

Day of Prayer and Fasting

Materials for 2nd Quarter — April 2, 2016

THEME:

“Praying for the Neighbor Next Door”

Revival
and REFORMATION
YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR CHURCH, YOUR COMMUNITY

Day of Prayer and Fasting ideas and resources

- Suggested sermon theme or topic for church:
The Power of Prayer and Fasting
- Suggested children's story:
John 6:9—The story of the boy who was willing to give up his lunch (five small loaves and two fish) so that Jesus could eat.
- Prayer theme for 2nd Quarter Day of Prayer and Fasting: "Praying for the Neighbor Next Door," as well as World Church requests.
- Suggested afternoon prayer program and activity: This could be 2 hours minimum or stretched out to fill the whole afternoon.
- Corresponding prayer outreach ideas, to follow prayer program.
- Day of Prayer and Fasting devotional: "*Praying for the Neighbor Next Door.*" This could be shared before prayer time or incorporated into the sermon if desired.
- Additional fasting materials and resources included: "*The Biblical Call to Prayer and Fasting*" and "*Spiritual Breakthrough.*" These could also be incorporated into the sermon or shared with church members separately. See attachments.

Things to keep in mind regarding fasting

While not everyone will be able to skip food completely, encourage those who can to fast from something during the morning and afternoon. The fast could be broken collectively by a special evening fellowship meal or by a Sunday morning brunch.

Possible types of fasting could include: water fast, juice fast, Daniel's Fast, sugar and/or rich foods fast, social media fast, TV fast, etc. Encourage members to pray and ask God what type of fast He wants them to undertake. For more on the Daniel's Fast, see the attachment, "*The Biblical Call to Prayer and Fasting.*"

While fasting is a "given" in the Bible (see Matt. 6:16), we must remember that fasting is not a magic key to righteousness or blessings, nor is any other spiritual discipline we undertake. We can't earn God's blessing or answers in prayer by fasting any more than we can earn our own salvation. Also, fasting doesn't substitute for obedience or personal surrender and Christ-like love. In fact, we are told, "Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 280). However, as we seek the Lord with humility of heart, and as we put away earthly distractions, we will have a more receptive frame of mind to what God wants to do in our life and through our prayers. As Pastor Derek Morris says, "We fast from the world so we can feast on Jesus!"

Prayer Theme for April 2, 2016

Praying for the Neighbor Next Door

Prayer suggestions to help us REACH out to those nearest

- Pray for **specific neighbors** by name as well as people that we hope will come to the Lord.
- Pray for **specific needs** that we've observed in their lives, whether it's victory over addictions, help with unruly children, knowledge of the truth, etc.
- Pray that **God will give us a genuine love** and interest in those who live closest to us, even though they may at times be difficult, different, of another faith, or have no faith at all.
- Pray that **God will help us be more warm-hearted and generous** toward strangers and those who live around us.
- Pray that **God will open doors** for us to minister and reach our neighbors for Christ.
- Pray that God will open doors for us to **study the Bible with neighbors** or invite them to special evangelistic meetings.
- Pray that God will help us learn to **minister to others** as Christ ministered to us.
- Pray that **we will have no regrets when Jesus returns**, knowing we did what we could to bring our neighbors into the kingdom.

In addition to the above suggestions, please remember the following World Church prayer requests during this day of prayer and fasting:

- Please pray for the **massive evangelistic campaigns planned throughout the country of Rwanda** for May 2016. There are 100,000-plus baptisms anticipated as a result of the many Bible studies already taking place, as well as the more than 2,300 simultaneous evangelistic series that will be happening in May! Pray for God's Spirit to be poured out!
- Pray for **church leaders and the many laity** who will be sharing the message of salvation with thousands. Pray for wisdom, strength, endurance, health, and Holy Spirit power. Many young people will also be preaching. Pray that this is a life-transforming experience for our young people!
- Pray for **your specific region and church** and any evangelistic campaigns that are scheduled. Pray that God will open the door for you to invite and bring your neighbors to hear the good news of salvation.
- Pray for **the latter rain to be poured out** on God's church, so that the work can be completed and we can go home!

Suggested Prayer Program and Activity

Prayer Program and Activity

(Time to get on our knees and pray!)

