



# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

**W**elcome to the 2024 edition of 21-days of Prayer and Fasting. During the next three weeks, our church family will be joining together to seek God's heart for our lives, our church, and our world. Each day will feature a different activity, prayer emphasis, and selected Scripture passages. The focus, however, is not on completing all the suggested tasks; it's on drawing closer to God and experiencing more of His power and presence in our lives. Our desire is that this will be a season when we see a fresh move of God in our midst—when His glory and grace is made evident to all.

As you proceed through this season of growth, you may wish to keep a notebook or journal on hand to record your experiences and insights from day to day. If work and family commitments make it difficult to follow this guide exactly, feel free to shuffle the activities as necessary.

May God bless you during these 21 days and throughout 2024.



## WEEK ONE (JANUARY 1-7)

**MONDAY:** As a spiritual discipline rooted in Scripture, fasting ignites a spiritual hunger for more of God. As you fast, you choose to go without something good in order to focus more intently on something better. You assume a spirit of humility and submission before God, inviting His Holy Spirit to take you deeper into your relationship with Him. When combined with prayer and repentance, fasting can position you for tremendous growth! Typically, fasting means going without food. This can mean fasting from only selected foods or meals for a span of days or weeks, or fasting from all food entirely. Consult your health care provider if you have health considerations or intend to participate in an extended fast. Note that it's common for people to still drink juice, water, or broth while fasting from solid foods.

At times, fasting involves going without something other than food. For example, you might choose to fast from social media, television, coffee, or anything else that you enjoy. Rather than devoting time and energy to those pursuits, you choose to focus on the things of God and experience Him more fully.

Through humble prayer, decide what you will be fasting during these next 21 days and identify the area of your life where you most need God to step in. Determine what lifestyle adjustments you will need to make, then use this reading plan to guide you through these 21 days. Write down your most needed breakthroughs and submit them to God through prayer.

**Parents:** Discuss with your children how prayer and fasting are spiritual practices that prepare the way for God to work in your lives. Help your children identify what they will fast and how they would like to see a move of God.

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 58:6-9; Matthew 6:16-18; Acts 13:2-3.

**Prayer:** Father in heaven, during these next 21 days, I commit to seeking You wholeheartedly and ask You to reveal Yourself to me in new and fresh ways throughout this journey. With humility, I give You permission to do whatever You want to do in me or through me. Amen.

**TUESDAY:** Jesus set a standard of grace and forgiveness, not legalism and condemnation. He went to the Cross in order to offer you forgiveness, and He offers it to you freely.





The expectation, however, is that you will in turn extend forgiveness to those who have hurt or offended you, too. In fact, a failure to extend forgiveness to others can prevent you from receiving forgiveness yourself, and a spirit of unforgiveness will limit any growth you could experience during these 21 Days.

Is there someone to whom you need to offer grace and forgiveness today?

**Parents:** Talk with your children about the importance of offering forgiveness. What does it mean to “turn the other cheek”? What benefits are experienced by being a forgiving person? How are you acting like Jesus when you forgive others?

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 6:27-31; Romans 8:1-2.

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for Your amazing gift of forgiveness. I give You praise that I can live in freedom instead of guilt and condemnation. As I have received Your grace in my life, teach me to extend grace to those around me by offering forgiveness when they wrong me, too. Amen.

**WEDNESDAY:** People often find themselves pretending to be something they are not. They might appear to have it all together outwardly, but inwardly they may be battling with a multitude of challenges and temptations. God does not look upon your appearance, though; He looks at the heart and knows absolutely everything about you. What, if anything, would you like to lay bare before Him? Anything you need to admit or confess? Any secret struggles or insecurities? In what ways do you want to experience more of His grace and mercy today?

**Parents:** While a person’s actions are important, God is much more concerned with his or her heart. With your children, discuss some of the qualities He wants to develop within each of us.

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 139:23-24; Hebrews 4:12-16.

**Prayer:** Father, thank You for what You are doing in my life. I do not want to merely do the right actions; I want You to make me Christlike in my character, my motivations, and my passions. Please continue to transform my heart to reflect Your heart. Amen.



