



DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

JANUARY 7 - 27

For the past several years, many of the Christ-honoring churches and thousands of the followers of Jesus have committed themselves to a special season of prayer and fasting. From **January 7 to January 27, 2019, we will come together for 21 Days of fasting and prayer.**

The goal of this time and focus of our prayers is simple: to see transformative, Christ-centered revival. We want to see the lost come to faith in Jesus. We want to see the broken healed. We want the body of Christ to pierce the darkness of our time with the light of the gospel.

The following guide is intended as a simple aid. Please use it as you see fit. It exists in two sections: a fasting guide to help you approach fasting wisely and Biblically, then a prayer guide that provides direction for your prayers during each of the 21 Days.

Fasting Guide

What does the Bible Teach about Fasting?

Biblical fasting involves abstaining from eating (and/or drinking) for spiritual purposes.

In the Old Testament, Israel celebrated certain annual fasts, the most prominent being the Day of Atonement. There were also occasional fasts tied to specific historical events, sometimes individual and sometimes corporate. Here are a few of the occasions for fasting: at a time of grief (I Sam. 31:13; Nehemiah 1:4), at a time of repentance (I Sam 7:6; I Kings 21:27), as an expression of humility (Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10) and as an expression of a need for God's guidance and help. All of these fasts express a common dependence on God. Several New Testament passages give us insight about fasting.

Fasting teaches us that God's Word nourishes us: Matthew 4:1-4 records the only example of Jesus fasting, just prior to his being tempted in the wilderness. He faced temptation with these words "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3-5 which talks about the 40 years Israel spent in the wilderness, depending daily on manna to sustain them. He says that God humbled them and let them be hungry in order to teach them to depend on God's Word to sustain them. By His example of fasting, Jesus reminds us that food alone can't sustain us. We need to be nourished by God's Word.

Fasting teaches us that doing God's will sustains us: John 4:31-35 records Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. When the disciples return they encourage Jesus to eat. He responds by saying "I have food to eat that you know not of," then He adds "My food is to do the will of the Father." Again, Jesus reminds us that food alone is not enough. We are sustained by doing God's will.

Fasting teaches us that Jesus Himself sustains us: In John 6:48-50 Jesus says "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die." We see this pictured symbolically in the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper. Jesus is the source of eternal life. Fasting is feasting on Jesus. Jesus assumed that fasting would be a part of His disciple's

spiritual life. In Matthew 6:16-18, He says “when you fast,” not “if you fast.” He warns us not to fast to impress people, but to be near to the heart of God.

What is the Purpose of Fasting?

Fasting is designed to intensify our dependence on God by weakening our dependence on food and other things.

Fasting reveals and heals our dependence on food (and other things) to fill the discomfort caused by low self-esteem, unfulfilling work, unloving relationships, uncontrollable circumstances, etc. It removes the false peace derived from the pleasure of eating. Richard Foster says “More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. David writes, “I humbled my soul with fasting” (Psalm 69:10). Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear—if they are within us, they will surface during fasting.”

Fasting teaches us that we can go without getting what we want and survive. Fasting can free us from having to have what we want. Therefore, fasting can teach moderation or self-control, not only in relation to food, but in other areas as well. It teaches contentment. (1 Timothy 6:6)

Fasting expresses and deepens our hunger for God. Richard Foster says, “Fasting reminds us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God: (Matt. 4:4). Food does not sustain us; God sustains us. In Christ, “All things hold together” (Col. 1:17). Therefore, in experiences of fasting we are not so much abstaining from food as we are feasting on the word of God and on Christ Himself. Fasting is feasting.” Fasting for other reasons, such as a “spiritual disguise” for losing weight, is an aberration to Biblical fasting. Fasting to even appear spiritual to others is more akin to the Pharisees than Jesus’ instructions. Fasting must always, first and foremost, center on God. It must be about Him.

STEP 1: Clarify the Purpose of your fast.