- **Place:**

Gather together in church, fellowship hall, Sabbath School room, or any place where you will be uninterrupted to pray. This prayer time can also be hosted in someone's home, or outside, weather permitting.

- **The Actual Prayer Time:**

Have a song leader lead everyone in the hymn, "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (*Adventist Hymnal*, no. 478).

Follow with a reading of Matthew 18:19, 20 and opening prayer.

Official Welcome: Have the Prayer Ministries director or a designated leader welcome everyone to the time of prayer, and share the "*Praying for the Neighbor Next Door*" devotional.

Go over the prayer theme for the Day of Prayer and Fasting as listed above. (This might be a good time to remind people to keep each prayer brief, so multiple people can pray. See additional comments below.)

Prayer Time: Give at least two hours minimum for members to pray. This time will go quickly. If desired, you can spend the whole afternoon in prayer by dividing up the afternoon between time for prayer, time for praises, time for testimonies, more time for prayer, devotional reading, more prayer, etc. Don't limit the prayer time with too much talking or sermonizing or sharing. Other things can make the time special, but keep the focus on prayer. This is the day to pray! The time will go too quickly.

In closing the prayer time, sing a few more songs of praise, thanking God for what He's going to do, and maybe share a few testimonies.

Corresponding Outreach after Prayer Time: You can dismiss members while it is still daylight to go visit their neighbors, and then come back for an evening fellowship meal to break the fast. (See Corresponding Prayer Outreach Ideas below.) Or members may prefer to take time over the following week to connect with neighbors. In this case, simply break the fast with a special evening fellowship meal. And challenge members to make some type of prayer contact with neighbors, if possible, in the following week. Although it may take time to build bridges and trust with neighbors, it's best not to delay. Ask them to be prepared to share testimonies the following Sabbath.

Additional pointers for the prayer leader:

As you begin the time of prayer, encourage everyone to take a few minutes to praise God and thank Him for what He's done in our lives, for it's quite possible that many have been brought to the Lord because of neighbors who cared enough to share.

Then encourage everyone to pray for their specific neighbors by name, claiming Bible promises as they pray. Be sure to agree with each other in prayer, claiming Matt. 18:19.

While people are encouraged to pray multiple times, remind them to keep their individual prayers brief! This isn't the time to give God a long shopping list or to go on and on. Ellen White writes: "Make short prayers in meetings, and lengthy prayers when you talk and commune with God in your closet" (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 130). In another place she writes, "Let the prayers be short, and right to the point" (*Christian Service*, p. 210).

Even after the Day of Prayer and Fasting is over, encourage members to continue to pray for their neighbors and loved ones. God will reward these prayers of faith!

For more prayer pointers for leading group prayer, you can download *Praying for Rain: A Mini Handbook for United Prayer* at <http://www.revivalandreformation.org/prayer>

Corresponding Prayer Outreach Ideas

Additional Prayer Outreach activity:

After taking time to pray, encourage members, if time allows, to go as families to visit their neighbors, taking with them maybe a small gift or baked item for the neighbors. People always have a hard time resisting tokens of kindness. If this can't be done on Sabbath, it can be done sometime during the following week(s). The point is not just to do this one time but to build bonds and maintain an ongoing connection that will lead to deeper spiritual sharing in the future.

Here are some suggestions of things that could be said when neighbors open the door:

For people we don't know:

"Hi! We live _____ (*next door/down the street, etc.*) and are just wanting to get better acquainted with our neighbors, so we thought we'd stop by to say hi and introduce ourselves. We also brought you a small gift that we made for you." (*Give them the gift. Engage in small talk for a few minutes, and look for clues as to needs they might have. When you feel it is appropriate, ask the following.*)

"Is there anything we could pray about for you or your family? Any pressing concern that you wouldn't mind sharing? We believe in the power of prayer!" (*Let them respond.*)

"Can we pray right now with you?" (*Most people will say yes, but if they say no, respect their desires, wish them a good day, and see if there are other ways you could help them.*)

For people we know:

"Hi! We just wanted to take a few minutes to stop by and see how you and your family are doing. We also brought you a little gift." (*Give them the gift.*)

"So how are you doing?" (*Listen, empathize, look for clues for ways you could help.*)

"As you know, we really believe in the power of prayer. Is there anything that we could pray about for you? Any burden on your heart that you wouldn't mind sharing?" (*Let them respond.*)