**THURSDAY:** Invite God to lay three specific people on your heart that you can influence for Him during the next 12 months. They might currently be far from God, they may be struggling spiritually, or perhaps they could simply use a mentor. Identify ways you can help them grow in faith and the steps you will take to initiate it. Spend time in silence and allow Him to bring specific people to your mind.

**Parents:** Read John 3:16-17 with your children, then talk about God's great love that propelled Jesus to enter into His Creation. Explain how He came to rescue each of us from bondage to sin.

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:35-38; John 3:16-17.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You for coming to save me. You have rescued me and set me upon a lifelong journey with You, and I know that You extend the same offer to each and every person. Use me to shine Your love to those around me. Teach me to gently and lovingly point others toward You. Amen.

**FRIDAY:** God is a generous God, and He has demonstrated this generosity to us in a multitude of ways. As He transforms and shapes us by His presence, He teaches us to also be generous. Like with fasting, He uses generosity to break the hold that "stuff" can have on us, enabling us to live in freedom instead.

Choose a way to express generosity today. It might mean making a donation to the church or a local charity, re-gifting some items to bless someone else, or giving blood to help save lives. You could even give the gift of time to visit a shut-in or help someone with a specific need. Give your gift for the benefit of others, thanking God for the opportunity to be a blessing in their lives.

**Parents:** Involve your children in this process while discussing the value of generosity.

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 11:24-25; Acts 2:44-47; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

**Prayer:** Father, thank You that You are a generous God. As I grow more and more like You, teach me to show others the same generosity You have shown toward me. Amen.



**SATURDAY:** Each Saturday during these 21 days, you will be encouraged to practice the ancient Christian tradition of Lectio Divina, or “Divine Reading”. This way of reading the Bible dates back to the early centuries of the Christian Church, and is designed as a way for us to slow down and allow Scripture to speak to us in a new way. It is not intended to replace the regular study of the Word, but rather as a way of allowing the Scripture to come to you.

Lectio Divina typically involves four stages:

- **Lectio (Reading):** Read the selected passage of Scripture slowly, over and over, to let it sink in. Read the text slowly, attentively, and with an open heart. Read silently and out loud. Focus on the words without trying to figure out what they mean. Simply absorb the passage as a gift from God.
- **Meditatio (Meditation):** Review the passage again, and select a word or phrase that jumps out to you. Contemplate its meaning and how it applies to your life. Meditate on it for a full five minutes, deepening your understanding of the text and considering its implications for your spiritual journey.
- **Oratio (Prayer):** Engage in a conversation with God, expressing your thoughts, feelings, and desires that have arisen during your meditation on the passage. This is a time for personal prayer and communion with God. Invite God to show you what He wants you to do with what He has revealed to you, and listen closely for His response.
- **Contemplatio (Contemplation):** In this final stage, simply rest in the presence of God. Thank Him for the gift of Scripture you have received. Write down your thoughts and impressions from this experience in a journal.

Today, take an extended period of time to focus on Psalm 1:1-6. Allow 5-10 minutes for each of the above stages. Be receptive to any correction or redirection that God may reveal to you, and allow Him to minister to you through His Word. When you receive a message, weigh it against a more objective understanding of Scripture, remembering that He will never tell you something that will conflict with what has been revealed in His Word.



**Parents:** Create a safe environment for your children to read through these verses for themselves, then express what God may be speaking to them. Spend time praying about these together.

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 1:1-6.

**Prayer:** God, thank You for revealing Yourself to me through your Word. As I respond to Your prompting today, I praise you and trust what you are doing within me. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, remind me of Your goodness and faithfulness. Amen.

**SUNDAY:** Set aside a block of time for worshipping God and expressing your adoration toward Him. It might take 30 minutes, an hour, or more. It might involve singing along with some worship music, or it could mean sitting in quiet reverence. It could take place during our Sunday Service, or it could be during a private time of worship. Perhaps you'll be prompted to express your love for God through a poem or artwork. Praise Him for adopting you as His beloved child. Thank Him for bringing you into His spiritual family.