Why are you fasting? (For the purpose of the 21 Days, see above.) Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Fasting is God-led and God-initiated. That means that He fuels a desire to fast and pray. He loves it when we fast.

STEP 2: Specify the Kind of Fast you will do

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast. (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15) For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast – one meal, one day, one week, several weeks, certain days (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts)

- The type of fast God wants you to undertake – discussed in the *Types of Fasts* section below.
 - What physical or social activities you will restrict
 - How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word
- Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3: Prepare your heart, mind and body for fasting

Fasting is not a spur-of-the-moment thing. It is planned and we must prepare. The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Un-confessed sin can hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.
- Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast. Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.
- Prepare your heart and mind: Remember that God is your Father and He loves you and is for you.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you. (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4) Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ. (Romans 12:1,2) Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others. (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart. (Hebrews 11:6)
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit. (Galatians 5:16,17)
- Finally, and of deep importance, Jesus instructs us in Matthew to not let others know about your fasting. The strict details of your fast should not be something you constantly talk about to others. It should remain between you and God.

Types of Fasts

Now that we have explored the Old and New Testament teaching and instruction on fasting, we can proceed to discuss specific kinds of fasts. Let us begin with the helpful words of Richard Foster in his classic, *Celebration of Discipline*: "As with all the Disciplines, a progression should be observed; it is wise to learn to walk well before we try to run."

Biblical fasting almost always concerns food. Since the purpose of fasting, as we saw above, is to focus on God, to humble ourselves and to remind ourselves that we are sustained by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, then the task in fasting is connecting our "going without" to "hungering for God." This takes time, focus and prayer in itself. Please do not expect

to be an “expert” at fasting right away. Fasting is a discipline that can take a very long time to understand well. ALSO, do not let this fact deter you or intimidate you.

Fasting is not unlike a beautifully written masterpiece of literature. It is simple enough for a youth to understand and enjoy, and yet magnificently rich enough for the scholar to devote his/her entire life to.

Abstaining from certain types of foods (meat, sweets, etc.) – Daniel 10:3

This type is a good one for beginners to fasting or those with health needs and special or restrictive diets. Choose to abstain from something like breads, sweets, sodas, coffee or even red meat. Perhaps spend some time reading through Daniel’s fast in Daniel chapter 1 and chapter 10. Stick to only fruits and vegetables like Daniel, or try something similar.

Determine the timing and duration of your fast and begin. You may choose to go without this specific type of food on only certain days like Fridays, or you may go without during the weekdays only or perhaps every day. Finally, choose the duration of your fast. This community wide fast is 21 days (January 9 -29) but that does not mean you must go without for all of the 21 days. Determine the timing and duration ahead of time and pray through it.

Abstaining from all food – Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9

This kind of fast is more difficult but can be broken up by timing and duration. This seems to be the most prevalent of the fasts we see in the Bible. It is also the most intimidating, but refuse to let it scare you. Fasting from all food is not scary if you determine beforehand when you will do so and for how long. Here are some ideas.

Start slowly. Begin with fasting for only a part of a day (lunch, or lunch and dinner). Do this for one day a week, or perhaps three days a week. You determine the timing and duration. Take a step of faith. Fasting is risky and involves our faith.

Next, try fasting from food but not beverages. This means that according to your timing and duration, you would not eat any solid foods but only water, juices, smoothies or perhaps simple soup broths.

Do this for the first one or two weeks. Devote the time that you normally would eating to Scripture reading and prayer. Focus on Jesus’ statements about food.

Next try a 24-hour fast. This means that you get up and eat a good breakfast and drink only water or juice until the following breakfast the next day. Set aside specific time, during normal meal times if possible, to pray and seek God.

Finally, you may progress to a two or three day fast. For some, progression may lead to a multi-day, even multi-week fast. But remember the purpose of your fast.

Abstaining from other things besides food – Daniel 6:18

The king’s voluntary “fasting” from entertainment in the time of Daniel helps us further understand yet another type of fast. Fasting from non-food items like entertainment can be particularly helpful and accessible to kids and teens.

