



January 5th—28th

Rest on Sundays

Rev. Christopher C. Moore, Senior Pastor

## FROM THE PASTOR...

In most cases, a spiritual fast involves abstaining from food while focusing on prayer. This can mean refraining from snacks between meals, skipping one or two meals a day, abstaining only from certain foods, or a total fast from all food for an entire day or longer. Fasting requires self-control and discipline as one denies the natural desires of the flesh.

During spiritual fasting, the believer's focus is removed from the physical things of this world and intensely concentrated on God. Put differently, fasting directs our hunger toward God. It clears the mind and body of earthly attentions and draws us close to God. So, as we gain spiritual clarity of thought while fasting, it allows us to hear God more clearly. Fasting also demonstrates a profound need for God's help and guidance through complete dependence upon Him.

In that, we must understand that fasting and prayer are synonymous; they literally walk hand in hand. Fasting that does not include prayer is merely a diet. While many people fast to lose weight, dieting is not the purpose of a spiritual fast. The purpose is to produce a transformation in *us*—a clearer, more focused attention and dependence upon God.

Our aim for this month is to seek God for a closer walk with Him as we face the challenges of this new year. I encourage you to join us in this corporate faith walk, as we not only glean the individual spiritual benefits, but the corporate benefits of these exceptional spiritual disciplines. We want to show God that we have a ***Commitment to Excel, Compassion to Engage, and Courage to Expand.***

The entire church body is asked to unite in a 21 day fast during the month of January. **We will be fasting and praying January 5, 2022—January 28, 2022.** Each day, Monday through Saturday we will pray for God to bless specific areas in our personal and spiritual lives. ***Sunday will be a day of rest from the fast.***

Your Pastor,

*Rev. Christopher C. Moore*

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FASTING?

Fasting is designed to intensify our dependence on God by weakening our dependence on food and other things. How does it do that?

- 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.
- Fasting teaches contentment. (I Timothy 6:6)-Fasting expresses and deepens our hunger for God.
- 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” (Colossians 1:17). Therefore, in experiences of fasting, we are abstaining from food or other activities and feasting on God’s Word.
- Fasting must always, first and foremost, center on God. **It must be about Him.**

## WHAT DOES FASTING TEACH US?

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.

## WHAT IS BIBLICAL FASTING?

Biblical fasting involves abstaining from eating food and replacing it with prayer. Here are a few of the occasions for fasting we see in God’s word.

It was in a time of fasting that the Holy spirit spoke **send out Paul and Barnabas for the work of the ministry. It’s in fasting God calls us into ministry Act 13:1-3**

In **Esther** a fast was called for deliverance of her people who were about to be killed. If you need deliverance from an addiction or stronghold in your life. It’s time to fast.

We fast for healing in our bodies. Isaiah 58:8

In **Jonah 3:5-7** the people of Nineveh fasted for mercy from God and for salvation. We fast for our neighbors and family members to know Christ.

It was during fasting, Daniel received one of the greatest revelations from God about his people and the future messiah. We fast for greater revelation of God and insight into our daily lives. **Daniel 10:2-3**

It was during fasting **Cornelius** and his family became the first non-Jewish people to receive salvation in Jesus and the baptism of the holy Spirit. We fast for our families, our marriages, and our children to grow closer to God. **Acts 10:30**

**Jehoshaphat** was king of Judah and a vast army marched against him and he declared a fast. They went out to battle appointing singers and worshippers and God caused the enemy armies to go into confusion and kill on another. The people of Judah arrived to the battle field and saw dead bodies as far as the eye could see. God went before them. God gave them victory through fasting. What battles are ahead that you can’t see in 2020? When we fast and pray, God goes out ahead and defeats the enemy without a fight, but by His spirit.

The **disciples** couldn’t cast out a demon out of a boy and they said why can’t we do, Jesus said these only come out with prayer and fasting. We fast and pray to defeat demonic activity.

**Jesus** fasted 40 days before ministry. Let’s take the first month of 2022 and fast and pray to prepare for all that God has for us this year.

## HOW TO GET STARTED ON YOUR FAST

### Step 1: Clarify the purpose of your fast.

Why are you fasting? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His purpose and objectives for your 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.

### 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:

1. How long you will fast? One meal, one day, one week, several weeks, certain days (beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts).
2. What type of fast does God want you to undertake?
3. What physical or social activities you will restrict?
4. 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. We must prepare. The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. There 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.
- Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high fat and sugary foods. Eating raw fruit and vegetables prior to your fast is helpful. 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.
- 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)

## TYPES OF FASTS

### 1. Selective Fast

**Daniel 10:3** - Choose to abstain from breads, sweets, sodas, coffee, and even meat. Perhaps spend some time reading through Daniel's fast in Daniel chapter 1 and chapter 10. Stick to only fruits and vegetables like he did. 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. Determine the timing and duration ahead of time and pray through it.

### 2. Partial Fast

This fast involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either be correlated to specific times of the day, such as 6:00am to 6:00pm, or from sunup to sundown.

### 3. Complete Fast

**Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9** - 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. The complete fast is going without food and only drinking water or juice. Example could be a 3 day fast, or one meal a day or eating only dinners.

### 4. Soul Fast

**Daniel 6:18** - The king's voluntary "fasting" from entertainment in the time of Daniel helps us further understand yet another type of fast. This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have a health condition, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. Fasting from things like entertainment can be particularly helpful and accessible to kids and teens. Think of abstaining from television, social media, 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.** If you do not choose to fast, or no matter what kind of fast you choose, seek God with us in prayer.

# JANUARY 2022

## Prayer and Fasting Calendar

1/5-1/28

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
1						1/2
2	3	4	5 Pray for Pastor & Sis. Moore and family, and their vision for the church	6 Pray for God to open our eyes that we may see clearly	7 Pray for the spiritual growth of our church	8/9 Pray for revelation of our individual first fruit offering to God in 2022
3	10 Pray for a commitment to excel in how we serve God	11 Pray for the evangelistic heart of our congregation	12 Pray for insight on the commitment of tithing	13 Pray for the men and women of our church and their spiritual discernment	14 Pray for the youth and children to see good vs. evil and know the difference	15/16 Pray that NMCBC will see the power of love and unity
4	17 Pray for the courage to expand our service to God	18 Pray for the evangelistic heart of our congregation	19 Pray for the President and Vice President of our nation	20 Pray for governmental authorities	21 Pray for pastoral leadership across our nation	22/23 Pray for the places of worship across our nation
5	24 Pray for compassion to engage with one another	25 Pray that we see with a heart of forgiveness	26 Pray that we see the need for intercession	27 Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for renewed sight	28 Pray a prayer of praise for seeing His mighty works through our fast	29/30