**Parents:** Invest time with your children today, whether playing a game at home or going out into the community. God has entrusted you with the raising of your children, so devote time and attention into your relationship with them. Have fun and create some new memories together!

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 19:1-14; Psalm 86:8-13; Psalm 105:1-7.

**Prayer:** Jesus, I am honoured to be part of Your family. Thank You for inviting me into community with You and for welcoming me as a full participant in Your Kingdom. I am so grateful for all You have done. Amen.





## WEEK TWO (JANUARY 8-14)

**MONDAY:** Words are powerful, carrying with them the power of life and death. They can build up, and they can tear down. They can create, and they can destroy. They can express gratitude, and they can convey contempt. Learning to control our tongues and use words that add value can be a challenge, particularly during difficult seasons of life. How can you speak words of life today? Is there someone you could bless? Call a friend or family member who could use a word of encouragement and speak into his or her life. Pray that he or she experiences a fresh sense of God's presence.

**Parents:** Guide your children to create a card or letter to express thanks to someone who has provided them with a positive influence and an example to follow.

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 33:4-9; Luke 6:44-45; Ephesians 4:29-32.

**Prayer:** God, thank You that none of us travel through life alone. You are with us, and You call us to be there for one another. Use me to be an encouragement in someone's life today. Amen.

**Tuesday:** In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 6, Jesus talks about doing good deeds in such a way that your left hand doesn't know what your right hand is doing. Rather, you simply bless others without seeking any credit or recognition for yourself. If anything, all the attention goes toward God or others. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

How can you practice this spiritual discipline of Secrecy today? Whether it be with a friend, family member, or complete stranger, how can you bless someone secretly without drawing any attention to yourself?

**Parents:** While Jesus talks in Matthew 6 about doing good deeds in secret, He also describes in Matthew 5 that there's a place for doing good deeds publicly for others to see. With your children, discuss the difference between doing things publicly and doing things in secret. What's the value of each? What role does motivation play? How can you as a family secretly bless someone today?



**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 6:1-4; Matthew 5:14-16.

**Prayer:** Jesus, as I seek to bless someone today without gaining any recognition for myself, I direct all the praise toward You. May this act of love performed in secret be a real blessing, and may You be glorified through it. Amen.

**WEDNESDAY:** Take a walk or drive through your community, praying for the people in the homes you pass. Pray for the transforming presence of Christ in the lives of the residents. As you pray, ask the Lord to direct you and be responsive to His leadings. Seek His heart and divine insight. Recognize the deep compassion God has for the people all around you, and invite Him to instill that same heart within you. Then, motivated by this compassion, offer yourself to serve as His representative within your community.

**Parents:** Pray aloud during your prayer walk or prayer drive, taking turns with your children as you go.

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 2 Corinthians 4:1-12.

**Prayer:** Jesus, I pray for those in my community who are far from You. I pray that they will come to know You personally, that You may be glorified in their lives and homes. I offer myself to serve as Your representative, lovingly and gently pointing people toward You. I ask this in Your holy name, Amen.

**THURSDAY:** As we reach the halfway point of these 21 days, what has God been revealing to you so far? What have you been learning about Him? What have you discovered about yourself? Are there actions, thoughts, or attitudes for which you need to seek forgiveness? Have you gained a new appreciation for what He is doing in your life? If He has revealed something powerful to you, share it with someone else. If He has uncovered areas of sin, confess it and ask Him to forgive you. If He has reminded you how you have harmed others, seek reconciliation.

**Parents:** Prompt your children to say a prayer of repentance for something they have said or done that requires forgiveness.





**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 4:9; Deuteronomy 8:10-14; James 1:22-25.

**Prayer:** Father, my desire is to glorify You in word, thought, and deed. Forgive me for times I have failed. I ask you to cleanse me and empower me to live a life of integrity before You. Amen.

**FRIDAY:** The message of Jesus is for you, but not only for you. It is for every other person on the planet, too. Is God laying a particular country or people group on your heart today? Perhaps one that holds a personal connection for you, or one that has been in the news recently? Spend some time praying that the Word of God would be proclaimed with power and that lives would be transformed by His grace in that part of the world. For ideas on how to pray for your selected country, visit [operationworld.org](http://operationworld.org).