Think of abstaining from television, ipods, iphone and video games, all reading except the Bible, music, texting, etc. for the duration of your fast. This can be a very powerful decision even as a supplement to food fasts.

Choosing your fasting plan is a very personal decision. We are all at different places in our walk with God and our spirituality should never be a cause for comparison or competition. There is nothing more “inherently spiritual” about one type of fast as opposed to another. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but know your body, know your options, and most importantly, seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. *It's also important to not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast.* This is a time to disconnect enough with your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God.

No matter what kind of fast you choose, and even if you choose not to fast, please seek God with us in prayer.

Prayer Guide

As we engage the heart of God and pray for transformative, Christ-centered revival in our city, we will be leaning on the work of Steve Hawthorne and his Austin-based prayer ministry Waymakers. (waymakers.org) The following prayers are adaptations from the Waymakers guide *Seek God for the City 2015*.

As you employ these 21 short prayer entries, or if you choose another method of praying through this season, focus your prayers on the following expressions of Biblical hope:

Revival – Pray that God would powerfully move among His church and the lost of our city

Awakening – Pray for those in our city that are far from God, that they would turn their hearts to Christ

Transformation – Pray for the family of our city, for its leadership and its blessing

Evangelization – Pray specifically that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be proclaimed and believed

Reconciliation – Pray for the healing power of grace to be released in relationships throughout our city

Monday, January 8

Psalm 85:6-9

Will You not Yourself revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You? ⁷ Show us Your lovingkindness, O LORD, And grant us Your salvation. ⁸ I will hear what God the LORD will say; For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones; But let them not turn back to folly. ⁹ Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, That glory may dwell in our land.

Our prayer today is for renewal. Revive us O Lord. Revive our city. Revivals in earlier generations have come and gone, blazing intensely and then sputtering out. Can Your unfailing

love bring an unceasing revival? We know that our love for You fades, but Your love is never-failing. Please show us what your enduring love can do. Meet us with your power and grace. Do something amazing in our city. Surprise us with your glory. We pray this word spoken over John the Baptist, that you would continue to do this in our city.

Luke 1:76-78

...go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; ⁷⁷ To give to His people *the*

knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us...

- Pray for God to expose sin in ways that bring hope in Jesus Christ, our freedom and righteousness
- Pray for the Body of Christ in our city to be awakened to pray and seek God for revival with abandonment
- Pray for the women and mothers in our city

Tuesday, January 8

Isaiah 29:13-14

Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*, ¹⁴ Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed."

Today we pray for the humility to replace our pride and complacency with faith, trust, action, obedience, prayer and mercy. We know what it is like to be impressed by our own religious performance. When we do so, we are among those who have approached You without heart or humility. Please break through our pride. Surprise us with your supremacy. Humble us with your glory O Lord.

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

We have kept ourselves busy and taken pride in our busyness and preoccupation. But our ambitious self-sufficiency has left us weary and distracted. We come to You now, just as You have summoned us to come – close enough to learn who You are. Show us your heart and train us in Your humility.

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Wednesday, January 9

Psalm 51:10-12

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.

Pray for God to rescue our runaway lives so that we can more fully follow Him and His ways
Pray for Christ's humility to replace our pride and heal our brokenness
Pray for the pastors in our city

Search my heart, our hearts, and expose areas of secret sin. For too long we have blamed others and denied our own responsibility. Purify us from the inside out. Grant us an enduring spiritual power to serve you with integrity. We long for the joy of a single-minded devotion to You, our most Holy God.

Mark 1:40-42

And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

As you did, our Savior, with this man so long ago, will you do with us and with our city? Thank you for your willingness to clean us from the pollution of our sin. You are still filled with endless compassion. You are willing to touch us. You can make us clean.

- Pray for God to give us, the body of Christ and those far from God, the desire to be free from sin
- Pray that Christ's compassion would be revealed to those who feel hopeless and alone
- Pray for the marriages in our city

Thursday, January 10

Isaiah 44:3-4

'For I will pour out water on the thirsty *land* And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; ⁴ And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.'