"Would you mind if we prayed for you right here and now?" (*Again, they will probably say yes, but respect them if they say no.*)

Alternate greeting that could be shared:

"Hi insert their name ! Our names are insert your names and we live insert location. Our church is having a special emphasis on prayer for our community and asked us to choose several people to be praying for. I decided to choose you and your family since you are our neighbors. I was just wondering if there's anything special that we could be praying about for you. (*Let them respond. After some small talk, and hearing their concerns, ask if you can pray together now. After you pray together, thank them for their time. Be sure to follow up in future days/weeks to see how they are doing.*)

Now a special connection has been made or deepened. Follow up on this connection by staying in touch, taking them more baked goodies or treats when you can, by sending birthday cards or get-well cards (as appropriate), by giving small gifts to their children (with parents' permission), by inviting them to your home for a special meal, by sharing inspiring literature, and eventually by inviting them to a health seminar or evangelistic series. Whatever you do, *don't stop praying for your neighbors!* God brought you into their life for a reason. He doesn't want to see them left behind!

“Praying for the Neighbor Next Door”

Devotional Thoughts for Day of Prayer and Fasting — April 2, 2016

How many of you like a good story? (*Give time for everyone to raise their hands.*)

I love good stories. And I have a special one to share with you today.

In some parts of the world, it's quite difficult to share about Jesus without having problems from the authorities. Vietnam is one of those places. It is still under communist control, and persecution and harassment are normal for those who try to share their faith. However, Adventist believers are learning that what man cannot do, God is able to do—especially when His people unite in prayer and fasting.

In one Vietnamese city of almost four million, a pastor of a house church, along with some of his fellow believers, was eager to reach the people of that city for God. Because of this burden, they began handing out DVDs and gospel materials. But they had few results and often suffered harassment and hours of grueling interrogation from the police because of their efforts.

Not sure what to do next, and desperate to see God work, the pastor asked the believers in his house church to commit to 30 days of united prayer and fasting. They agreed. Fasting can be done in many different ways. In their case, they chose to fast several days each week, in addition to regularly coming together to pray. As they came together in prayer, they also spent time putting away wrongs and confessing their sins as they prayed that God would bring spiritual breakthrough in their community and city.

Not long after the 30 days ended, the pastor received a knock on his door. Opening the door, he instantly recognized the face of a notorious former Viet Cong commander turned mafia gang leader in the city. This man was well known for his illegal activities—drug dealing, gambling halls and brothels—as well as his dislike of Christians. The pastor wasn't sure what to expect when the man held up one of the gospel DVDs, asking, “Do you know anything about these?” With some fear and trepidation, but overpowered by his love for God, the pastor said that he did. The man asked, “Can you tell me more?” So the pastor invited the man into his home. They began to study the Bible together, one day at a time for several weeks, until the man, finally overpowered by the love of God, accepted Christ as his personal Savior.

The transformation in the man's life was amazing. Immediately he went to work to dissolve his mafia organization and started closing down all his businesses that did not honor God. Everyone noticed the dramatic change, and his men began asking questions. As a result of his witness, 40 of his men (along with their families) soon followed his example and accepted Jesus as their Savior.

Now meetings have been held, with no problems from the authorities, which is a miracle, and more house churches have been established in the city. The group of ex-gangsters now has more than 200 members and is growing. People are on fire for the Lord and His Word. More than 90,000 copies of gospel DVDs have been copied and shared with people throughout the

city. Many are hearing the everlasting gospel message for the first time and preparing for Jesus Christ's soon coming.¹

But would this miracle have happened if this pastor and his group had not been willing to fast for a period of time and unite in prayer, putting away their differences as they pleaded for God to intervene in their city?

While we tend to talk a lot about prayer, we don't talk a lot about fasting these days. However, fasting is a very important part of *effective praying*, as we see from this story.

Praying for the Neighbor Next Door

As we know, we are in the final days of earth's history. We are on the verge of something significant. Big things are about to happen. Both Christians and those in the secular world are talking about an impending crisis. However, as Christians we have not been left in darkness regarding the coming crisis.

