choice for how to invest our time, attention, and affection. We can choose, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus at any time and any place! How will you make room in your life to rest in abiding fellowship with Jesus?

Prayer: Pray for God to show you where your treasure is. Are you currently living like Martha, troubled and anxious about many things? Or are you more like Mary, enjoying and resting in the presence of Jesus? Ask God to show you how to sit at His feet today. Pray for God to remind you of the incredible gift it is to have fellowship with God! Ask for help making room for Him in every moment of your day, so you can walk closer with Him.

Day 21 | March 28|| Prayer Focus: Relationship. John 15:4-5

Seeing the text: When we get frustrated with life, it's easy to feel frustrated with God. We wonder why things are going wrong and feel angry in our circumstances. But how often does our frustrations and fruitlessness come from a lack of abiding in the Lord's presence and listening to His teachings. In these verses, Jesus is reminding us that the only way to a fulfilling life is through our relationship with Him. Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him we are blessed beyond measure.

Applying the text: This decision to abide in Christ is not a one and done choice. Because of our sinful nature, there is a constant spiritual battle going on inside us. Every single day we must wake up and choose to spend time with Jesus, to dwell in His presence, and learn from His Word. When we learn to maintain this habit of walking with Christ, He blesses us in ways that we can't imagine. When Jesus says "apart from me you can do nothing" we need to recognize that this comes down to us making a choice to live in obedience and unity with Christ. We must acknowledge that whenever we try to do things on our own, we are like a branch that withers away, and it is only through God that we can be fruitful.

Prayer: Whatever is currently going on in your life, take a few moments to include God in it. Jesus wants to be a part of every decision, and in every aspect of your journey. Ask the Lord to walk with you as you take on the highs and lows of daily life and ask for help in keeping your heart open to God's presence, God's voice, and God's guidance.



BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF FASTING

1. THE DISCIPLES FAST

Fasting to break addictions. Matthew 17:20-21

2. THE EZRA FAST

Fasting to solve problems and seek protection. Ezra 8:21-23

3. THE SAMUEL FAST

Fasting to win people to Christ and petition God to pour Himself out on Mankind. 1 Samuel 7:1-8

4. THE ELIJAH FAST

Fasting to break every yoke. 1 Kings 19:2-18

5. THE WIDOW'S FAST

Fasting so that others' needs will be met. 1 Kings 17:12

6. THE SAINT PAUL FAST

Fasting for wisdom and insight from God. Acts 9:9-19

7. THE DANIEL FAST

Fasting for good health and obedience towards God. Daniel 1:12-20



BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF FASTING

8. THE JOHN THE BAPTIST FAST

Fasting for a stronger testimony and influence. Matthew 3, Luke 1 :159.

THE ESTHER FAST

Fasting for protection from the evil one. Esther 4:16



BIBLICAL CONNECTION TO COMMON FASTING IDEAS

Option #1: Abstain from all foods and drinks EXCEPT WATER. Focus: For wisdom and insight from God. (St. Paul Fast)

Option # 2: Fruits and Vegetables Only. Focus: For good health and obedience towards God. (Daniel Fast)

Option #3: Abstain from all sodas and sweets; Natural sweeteners and fruits are okay. Focus: To solve problems and seek protection from the evil one. (Ezra Fasts)

Option #4: Abstain from all types of fried foods and bread. Focus: To win people to Christ; Fasting so that others' needs will be met; for stronger testimony and influence. (Samuel, Widows , and John the Baptist Fasts)

Option #5: Abstain from meats and sweets. Focus: Fasting to break addictions and every yoke. (Disciples and Elijah Fasts)

Option #6: Abstain from all Social-media platforms (Streaming Worship is permitted)



HEALTHY FOODS TO TRY

WHOLE GRAINS: Brown rice, barley, black rice, rolled oats, popcorn, quinoa, millet, farro.

LEGUMES: Beans (lima, northern, garbanzo, pinto, red, black, kidney, navy, peas, lentils, black-eyed peas, etc.)

NUTS: Almonds, cashews, pecans, peanuts, walnuts, etc.

FRUITS: Apples, apricots, avocado, applesauce, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, currants, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, nectarines, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangos, Mandarin oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines, watermelon.

VEGETABLES: Artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, dandelion greens, eggplant, endive, garlic, ginger root, green beans, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, peas,



HEALTHY FOODS TO TRY

potatoes, peppers (bell, sweet or hot), pumpkin, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squash (yellow/summer, zucchini, acorn, spaghetti, etc.), sweet potato, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, wax beans, yams.



LIQUIDS: Spring water; distilled water
100% all-natural fruit juices; 100% all-natural vegetable juices.

OILS: Olive Oil; sesame oil; grape seed oil;

SALAD DRESSINGS: Homemade vinaigrette using vinegar, olive oil, and herbs; homemade French, Italian, Ranch, etc.

SWEETENERS: Honey, real maple syrup, organic agave nectar, organic sucanat (whole cane sugar).

PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY INFORMATION



Monday Morning Meditation Mondays @ 10:00 AM

DIAL IN: 605 472 5520 ACCESS CODE: 989 604

Noon Day Bible Study Wednesdays @ 12 :00 PM

**MEETING ID: 822 2751 6189 PASSCODE: 511 118
DIAL IN: (646) 558 8656 PARTICIPANT ID: HIT "#"**

Evening Bible Study Wednesdays @ 6:00 PM

**MEETING ID: 8492884 0482 PASSCODE: 196 583
DIAL IN: (646) 558 8656 PARTICIPANT ID: HIT "#"**



2025 MCBC FASTING COVENANT

“So, we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.” —Ezra 8:23

I believe that God is the only answer to my prayer and that fasting will draw me close to God.

Therefore, God being my strength and grace being my basis, I commit myself to the MCBC2025 Fast.

2025
Renew, Resiliency, Relationship