For some of us, Lord, prayers that echo passages like this make us uncomfortable. Save us from the shackles of fear. Allow the Holy Spirit to form our meager prayers into powerfully true expressions before your throne. Pour out your Spirit on us and our city. Inundate us with Your love. Pour out your grace on our children. Grow us in maturity, health and strength.

John 7:37-38

Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

Like that beautiful moment with our Savior, take your stand in our city O God. Raise your voice so that everyone can hear. Call us to come to you. May those far from you hear and respond. You are the only source of life, we confess and celebrate. May Your life cover our city.

Friday, January 11

Isaiah 62:6-7

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; ⁷ And give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Pray for great spiritual thirst throughout our city and in the Body of Christ Pray for man to hear the voice of God and respond in faith
Pray for the orphans and widows in our city

Consistent and persistent prayer is hard, O Lord. But your goodness and gracious plans for our city and our people keep us on our knees. We refuse to believe the lie that You are inactive and uninterested in us and our city. You are not finished with us. Lift up our hopes so that we pray mighty prayers. Grant us stamina at our posts, watching, asking and thanking You.

Luke 18:1-3

Now [Jesus] was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, ² saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. ³ "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him...

We confess we are often prayerless. We lose heart easily. We are too full, too content and too busy. Call us anew to a life of praying with steady determination. Energize us with Your unwavering zeal. Train us to pray in patient pursuit of Your promises.

- Pray for Jesus to encourage our hearts to pray with renewed hope and persistence
- Pray for God to invigorate this special season of prayer in our homes and throughout the

Body of Christ in our city

- Pray for students, professors, administrators and parents

Saturday, January 12

Isaiah 30:18-19

Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. ¹⁹ O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.

Thank you, O Lord, that you are quick to answer when we cry for help. You are as swift as You are patient. We pray that today you act in our hearts, in my heart, O God. Wait no longer, God of patient love. May this be the day when You satisfy Your desire to be known as the God who is gracious to all.

Luke 15:20

"So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

O Jesus, this well-known story of your love for the broken is medicine for a soul who fails to believe this is true of You. You are constantly watching. Expose the hoax of worldly treasures that keep us and so many in our city from returning to You. Awaken their yearning. Convince them of your unfailing love and let the homecoming party begin.

Sunday, January 13

Psalms 103:11-13

Pray for the Body of Christ in our city to give grace to those who are on their way back home to God.

Pray that God would strengthen the heart of parents of wayward children, spouses of wayward partners, etc.

Pray for the Fathers and Husbands of our city

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³ Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

Why is your boundless compassion and grace unknown by so many in our city? Your love is more fiercely loyal than the finest father's. Your constant compassion is more sure and merciful

than the best of mothers. Put Your love on display for all to see. Send a message to people throughout our city that you long to embrace them with love as large as the sky. Use your church to do it.

John 17:20-23

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

Let Jesus' prayer be true of us, O Lord. Let the unity of the Body of Christ in our city be a loud cry for the strength of Your love for all. Let our love for one another be a clarion call for our city to respond to Your love for all.

- Pray for Christians throughout our city to pray with humility for the lost and those far from God
- Pray for as many as you can, by name, of those you know who are far from God
- Pray for those struggling with depression, anxiety and mental illness in our city

Monday, January 14

Psalm 110:1-3

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." ² The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." ³ Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew.

Mighty Messiah, You died to break the power of evil. You ascended to liberate its captives. You alone are crowned with power over every enemy. Extend Your mighty power over our city. Break the grip of evil, darkness and the devil. Cause all of the prisoners of this spiritual battle to hear Your voice and to rise to follow You. Release them. Set the captives free.

Luke 10:17-20

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." ¹⁸ And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. ¹⁹ "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. ²⁰ "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Jesus, be our Captain! As you authorize us, we will act in Your authority. Be our Champion!