Ellen White writes,

The crisis is fast approaching. The time for God's visitation has about come. Although loth to punish, nevertheless He will punish, and that speedily. Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril; but they are not to sit in quiet, unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that God will shelter His people in the day of visitation. Far from it. They should realize that it is their duty to labor diligently to save others, looking with strong faith to God for help. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16 (*Christian Experience and Teachings*, p. 186).

Let's consider how the prophets of old responded during significant times of trial in biblical history. Their example could be the keys not only to our own deliverance and victory but for those around us as well:

As the time approached for the close of the seventy years' captivity, Daniel's mind became greatly exercised upon the prophecies of Jeremiah. He saw that the time was at hand when God would give His chosen people another trial; and with fasting, humiliation, and prayer, he importuned the God of heaven in behalf of Israel. . . .

What earnestness and fervor characterize his supplications! The hand of faith is reached upward to grasp the never-failing promises of the Most High. His soul is wrestling in agony. And he has the evidence that his prayer is heard. He knows that victory is his. If we as a people would pray as Daniel prayed, and wrestle as he wrestled, humbling our souls before God, we should realize as marked answers to our petitions as were granted to Daniel. Hear how he presses his case at the court of heaven" (*The Sanctified Life*, pp. 46, 47).

As Daniel wrestled on behalf of Israel, so we are to pray and wrestle on behalf of the lost. That includes our neighbors, our loved ones, and all those who cross our path.

Back in the early 1900s, Ellen White had a dream of great destruction coming upon the earth. Listen to her sobering words:

It seemed that an immense ball of fire came down upon the world and crushed large houses. From place to place rose the cry, "The Lord has come! The Lord has come!" Many were unprepared to meet Him, but a few were saying, "Praise the Lord!" "Why are you praising the Lord?" enquired those upon whom was coming sudden destruction. "Because we now see what we have been looking for." "If you believed that these things were coming, why did you not tell us?" was the terrible response. "We did not know about these things. Why did you leave us in ignorance? Again and again you have seen us; why did you not become acquainted with us and tell us of the judgment to come, and that we must serve God, lest we perish? Now we are lost!" (*Reflecting Christ*, p. 243).

In another place Ellen White writes even more boldly:

My brethren and sisters, in the great day of judgment some will be charged with a neglect of their fellow citizens. If you are not faithful in this work, those who are now your neighbors will rise up in the judgment and say with groaning and mourning, Why did you not tell us of the importance of these things? You acted indifferently, as though it were of little consequence whether we believed the truth as you believe it. And now our souls are lost because of our disregard of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. You did not act as if this matter were a testing question (Manuscript 68, 1910).

Dear friends, let us not be among that number. Let our neighbors not be the ones crying, "You knew, and you didn't tell us." Inspiration tells us, "Only in eternity can we rightly estimate the loss of a single soul" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 640).

Today, let us pray that God will give us hearts of love for our neighbors next door. Let us pray that He will give us the keys to reach their hearts. Let us pray that He will hear our fasting and prayers on their behalf. Let us pray that He will hear our prayers on behalf of our church that many more will come to salvation while there is still time.

We each have an important part to play. Let us not shirk our duty! Let us fast and pray and work while it is day, for the night is coming when we cannot work.

Let's pray for our neighbors today!

¹ This story is used by permission of ASAP Ministries and comes from the DVD, *United in Prayer*. To read more amazing stories like this, visit: www.asapministries.org.

The Call to Biblical Fasting

Resources for the Day of Prayer and Fasting

In the Bible, fasting is not an option. It's a given. Matthew 6:17 doesn't say, "If you fast," but rather, "When you fast." Fasting has always been part of the lifestyle of believers, just like praying and studying the Bible. In fact, every major character in the Bible fasted. And even now Jesus is fasting: He promised He would not drink grape juice again until we are all together in heaven (see Matt. 26:29).

Have you ever thought about the fast Christ is currently keeping for you and me?

If you study out all the fasts in the Bible, you will find that every time God's people prayed *and fasted*, God worked mightily on their behalf. From deliverance from their enemies in battle to supernatural deliverance from prison, to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and on and on, we see a pattern. And this pattern repeats itself all down through Christian history.

Hudson Taylor once said, "Perhaps the greatest hindrance to our work is our own imagined strength; and in fasting we learn what poor, weak creatures we are—dependent on a meal of meat for the little strength which we are so apt to lean upon" (J. Hudson Taylor, ed., *China's Millions*, 1887).

