



Reedy Fork Community Church

January 1 through February 9, 2019

On a basic level, fasting is a spiritual discipline where we set aside the desires of our flesh, and our ability to provide for them, in order to seek and hear from God. The purpose for our 40 Day Prayer and Fast, is to seek God for direction, and ask Him to move greatly in and through our church.

We are not asking that all of our church engage in a 40 day fast individually, however if you would like to prepare for a longer period fast then we would love to share resources with you about how you can begin preparing.

We are asking that everyone take part as we move forward as a unified body of Christ. Our leadership is preparing to take days in order to cover the entire 40 days. We are asking that you join on days that you are prepared to fast specifically and pray in a more focussed way. Please be prepared to pray through all 40 days. We hope that fasting as a spiritual discipline, develops into a habit for all of our church family.

Why fast?

Listed below are some of the reasons why people in the Bible fasted:

In times of war: Judges 20:26

Repentance: Jonah 3:5 and Daniel 6:18

When facing danger: Ezra 8:21, 23

Courage and wisdom: Esther 4:3, 16 and 9:31

In times of grief: 1 Samuel 31:13 and 1 Chronicles 10:12 In times of distress: 2 Samuel 1:12

Ultimate denial of the flesh: Matthew 4:2

Spiritual power: Mark 9:29

Wisdom: Acts 14:23

Set aside self for holiness: 1 Corinthians 7:5

Answered prayer: Acts 10:30-31

Mourning: Daniel 10:1-3

Special revelation: Exodus 34:27-28

Spiritual recuperation: 1 Kings 19:1-9

As you can see, there are many wise reasons why people fast. Some wanted wisdom and power, while others were repenting of their sins. There was one aspect of the fasting experience that each had in common: a personal encounter with the living God.

As you begin to consider reasons for your fast, you will come up with several, but there is one that will over ride all the other reasons: to have a powerful, life-changing encounter with the living God. Never confuse your fasting goals with the most foundational reason to fast – to meet with God. All other reasons could cause you to miss the biggest blessing of your fasting experience.

Our purpose for a church fast, is to experience all that fasting and prayer does to connect us individually with God, and seek His guidance as we live our lives connected to each other, and lived for him.

Why food?

When Jesus faced intentional temptation from Satan in respect to his hunger while fasting, Jesus responded with a very powerful statement in Matthew 4. He said that man cannot live solely on the resource of food, but instead by every word spoken by God. Food is something that we view as a necessity for survival and as a source of self-satisfaction. Therefore, when we set food aside we are able to concentrate on time with God instead of time spent meeting our own needs.

Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." If our heart is set on God and His will, then hearing from Him and discovering His will brings the desires of our heart.

Fasting agrees with lordship. Jesus fasted during a dedicated time seeking his Father. We, as Christians, are called to follow Jesus.

Why do this as a church?

We hope to hear from God collectively, leverage the power of prayer and experience a unification through the Holy Spirit.

How do I fast during this period?

We are asking that all adults that are able fast from food from sun-up to sun-down on the days that you commit to fast. We encourage you to drink water during the day. During times you would normally eat meals, use this time to pray, read scripture, and meditate on what God is speaking to you about. We encourage families to work with children to fast either food or other activities that serve their desire to do what appeals to them for fun.

How often should I do this?

Consider days that you can set aside time to focus time you spend with God. Do not only consider when it is convenient.

Do I sign up?

Yes, you can sign up in our lobbies and online. Signing up increases accountability, commitment and encourages our entire church family.

What are we praying about together as a church?

We are praying for God to direct us in our efforts, plans and vision for this next year. We are asking God to expand our opportunities to build His kingdom. We are asking for his blessings and direction. We are praying that our hearts will be drawn to Him. We are praying for needs of sickness, encouragement and discipleship for each person in our body of Christ.

How do I get more information about fasting and prayer for this 40 days?

Pick up more information at our main lobby Connection Station and online. We would also like to encourage you to connect with our staff, elders and deacons to have questions answered about this exciting time for our church. If you would like more reading recommendations while preparing or during your fast please contact our staff, elders and deacons.

Tips for beginning your time of fasting:

- Have a PLACE picked out where you will meet with God. (Consider distractions!)
- Have a PLAN for your time in the Word and what you will pray.
- Center on PURPOSE. It is time for hearing God, so be quick to listen and slow to speak.
- Be ready to WRITE. Journal what God speaks to you about.
- Know the TRUTH. (Our enemy doesn't want us to devote time to God, so don't listen to him about why you can't do this, or how you don't have time.)
- INVOLVE the family. (If you have kids then they may not be able to decide to miss meals. Encourage them to find something that serves their wants and desires and fast time from that thing or activity. Help them pray and read during those times.)

There will be suggested reading plans and prayer emphasis cards out next week to help.