Pray for people who are afflicted by dark powers to be liberated by the power of the gospel

- Pray for Christ to be glorified by subduing the darkness in our city

- Pray for the Biblical counselors and mentors in our city

Tuesday, January 15

Isaiah 61:1, 3-4

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners... So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. ⁴ Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.

O God, place your church among the poor and the needy and those far from you with words and deeds of freedom. Empower you people to speak good news with such life that people are transformed by Your Good News. Bring renewal to desolate families throughout our city. Be glorified in the very settings where You are now forgotten, suppressed and rebelled against.

Luke 4:43

But [Jesus] said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."

Jesus, through your church, You are still fulfilling the same purpose in our day, right here in our city. You are pressing forward to peoples and places that have yet to see the demonstration of your power and grace. Do not overlook a single home or neighborhood.

Wednesday, January 16

Isaiah 59:14-16

Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands far away; For truth has stumbled in the street, And uprightness cannot enter. ¹⁵ Yes, truth is lacking; And he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey. Now the LORD saw, And it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice. ¹⁶ And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that there was no one to intercede; Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, And His righteousness upheld Him.

Truth has become scarce in the open squares of our culture and society. Falsehood dilutes almost everything. Integrity is rare. Standing for truth is considered intolerance. O God, do not leave us in this darkness. We call on you to intervene as only you can. Reach in to our city. Expose what is false. Establish the truth and let us walk in the light of your justice and mercy.

Matthew 22:16

"Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.

Pray for the gospel of Christ to be proclaimed throughout our city and that hundreds and thousands of people turn their hearts to the Lord and He received great glory
Pray for the church to demonstrate the power and life of God's kingdom as Jesus did Pray for the children of our city

Jesus, you not only say true things, You are the truth. We welcome You to our city as Teacher, as Truth, as Light. Train us to walk in Your ways so that our entire city and culture honors what is true and right.

- Pray for truth to be recognized in government, education, business, the arts and in media
- Pray for someone by name to seek Christ as true teacher
- Pray for the civil servants of our county and of Houston

Thursday, January 17

Isaiah 58:6-8

"Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? ⁷ "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh? ⁸ "Then your light will break out like the dawn, And your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

We consume so much. We become more selfish every day. Please, O God, give us the courage to turn from the tyranny of constantly satisfying our earthly desires. Turn our attention to You and Your idea of justice and service. Do it through us, Your church. Heal our land.

Matthew 23:23

"For you have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."

We can excel at duties surrounding religion without Your help. But apart from your Spirit we can do nothing that pleases You, nothing that lasts. Do a new work of Your Spirit in Your people. Give us the joy of serving, pursuing justice, extending mercy and grace. Train us to be faithful in Your purpose.

Friday, January 18

Isaiah 49:6

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Lift our vision, O God, to see the broad expanse of Your family. You are the Father of all peoples, as each of the nations is a precious child in your household. Bring your light to illumine every people group on the earth, every language. Light of the world, make us to be Your able light-bearers. Send us also, to the nations who have been brought into our city.

Luke 2:30-32

Pray for God's people to liberate the oppressed from spiritual bondage
Pray for the church of our city to find a tangible way to serve and extend mercy and grace to our city
Pray for the unborn and their mothers in our city.

For my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Let us see Your glory. Since we can't ever figure You out by our own understanding, the truth that brings Your salvation must be revealed to us. May the truth of the Gospel shine among the diverse peoples of our city. Glorify Your Son Jesus as the only Savior, the Way, the Light of the world.

- Pray for the church to seize opportunities in their life to proclaim and live out the gospel
- Pray for those of Muslim faith and heritage in our city
- Pray for those engaged in other false religions in our city

Saturday, January 19

Psalm 65:2, 5

O You who hear prayer, To You all men come. ⁵ By awesome *deeds* You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

You always hear. Nothing escapes your attention. You respond with great love and attention. Today, we ask again for you to continue to be Yourself, O God, the hearer and responder to our prayers. Move powerfully as we intercede for our city and for individuals. Work your grace. Do more than we ask.