**Parents:** Pull out a globe or map and talk with your children about how missionaries have gone throughout the world to share the message of Jesus, often at great personal risk. Choose one country and look up information about it. As a family, pray that the people in that country would be receptive to Jesus. Pray for the safety and effectiveness of those proclaiming His message throughout the region.

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 9:35-38; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.

**Prayer:** Lord of the harvest, I pray today for missionaries who have travelled to foreign lands as Your ambassadors, often at great personal risk. I pray for Your blessing and anointing upon them, that they might see abundant fruit from their ministry. Amen.

**SATURDAY:** Again this week, take time to participate in the ancient practice of Lectio Divina. (You can find the full description on the Saturday of Week 1 of this guide.) While working through the four stages of Reading, Meditation, Prayer, and Contemplation, allow God to minister and speak to you through His Word. This week, focus on Philippians 3:12-21.

**Parents:** Encourage your children to read through these verses for themselves, then express what God may be speaking to them. Spend time praying together.

**Scripture Reading:** Philippians 3:12-21.



**Prayer:** God, thank You for revealing Yourself to me through your Word. As I respond to Your prompting today, I praise you and trust what you are doing within me. Thank you for loving and accepting me as I am, but also for the grace to grow and mature into the person You created me to be. Amen.

**SUNDAY:** A preoccupation with the problems and difficulties of life can leave us enslaved to feelings of bitterness, criticism, and frustration. This is not God's desire for us, however, as He calls us to live in freedom instead. Rather than becoming consumed by negativity, choose to focus on His many blessings, developing a heart of gratitude and grace in response to His goodness.

How has God blessed you? What are the top three ways He has recently shown His favour toward you? Glorify Him and spend time in His presence, giving thanks for all He has done.

**Parents:** Perhaps while eating a meal together as a family, take turns describing the many blessings of God.

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 103:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

**Prayer:** Lord, I celebrate Your presence within me. I have hope because of who You are and what You have done in my life. Thank you for your many blessings. Be glorified through me I pray. Amen.



## WEEK THREE (JANUARY 15-21)

**MONDAY:** Life can be chaotic, and sometimes we add to the chaos ourselves. Amidst the commotion of activity and noise that we surround ourselves with, we may even find ourselves unable to rest in God's presence or hear Him speak into our lives. Indeed, the thought of spending time in solitude and silence before Him might seem like nothing more than a lofty ideal.

Set aside your busyness and carve out time today for the purpose of connecting with God. Instead of giving yourself to all the distractions vying for your attention, choose to invest that time in still silence, meditating upon God and His Word. Invite God to speak to you and receive whatever He has to say.

**Parents:** Encourage your children to sit in silent prayer, too, for one minute per year of age. Reiterate that this is not punishment; it is an opportunity to enjoy the presence of God. Finish with a discussion about the experience.

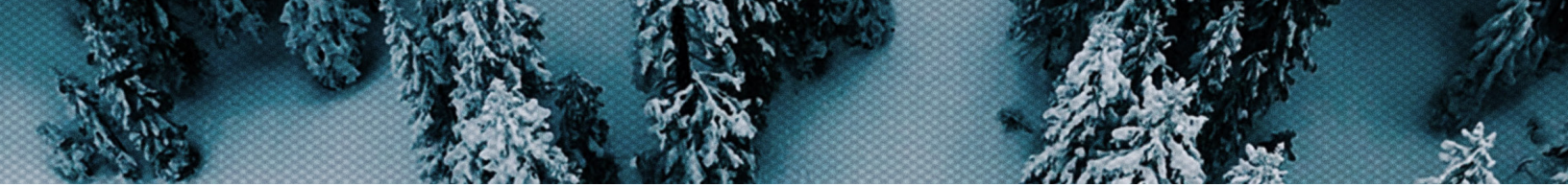
**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 46:10; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2; Mark 1:35-39.

**Prayer:** God, as I spend this time in silence, I invite You to speak into my life and reveal Yourself to me. Give me ears to hear and eyes to see what You have for me today. Amen.

