

PCF's week of
prayer & fasting

6th - 12th
January 2020



"The seven 'P's"

"Spread, Serve &
Strengthen"

Introduction

We are calling all to enter a period of 7 days prayer and spiritual fasting, starting on Monday 6th January to Sunday 12th January 2020.

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 food items, or a total fast from all food for an entire day or longer (see notes on page 3).

As a church, we recognise the importance of starting the new decade in a manner which brings honour and glory to God. For many, the last 12 months brought with it challenges, disappointments, hurts and pain. But amidst these lessons were learnt, deliverance and healing received, burdens and bondages removed and broken, and we came through triumphantly as victors. And it is for these things and so much more why we give all praise to God.

In recognising that it is God's grace and mercy that has allowed us to enter 2020, we want to ensure that we give Him all that we can give, and that which He is deserving of. We want to ensure in every situation, that we give our 'first fruit', our best to the Lord. Our best means to give Him our total being – i.e. our heart, mind, and soul. It is to present ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing – as commanded in Romans 12:1. Our best also means giving the first of everything we have – i.e. our time, effort, and resources.

Our period of fasting is a time of preparing our hearts, mind, and soul to give our best. Fasting draws us closer to God and directs our hunger toward Him. It clears the mind and body of everyday concerns and help us to gain spiritual clarity of thought and to distinctly hear his voice. Fasting also demonstrates our sincere need of God's help and guidance through complete dependence on Him.

As we embark on this 7 day of prayer and fasting, let us endeavour to give God our most superior work—i.e. our entire being. 2020 belongs to Him.

He will be central in everything we do in Jesus name.

Choosing Your Fast

Reasons for Fasting

- ◆ to know God's will and direction for your life
- ◆ for a miracle or breakthrough
- ◆ for a word inside you that only God can make possible
- ◆ a fresh touch from God in your life
- ◆ a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord
- ◆ to have greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's voice
- ◆ to break free from bondages that have been holding you captive
- ◆ for the salvation of friends and/or loved ones
- ◆ to bring your flesh into subjection, to be more influenced by the Holy Spirit

Medical Advice: For medical reasons, some people may not be able to fast from food altogether. They may choose to abstain only from certain foods, like sugar or chocolate, or from something other than food. Doing without something temporarily, such as television, as a way of redirecting our focus toward God. **Consult your doctor before going on the fast.**

Types of Fast

Complete Fast: Abstaining from food and liquids for a period of time (see Esther 4:15-16).

Normal fast: Abstaining from food but drinking liquids. This fast can be exercised over the course of a full day or for a specific period of the day. The majority of people do this type of fast. Fasting from for example, from sunrise to sunset, or from 6am to 6pm. Or from 8pm in the evening and breaking the fast at 3pm the next day.

Partial Fast or Daniel Fast: Some people see the daily periodic breaking of the normal fast as a type of partial fast. But a partial fast could allow the eating of certain foods. The Daniel type fast is based on Daniel 1:8 and 10:2-3 which includes a restriction on the consumption of all meats, sweets, alcohol and pleasurable foods.

Electronic Entertainment Fast: Abstaining from social media and all forms of electronic entertainment (movies, TV, video games, etc.) This is a wonderful fast for everyone! Still, it is important that when you embark on any spiritual food fast, that you include this form of abstinence also. When you break the fast, try not to rush back into social entertainment. Continue to think about whatever it is the Lord had shown you during the period of fasting, enjoy the Lord.

P1

PURIFICATION



2 Corinthians 7:1, Mark 7:20-23

Life Focus: King David's prayer for forgiveness - Psalm 51:1-2

The purpose of purification is to restore something back to a state of purity. God is Holy and will not connect with things which are impure (Leviticus 10:10). The ritual of cleansing symbolised often by washing infers the removal of something which should not be there. When something is dirty, it is washed down and made clean and then it is fit for purpose.