Luke 19:37-38

...the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, ³⁸ shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Lord, Jesus, each of Your miracles in the Bible was in some way an answer to prayer. In our city, during this season, outdo Yourself by answering our prayers in miraculous ways. Enable us

to pray with empathy, faith and boldness. Show Your kindness and power so that we can celebrate as Your disciples did, with loud, raucous joy.

Sunday, January 20

Zechariah 8:20-22

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. ²¹ 'The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go." ²² 'So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.'

Only You, O God, can trigger chain reactions of people to move toward You with faith and passion. Draw more than just a few scattered people. We ask you to move among whole cities. Start with ours. Fulfill Your promise in our day by igniting city-wide movements.

Matthew 21:10

Pray for God to encourage those who struggle with doubt
Pray that God's answers to our prayers would become the talk of the town
Pray for the physically disabled in our city and those who provide them with care

The whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

Jesus, our Redeemer, as you shook the culture and expectations of cities in your earthly ministry, do so again today in ours. Many times, you set the entire city buzzing with questions and conversations about You. Stir the hearts of our people to the know the truth of who You really are.

- Pray that our city would be stirred with curiosity about Jesus
- Pray that the Body of Christ in our city would answer this curiosity in truth, clarity and grace
- Pray for those in our city struggling with addiction

Monday, January 21

Psalm 22:27-28

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before You. ²⁸ For the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations.

How long, O Lord, until You fulfill Your promise to be known in every nation? We know that when you return You will set all things right. You are worthy of praise from every people, language and place. You deserve that kind of glory. You are that good. Even today, draw worship from every people. Gather those who love you in every city. Give them courage to honor You openly, especially in places where that is dangerous.

John 12:20-21

Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast. These then came to Philip... and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

People from every nation are eagerly seeking to worship what is true. Their hearts are longing for meaning and substance. Many have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worship the created things rather than You, the Creator. The truth is only found in You, and Jesus is the only way to You, Our Father. Help us to fulfill our role in global evangelism and discipleship. Only You can accomplish a task so large. Train us by Your grace.

Tuesday, January 22

Micah 4:3

And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war.

We are powerless to quell the feuds that rage among the nations. Thus we come before You, God of all nations. Only when You rise to rule will the nations find rest from war. We do not know when, but we trust that You will. Your promise encourages us to begin this work of peace everyday, where we are, as we can and in Your power. Disarm our hearts to move towards

Pray that God will miraculously reach the millions who are seeking truth within a dark religion or culture

Pray for the church to be strong, growing and protected in these places

Pray for honest trust, love, support and partnerships among the churches of our city

people, dismantle grievances, reconcile distances and bring peace. Walk with us and train us in Your ways of peace.

Luke 18:13-14

"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' ¹⁴ 'I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Our Savior, let the cry of this tax collector be the heart cry of those in our city that are far from you. Let it be the prayer of all nations, all peoples, all cultures. Release Your hopes and dreams for every nation as they fix their hope on Jesus and He brings them peace.

- Pray that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who reconcile wars on a global scale
- Pray that Christ would bring peace to relationships throughout our city
- Pray for refugees of Houston and in our city

Wednesday, January 23

Jeremiah 29:7

'Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.'

Forgive us, O God, for speaking of our city with ridicule and pessimism. We, in many ways, have failed to believe your intentions to bring peace and blessing here. Let us see Your vision for our city. Transform our hearts. Bring outbreaks of peace throughout our city and let us celebrate your peace and reconciliation together.

Luke 6:27-28

“But I tell you who hear Me; Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you.”

Jesus, help us to follow Your ways of love. They are so alien and unnatural to our flesh. Save us from merely being nice or pleasant. Instill in us deep kindness, sincerity, humility and Your brand of love. Change our hearts and shape our thoughts to respond to trials, attacks and mistreatment in the way You desire. Help us to become the blessing You desire us to be.

Thursday, January 24

Haggai 2:7, 9

'I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁹'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts.'