**TUESDAY:** Jesus promised His followers that, as long as they remained in Him, they could ask whatever they wanted and their request would be granted. (See John 15:7.) This was not a license to act selfishly, but rather an invitation to align themselves with Him. His desires would become their desires, which would be reflected in the requests they made. The same is true for followers of Jesus today. As you draw closer to Him, you experience Him working in and through you according to His will and for His glory. Your desires begin to mirror His desires. Your thoughts begin to reflect His thoughts. Your heart begins to resonate with His heart.

What would you like to ask of God today? Express your heart's desire to Him, while inviting Him to guide and shape you in the process.





**Parents:** Talk about the difference between praying selfishly and praying selflessly. What does it mean to remain in Jesus while asking God to act?

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 6:31-33; Matthew 26:39-42; John 15:5-8.

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for loving me so selflessly and giving of Yourself so freely. Thank You, too, for making Your power available to me through prayer. Help me and guide me to use it according to Your will and for Your glory. Amen.

**WEDNESDAY:** Bring glory to Jesus by offering praise for who He is and what He has done in your life. Identify three ways you have been changed by His presence, then share them with someone else.

**Parents:** Talk with your children about what it means to grow in your love for Jesus. Help them put into words what following Jesus means to them.

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 5:22-25.

**Prayer:** Thank You, Lord, for Your transformative work in my life. Little by little, You are changing me into Your glorious image. Please continue this work until that day when it is finally finished and I stand complete in Your presence. Amen.

**THURSDAY:** God designed us to experience community, encouraging and spurring one another on in our spiritual walks. Who are the other believers that speak into your life and help you grow? Spend time praying today for those who God has placed around you in Christian community. Reach out to them to express your gratitude.

**Parents:** Guide your children to pray for their teachers and their children's ministry leaders. Write a card or send an email to say "thank you" for all that they do.

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 1:8-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25.

**Prayer:** Father, thank You for those You have placed around me on this faith journey. Bind us together in community, empowering us to support, serve, and encourage one another along the way. Amen.



**FRIDAY:** Perform an act of kindness for someone else as an expression of God's love. For example, you could provide free babysitting for a single parent, pay for someone's gas, or prepare a meal for someone who is lonely, sick, or overwhelmed. Opportunities to show kindness abound, so be attentive and creative. With no expectation of reciprocity, how can you selflessly seek to bless another?

**Parents:** Choose an act of kindness that your children can perform alongside you.

**Scripture Reading:** Galatians 5:13-14; Philippians 2:1-13.

**Prayer:** Lord, I'm grateful for the privilege of representing You and showing Your love through simple acts of kindness. May the things I do for others be a true reflection of Your great love for them. Amen.

**SATURDAY:** Join again in the ancient practice of Lectio Divina. (You can find the full description on the Saturday of Week 1 of this guide.) While working through the four stages of Reading, Meditation, Prayer, and Contemplation, allow God to minister and speak to you through His Word. This week, focus on Romans 12:1-21.

**Parents:** Encourage your children to read through these verses for themselves, then express what God may be speaking to them. Spend time praying together.

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 12:1-21.

**Prayer:** God, thank You for revealing Yourself to me through your Word. As I respond to Your prompting today, I praise you and trust what you are doing within me. Thank you that, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in my life, I am being transformed and equipped to fulfill God's perfect will for my life. Amen.

**SUNDAY:** As you conclude these 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, reflect on what Jesus has been revealing to you about Himself, yourself, and others. For what experiences are you most grateful? What new step is He now calling you to take? How will you continue to grow throughout 2024? Are there 2-3 new habits of growth that you can incorporate into your life?



**Parents:** Allow your children to tell you about their experiences during these 21 days, too. How has God been working in their lives?

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 3:1-6; Romans 8:31-39; Philippians 1:3-6.

**Prayer:** Father, I thank You for Your work within me. You have refined me and transformed me, and I praise You for all You have done. Even though the process can be difficult, I know that You are doing something wonderful. Thank you for the new life You have given me. Continue to lead me and shape me I pray. Amen.