Of course, in Bible times fasting wasn't merely a denial of food. It was a time of heart evaluation as the petitioner sought God's blessing or deliverance in some situation.

Inspiration encourages us: "Men need to think less about what they shall eat and drink, of temporal food, and much more in regard to the food from heaven, that will give tone and vitality to the whole religious experience" (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 90).

If a fast is not combined with extra time in the Word and seeking God in prayer, it would better to term it dieting! However, true biblical fasting is not about dieting, nor is it about self-righteous attitudes to impress others of our piety.

Referring to the outward type of fasting the hypocrites practiced, one Bible commentator writes,

Do we not often [even today] feel that there is something meritorious in the very inconveniences which we suffer in our acts of self denial? . . . [However,] the pain and inconvenience which we may endure by the most rigid fasting are not meritorious in the sight of God. They are not that at which he aims by the appointment of fasting. He aims at justice, truth, benevolence, holiness (Isa. 58:6–7); and he esteems the act of fasting to be of value only as it will be the means of leading us to reflect on our faults, and to amend our lives (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Bible* [1834] on Isaiah 58:5).

It's important to remember that we can't earn God's blessing or answers by prayer and fasting any more than we can earn our own salvation. Fasting doesn't substitute for obedience or personal surrender. However, it is a means of cleansing the heart of distractions and helping us have a more receptive frame of mind to what God wants to do in our life and through our prayers. And we are promised, "To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 59).

Speaking to early Adventists, Ellen White writes, "It is your privilege to receive more of the Spirit of God, as you engage in fasting and earnest prayer." In fact she correlates this fasting and prayer with the ability to more clearly present the truths of God's Word to the unconverted. Continuing, she writes, "You need to accept the promises and assurances of God and walk out on them in faith. You need to learn how to present the truths of the Word to those around you in all their binding force and in all their encouragement, that the unconverted may feel the influence of the Spirit of God upon heart and mind and character" (*The Review and Herald*, Jan. 13, 1910).

In the book, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, Wesley Duewel writes the following:

The great leaders of the Reformation, in their spiritual warfare to restore purity to the church, naturally made great use of the biblical means of fasting. Martin Luther not only maintained the spiritual discipline of fasting one day a week but additionally fasted so often along with his three hours of daily prayer that he was often criticized for fasting too much. But he blessed the whole church and impacted the world for God by his prayers, fasting, and holy boldness. . . . John Calvin was called an inveterate [habitual] faster—and lived to see God's power sweep Geneva. The Moravians fasted, as did the Hussites, Waldensians, Huguenots, and Scottish Covenanters. Except for prevailing prayer that included fasting, we would have had no Reformation and no great awakenings over the centuries (p. 181).

Throughout the Bible we see many examples of God's people fasting: for wisdom (Daniel 1, Acts 14:23), for deliverance (Esther 4:16, 2 Chron. 20:3), when beginning in ministry (Matt. 4), when seeking spiritual revival (Neh. 9:1, Joel 1:14, Jonah 3:5), when seeking victory over demonic oppression (Matt. 17:21), and many more.

Ellen White also has written a number of reasons why and when we should consider fasting. Consider the following:

- We should fast when searching out the truths of Scripture so our understanding is clear!¹
- We should fast when seeking heavenly wisdom that God has promised!²
- We should fast when seeking God's direction in making important plans.³
- We should fast when dedicating our talents to God's service.⁴
- We should fast when requesting God's help in crisis.⁵

- We should fast when contending with demonic oppression.⁶
- We should fast when seeking God for more laborers for the harvest.⁷
- We should fast for unity among church members.⁸
- We should fast when seeking heart cleansing and spiritual renewal.⁹
- We should fast when seeking to overcome spiritual temptation.¹⁰
- We should fast when seeking to develop an appetite for plain food.¹¹
- We should fast when seeking to conquer disease (for a meal or two).¹²
- We should fast over our decaying zeal and languishing spirituality.¹³
- We should fast as we seek a deeper walk with God in the last days.¹⁴
- We should fast when seeking to see the lost brought into the Kingdom.¹⁵

In addition to fasting when specific problems or issues arise, there is also *an advance fasting* we might consider. This is what Christ did in the wilderness for 40 days *before* He started His ministry. This is what we should do *before* we make big decisions, or *before* we go forward in our work, as we want to make sure we have God’s full blessing upon our lives.