Pray that our city would see the Body of Christ in a positive light, because of our love, grace and service

Pray for the persecuted church around the world, especially pastors and those in prison Pray for judges and law enforcement officers

Come Lord Jesus. You are the desire of all nations. Build Your house amidst the chaos of this age. Awaken among the people a desire for the greater glory of Jesus Christ. Gather a great

throng of people to Yourself. Under the canopy of Your presence, let heaven's peace be granted and Jesus be exalted.

Matthew 24:7-8, 14

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. ⁸ "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs. ¹⁴ "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Bitter conflicts are tearing peoples and nations apart. Disasters have obliterated cities. Our hearts are fearful. But Your kingdom is forever. Enable us to be the living testimony of Your kingdom. Use the Body of Christ, Your church, to demonstrate Your kind of reconciliation, peace, healing and grace.

- Pray for the Gospel of Jesus to be proclaimed clearly in the midst of war and conflict and pain
- Pray for churches and pastors in these areas to rise up with faith and boldness
- Pray for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces

Friday, January 25

Isaiah 2:2-3

Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths."

We want to walk in Your ways. We need You to teach and train our steps. We long to live in a land of justice, joy and generous love. Teach our children. Instruct our elders. Train our leaders. Educate our educators. Equip our pastors and shepherds with your nearness. Lead us to walk in the wisdom of Your ways.

John 8:2

At dawn He appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around Him, and He sat down to teach them.

Your words, O Jesus, were so appealing and powerful that people rose at dawn and crowded near to hear You. We have not been as eager to hear Your teaching. Forgive our complacency. Equip us, each of us, to change our city through the teaching, preaching and modeling of Your Living Word. Gather us to Yourself and under the banner of Your truth. Disciple us to make disciples.

Saturday, January 26

Zechariah 9:9-10

Pray for the powerful preaching and teaching of God's Word in our city Pray for a new dawn in our city as many people gather to Jesus Christ Pray for the influential business men and women of our city

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ ... And He will speak peace to the nations...

Your kingdom does not come by conquest. Instead of invasion, You come by invitation. And so we pray that our city would gladly welcome you, Jesus, as Jerusalem did on Palm Sunday. Come to us, lifting your voice to proclaim Your peace to the nations and to our city. Disarm the arguments of those who deny You. Dismantle the defenses of those who are resisting Your love and offer of grace. Instill in our souls an enduring hope in You.

John 12:19

"Look how the whole world has gone after Him."

This statement from Your detractors is still a welcoming prayer and hope for us and our city, O God. Instead of typical religious activities of mundane routine, we pray that our city would be shaken with an explosion of joy as thousands welcome the long-awaited Messiah into their hearts. Disclose yourself to the lost in our city, Lord Jesus. Make yourself known.

- Pray that God's Spirit would open people's hearts to the Gospel
- Pray for the parachurch ministries of our city, mission organizations and specific outreaches
- Pray for our seminaries, theological training centers and Biblical professors

Sunday, January 27

Psalm 24:1-10

A Psalm of David. The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. ²For He has founded it upon the seas And established it upon the rivers. ³Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. ⁵He shall receive a blessing from the LORD And righteousness from the God of his salvation. ⁶This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face-- *even* Jacob. Selah. ⁷Lift up your heads, O gates, And be lifted up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in! ⁸Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong

and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift *them* up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in! ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.

As we close this special season of fasting and prayer, O God, hear our hearts yet again for our city. Please bring transformative, Christ-centered revival. Let it be all about Jesus. Let all the other names fade away, names of churches and individuals. Let it all be about Jesus. Fill the earth with Your glory, and we pray that You start here among us. Open the gates of heaven and come down. Visit us with power. Save the lost. Heal the broken. Revive the weary. Show us Your glory and Your blessing.

Give thanks to God today for the past 21 days
Worship God today for specific answers to our many prayers
Pray again for awakening and revival in our city
Pray for the Body of Christ to be bold, to be a light, to speak with truth and grace Pray, by name,
for those that you know that are far from God