During the year while we focused on our churches spiritual objective of '*Living in the Spirit*,' it became clear to me that a key principle to maintaining the Spirit led lifestyle, was the position and condition of the mind. Today, throughout this week, and moving forward, let us work towards the purification of our minds. Let us allow the Lord to clean our minds of ungodly thinking. Ungodly thinking comprises of thoughts, attitudes, mindset, beliefs, convictions and opinions that are opposed to the mindset of God our Father.

Let us then submit our thinking to the Lord in order for Him to cleanse our minds for only He is able to this (Proverbs 30:12; Job 4:17; Jeremiah 33:8).

Prayer Points

- ◆ Lord reveal to me where my thoughts have been unlike yours
- ◆ Pray also that He might renew our thought processing, and thinking, and align our minds alongside His – renew our minds.
- ◆ Grant me a deep desire to embrace and submit to your ways

Philippians 2:1-11**Life Focus: Samson**

After purification comes consecration, when a thing has been consecrated to the Lord, it must not be used for any other purpose than where it has been placed within God's order.

Samson was dedicated to the Lord before his birth, he was born a *Nazarite*. A person didn't become a Nazarite because of their place of his birth (Nazareth), but based on a vow made to God. A Nazarite had to live by a strict code which included abstaining from strong drinks, refraining from cutting their hair, and not being in contact with the dead. Their lives were to be one of holiness and devotion to God.

As Samson pushed against his God ordained placement, his life took a turn for the worst. He ended up being captured by his and God's enemies, and his life came to an untimely end. The story of Samson, is one of a powerful man who failed to embrace the **place** which God had set for him. The implication is that he provides an example of awe, but in some matters not one to be followed. Once something has been cleansed, it can be placed in position, and so we conclude that after purification comes consecration which means being **placed** where we should be placed for the purposes of God.

Our focus yesterday was on the purification of our minds, we must avoid contamination at all cost. We do this by centering our minds on the things of the Lord. The Bible states in Isaiah 26:3 *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you*. And that is the secret of maintaining our placement/consecration, we commit to thinking how the Lord wants us to think (Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:1-4).

Prayer Points

- ◆ Help us to be influenced by the word of our Lord and not by the world
- ◆ Help us to prioritise the centering of our minds on the things which matter to Jesus Christ
- ◆ Help us to value our faith and relationship with the Lord above all other things

P3

PRESERVATIVE

2 Kings 2:18-22

Life Focus: Salt

When you look up the word preservative in a dictionary you see that a preservative stops certain things from decomposing. Salt in the bible is described similarly but among other things, for purification and is symbolic of fellowship and peace amongst brethren (Mark 9:50; Col 4:6) It is interesting that sacrifices were not acceptable to God unless they were presented with salt (Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:24).

The salt signifies the fact that the covenant that God makes with His people is one of salvation, but specifically through the work of His Son Jesus the Christ. God alone provides the means and quality which saves a person, and the obedient addition of salt by the worshipper, confirms their belief.

Purification leads to consecration which in effect, leads to us being promoted to a glorious place for service. In order to remain in that place and not decompose and become unusable, the quintessence of the Spirit of God has to saturate our very being. We have to be marinated in the presence of God, soaked in the glory of the Father.

We remain fresh and purposeful only as long as we remain in His will (2 Chronicles 15:2; Leviticus 26: 39-42; Deut 30:1-3). And that is why we seek His word and will, for by pursuing this, we will always remain in His love (John 15:9-17).

Devotional Thinking and Prayer Points:

- ◆ What happens to our effectiveness when the church becomes like the world (Mark 9:50)?
- ◆ What happens to Christ's influence through us when our opinions and ideals and attitudes and practices are similar to that of the world (1 Peter 3:1-2)?
- ◆ Pray for the effectiveness of the church throughout the year 2020

P4

PRACTICE

John 15:1-27— Love One Another

Life Focus: Good Samaritan

Today our task is to read and re-read Matthew 18:1-6 as many times as we can. Note that Jesus was only using the little child as an example of what His disciples who would populate His glorious kingdom should be like. So then, these 'little ones,' are humble disciples. Also take note of the threatening intensity in Christ's language, especially regarding how His humble disciples are treated. Whatever you do, **DO NOT CAUSE ONE OF HIS HUMBLE FOLLOWERS WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM TO STUMBLE AND FALL.** Christ will stand alongside and bring retribution on behalf of His little ones.