Prayer and fasting should go hand in hand! Prayer is the means by which we grasp the invisible things of God, while fasting is the means by which we let loose and cast away the visible things that we are prone to depend upon. Ultimately, the goal of true fasting should be the fulfillment of Isaiah 58. This is the kind of fast that God is calling us to.

The true fast is no mere formal service. The Scripture describes the fast that God has chosen,—“to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke;” to “draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul.” Isaiah 58:6, 10. Here is set forth the very spirit and character of the work of Christ. His whole life was a sacrifice of Himself for the saving of the world. Whether fasting in the wilderness of temptation or eating with the publicans at Matthew’s feast, He was giving His life for the redemption of the lost. Not in idle mourning, in mere bodily humiliation and multitudinous sacrifices, is the true spirit of devotion manifested, but it is shown in the surrender of self in willing service to God and man (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 278).

The Daniel Fast and More Specifics

The Daniel Fast is based upon the prophet Daniel’s fasting experiences as recorded in the Bible. While we don’t know Daniel’s complete menu, we are told a few things. In Daniel 1, Daniel chose not to eat the royal food that he was being served and ate only vegetables and drank water. Another time (in Daniel 10:2, 3) he deprived himself of choice food, meat, and wine as he sought the Lord in prayer. Most commentaries believe “choice food” would have been bread and sweets.

You will find some variation in the specific guidelines for the modern-day Daniel Fast, in what different people think you should or should not eat. **But our word of advice is, don't stress**

about the details. Just keep it simple. The most important part of the fast is not necessarily what is on your plate but what is happening in your heart.

Ellen White writes, “Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food” (*The Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1904).

The intention of today’s Daniel Fast is not to duplicate exactly what Daniel did but rather the spirit in which he did it. Daniel’s passion for the Lord caused him to hunger and thirst more for spiritual food than for physical food, which should be the desire of anyone choosing to participate in this type of fast.

With that in mind, here are some general guidelines.

Fasting Guidelines

It’s important not to get too hung up on what we should and shouldn’t eat. Again, remember that the most important part of the fast is what is happening in our hearts. We deny ourselves physically so that we can seek the Lord in prayer with fewer distractions and more clarity of mind. We fast because we desire to grow closer to Him. Our particular fast may look a little different than someone else’s fast, but that’s OK. Some people may choose to be stricter than others in their food choices; however, that doesn’t make them more spiritual or holy. That just means they are being led to do something different. Thus, these food guidelines are meant to be just that—a guide. They are given to help create some healthy boundaries for a fast. But ultimately the decision on how and what to fast from should be between us and God.

The Modern-Day Daniel Fast Food List

- **All fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned
- **All vegetables** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned
- **All whole grains** – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat
- **All nuts and seeds** – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk; nut butters
- **All legumes** – canned or dried: black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas
- **All quality oils** – avocado, coconut, grape seed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut
- **Beverages** - distilled water, filtered water, spring water, or herbal teas.
- **Other** – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg’s Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.

Foods to Avoid on the Daniel Fast

- **All meat and animal products**
- **All dairy products** – butter, cheese, cream, eggs, milk, etc.
- **All sweeteners** – agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups, stevia, sugar, etc.
- **All leavened bread and yeast** – baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey)
- **All refined and processed food products** – artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, white rice, etc.
- **All deep-fried foods** – corn chips, French fries, potato chips, etc.
- **All solid fats** – margarine, shortening, etc.
- **Beverages** – carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, and regular tea.

For more inspiration on fasting, I recommend reading chapter 10, “Fasting,” in the compilation *Counsels on Diet and Foods* by Ellen White. This reading starts at page 185.

Remember that fasting for more effective prayer and spiritual breakthrough is not about mastering a method but about having a change of heart. Only as we listen to the Holy Spirit’s promptings and allow Him to lead us into deeper surrender will our fasting truly be effective.