So what would the positive response to this word be? It would be to do all that we can to support and build up the faith of the humble followers of Christ. Receiving each other means to accept each other, to welcome and entertain each other, to show hospitality, to take each one by the hand. Jesus said that the witness of the church will find effectiveness only in our unity and love. John 17:21 says that *they may all be one, just 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 have sent me.* Again this essential principle is expressed in John 13:35 *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

The story of the good Samaritan provides a solid example of how love can be exercised (Luke 10:25-37). You should put into your own words how you would define the Samaritans act of love. What cannot be denied is that he showed mercy, kindness and care.

Prayer Points

- ◆ Let us pray that we find pleasure in being hospitable to each other
- ◆ Pray against all of our insecurities and issues that cause discord and cause us to not trust each other
- ◆ Pray that we genuinely value and care for our brethren

P5

PERSPECTIVE

Joshua 5:13-15

Life Focus: Angels of the Lord encamp around those that fear the Lord

The people of God were ready to go to war and take the land that God had promised them. Standing in their way was the notorious fortress of Jericho. From their perspective they readied themselves to do battle, but Joshua had an encounter that redirected his perspective as to how this battle would be won. He encountered this heavenly figure with his sword brandished. Having his sword bare, meant he was ready for confrontation. Joshua wasn't certain whether this person was on his side or against him. The person said no, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. What an amazing thing.

We have our own ideas as to how we are going to make it through, how we are going to win our personal and spiritual battles. But how comforting it is to know that the Commander is nearby to fight the battle. A short while after this meeting, the stronghold known as Jericho crumpled to the ground not by the bulwarks of the Israelites, or by their battering rams, but by the hand of the Lord. The walls fell flat.

When Elisha was confronted by the Syrian army, he had no fear because he could see something others couldn't. He could see that He was surrounded by a fiery spiritual army who were more in number than his physical adversary (2 Kings 6:8-17). It is important that we have the right perspective.

Read and re-read 2 Corinthians 10:4-6, pay special attention to what the strongholds are in context to that passage? What is the purpose of our weapons in the context of this passage?

Live your life with the confidence that God sees and knows all things, He knows your end before your beginning, His provision is more than enough (Isaiah 46:10).

Prayer Points

- ◆ Let today be a day of thanksgiving, worship and praise

P6

PRECIPITATIONS

Malachi 2:17-3:12

Life Focus: The Principle of Tithes and Offering

I began to notice the word Precipitation after opening up the weather application on one of my apple devices, I did this to find out what the weather was going to be like that day. I never noticed this word before so to be sure I looked up its meaning. 'Precipitation' according to Wikipedia *occurs when a portion of the atmosphere becomes saturated with water vapor, so that the water condenses and precipitates* or falls, the result being rainfall if the temperature is above freezing. The vaporised condensation gets so full, so thick that it cannot be contained in the air any longer but falls out in droplets of water.

As I was writing this article, I received an email notification from Premier Christian News Newsletter. The heading was interesting, it said, 'Bishop prays for rain.' The context was in relation to the drought which has devastated the eastern regions of Australia and has resulted in catastrophic bush fires. The article stated that Christians were being urged to pray for rain and encouraged to provide help to those in need.

In Malachi 3:10b it says "*See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.*" I encourage you to read the chapter for yourself, but the context in brief actually relates to God's peoples trust and obedience in Him by way of them presenting their tithes to the Lord. So do you trust God enough to give Him not just your finances, but all of your life? In Australia they are desperate for the rain to fall, they would do almost anything to see the clouds burst forth and saturate the land. They are praying for a change.

Prayer Points

God is challenging us today to line up with His word, to walk in obedience and trust Him. Sometimes words are not enough. Sometimes what is needed is **action** in line with the Word of God.

- ◆ Let us pray that the church be a church of action in the year 2020
- ◆ Let us pray that the Lord opens the windows of heaven and blesses His church, may we be saturated in His presence, pray that our countenance might glow with His glory in Jesus Name

P7

PERSEVERANCE/PREPARATION

Daniel 3:1-30 (especially verse 18), Matthew 24:9-14

Life Focus: The three Hebrew boys

Films and TV shows manipulate our emotions in different ways. The crescendo and intensity of the music, plus the development and dramatization of the storyline, are all intended to stress the viewer and affect their feelings. There may be a scene where the hero seems as if he or she is going to experience ruin, only for things to turn around at the very last moment. When the film is finished, the conclusion is that this was a very good movie, but especially because of the intensity of the roller coaster of emotions that you had experienced, and the way in which the movie connected with you.

But when you watch that very same movie again, the intensity is no longer the same, simply because you already know what is going to happen and how things are going to transpire. You cannot be surprised in the same way again.

The Christian life is one of faith in God. An easy ride has not been promised. In fact the Lord informs us that His followers will experience all kinds of hardships, trials and tribulations, and all because we trust in Him for salvation.

Christianity calls for patience, endurance and perseverance.

I hope that you have sensed this week the importance of our minds and our responsibility to control our thinking. But I believe that one of the things the Lord does for us is prepare us for the future by informing us of what is to come. Since we know what is to come we must prepare. But we have to be serious about this. Be very confident dear believer, live your life with a high sense of hope despite what you may be facing. God is working everything out for your good. If we endure we shall be saved.

Prayer Points

- ◆ Pray that the church will be ready, and that when hard times come, we might endure
- ◆ Pray that the church will stand out in this world in obedience to the will of the Lord
- ◆ Pray that our knowledge and understanding of the truth, that it might increase in these last days

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Pastor, what time is the fast starting?

A: We are fasting for a period of 7 days, from sunrise on the 6th of January to sunset on the 12th of January. If you wish to mix the Daniel fast with a normal fast you may. If you have health issues related to food, such as diabetes, you should check with your doctor first before doing a 'normal food fast'

Q: What if I'm on medication, should I do the fast?

A: Consult your doctor before going on the fast. Still, you could restrict your self from indulging in other things like TV, social activities, social media and spend the time prayerfully, reading and listening to spiritual material. I do believe you can still partake in this period of consecration.

Q: Pastor, what is one thing a first time 'faster' like me should remember?

A: This is a spiritual fast. What you do during this period of consecration is more important than the food restrictions you have chosen. Fasting is about denying the physical body and soul of things it may both need and desire, to focus on providing for one's spiritual necessities. So, we may like to be entertained by many things, but in this period of fasting, we choose to develop our spirits and relationships with Christ.

Note:

- ◆ Always keep a paper and pen near by so that you can write down the things the Lord lays on your heart.
- ◆ During the evening it might be good to fill out a journal which recaps your thoughts and feelings throughout the day
- ◆ Put on Christian radio and TV channels, ask the Lord to direct you to a book that you should read or a Christian magazine. Speak to the Admin Office about signing up to Right Now Media. (if you have not already done so). Don't let non-spiritual things cloud your mind. If you watch the news or TV do not allow things to cause you to loose focus.
- ◆ Call a Christian friend and entertain them with godly words of comfort and encouragement.



**The People's Christian Fellowship
Springfield Hall, 89 Broad Lane, London, N15 4DW
Tel: 02088011873**

**E-mail: admin@tpcf.org.uk
Website: www.tpcf.org.uk**

***"Looking unto Jesus, the author
and finisher of our faith"
Hebrews 12:2***