—Melody Mason
United in Prayer Coordinator
General Conference World Headquarters

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1. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 187.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
 3. *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 364.
 4. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 134.
 5. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 517, 518.
 6. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 431.
 7. Letter 26, 1883.
 8. Letter 98, 1902.
 9. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 187, 188.
 10. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 202.
 11. *Counsels on Health*, p. 148; *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 190; and G. D. Strunk, “Fasting,” *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, Dec. 21, 1978, p. 5 (http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/CUM/CUM19781221-V47-24_C.pdf).
 12. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 189.
 13. *Gospel Workers* 1892, p. 37.
 14. *A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 69.
 15. *Ibid.*

SPIRITUAL BREAK THROUGH

by Janet Page

Would you like to make your spiritual life come alive? Develop a deeper passion for God? Be able to better discern God's will for your life? See God move in a powerful way in your life, your family, your church, and your community? Have a deeper understanding of Scripture? Have more energy and feel better? Be happier and full of God's joy and peace?

TRY FASTING AND PRAYER!

Don't panic and please don't stop reading. It's really true. Fasting will change your life and the lives of those you pray for.

You don't have to go without food to fast. You could do the following:

- Leave off desserts
- Eat simple foods like fruits, vegetables, and bread
- Skip lunch or supper (use the time to pray)
- Stop eating between meals
- Do 1, 2, or 3 days of just fresh vegetable and fruit juice (be sure to check with your physician beforehand)
- Omit television, videos, computer, books, stereo, or radio (use time to pray)

Involve your children. Children take prayer requests seriously and they believe God will answer. Some activities are:

- Eat simple foods or eliminate dessert.
- Get a map of your community and have the children join in praying over the streets.



- Obtain a world map or globe and involve the children in praying for specific areas of the world.
- Prayer walk the neighborhood.
- Pray together, pray one subject at a time, keep it short, go back and forth.

Why fast? Because God wants us to fast.

The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; and then they will fast”

Matthew 9:15

“Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days of fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food.” *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 188.

Fast only as God directs you. As you spend time with God, ask Him to give you a desire to fast

AYER

and to show you when, how long, and what type of fast.

“For certain things, fasting and prayer are recommended and appropriate. In the hand of God they are a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind. We obtain answers to our prayers because we humble our souls before God.” *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 187

FASTING IS...

- An attitude of the heart in which we interrupt our life to pray for a specific matter or cause.
- A tool that may be used to glorify God and realize answers to prayer.
- A means by which we can worship the Lord and submit ourselves in humility to Him. 🙏

JANET PAGE, General Conference ministerial associate for Shepherdess International and Prayer Ministries, is passionate about knowing Jesus, prayer, and reaching people for Him. As Prayer, Shepherdess, and Women’s Ministries coordinator for the Pennsylvania and Central California Conferences in North America, Janet has seen God work to change lives in miraculous ways when His people come together in prayer. Often a speaker for weekend retreats, she loves sharing her favorite subjects—Jesus and spending time with Him. She also travels with her husband Jerry, speaking at leadership events around the world. She has two sons, two daughters-in-law, and two young grandsons. You can contact her at pagejanet@gc.adventist.org.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

For some fascinating biblical examples of the purpose of fasting:

The Disciple’s Fast:

“To loose the bands of wickedness” from ourselves and others.
Isa. 58:6, Matt. 17:21.

The Ezra Fast:

“Undo the heavy burdens.”
Isa. 58:6; Ezra 8:23.

The Samuel Fast:

“To let the oppressed (physically and spiritually) go free.”
Isa. 58:6, 1 Sam. 7:6.

The Elijah Fast:

“To break every yoke” conquering mental and emotional problems.
Isa. 58:6, 1 Kings 19:4, 8.

The Widow’s Fast:

“To share our bread with the hungry” and to care for the poor.
Isa. 58:7, 1 Kings 17:16.

The Paul Fast:

To allow God’s “light to break forth like the morning” bringing clearer perspective and insight as we make crucial decisions.
Isa 58:8, Acts 9:9

The Daniel Fast:

So “thine health shall spring forth.”
Isa. 58:8, Dan. 1:8.

The Esther Fast:

That “the glory of the Lord” will protect us from the evil one.
Isa. 58:8, Esther 4:16, 5:2

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Isa. 58 Chapter 10

“Fasting,” *Counsels on Diet and Foods* by Ellen G. White - Both books are available at the Adventist Book Center, **800-843-8585**