

Day of Prayer and Fasting

Handbook and Resources

The Battle Belongs to the Lord:
Fighting for Our Hearts

Third Quarter 2017

Sabbath, July 1

Revival
& REFORMATION

Prepared for church group and individual use by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in coordination with the Revival and Reformation Committee. Prepared by Tamyra Horst for the Day of Prayer and Fasting global initiative.

Visit www.revivalandreformation.org for information.

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Why a Day of Prayer and Fasting?

Imagine you are a parent about to leave your children, knowing you will not see them again until the Kingdom of Heaven. What is the most important thing you could say to them?

Jesus had that dilemma as He prepared to return to heaven after His crucifixion. What was the burden of His last words to His disciples? As we read through His last prayers and counsel in John 15-17, we discover repeating themes: Unity, love, and seeking God through prayer. Jesus longed for His fledgling church to come together in purpose, harmony, and mission. Today, amid perhaps unprecedented polarization in the world, our nations, and our church, we too need to heed Jesus' counsel to seek His Spirit and come together for mission. The task seems daunting and impossible in our humanity. That's why we need to pray as never before for the miracle of reconciliation that only God can bring.

We invite you to pray "in your closet." We invite you to pray with your local church family. And we invite you to the global Revival and Reformation initiative of prayer and fasting. Perhaps you will not choose to fast totally from food. Perhaps you will fast from desserts or social media, or eat sparingly of plant-based food for a time.

"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" (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1904).

As you choose to focus more deeply on prayer, God will bless you and strengthen your heart for the challenging days ahead.

Cindy Tutsch

For Revival and Reformation Committee

Suggested Planning Ideas

- Key verse: Proverbs 4:23
- Suggested sermon titles or possible topics for church:
 - We Have an Enemy
 - Resisting the Attacker
 - Guarding Our Hearts with Prayer
 - Strengthen My Hands
- Suggested children's story:

Tell a children's story based on the Armor of God found in Ephesians 6:10-18. Make sure kids understand what armor is and why soldiers wore it. Tell them that the Bible encourages Christians to wear armor every day, too. Every day the devil tries to get us to do or say things or think things that we shouldn't. Putting on this special armor helps to protect us and keep us safe.

Walk them through each piece of armor and how it protects us as Christians:

- **The Belt of Truth:** *Knowing the truth about God—who He is and who He says we are—helps to keep us strong. We can learn truth by studying the Bible and listening to our parents, Sabbath School teachers, and pastor as they teach us about God.*
- **The Breastplate of Righteousness:** *Soldiers wore breastplates to protect their torsos (the area from the shoulders to the waist) and, most importantly, their hearts. We can protect our hearts by praying, confessing sin, and thinking about good things. Watching, reading, or listening to unhealthy, negative material will only harm our hearts.*
- **Sandals of Peace:** *Soldiers wore sandals to protect their feet wherever they went. Our spiritual "feet" are protected when we walk in peace. This means that we try to keep peace with others wherever we go. Promoting peace means being nice to people, not arguing or fighting, forgiving others, and asking for forgiveness when we've hurt someone.*
- **Shield of Faith:** *Soldiers used shields to protect them from things coming at them like arrows or spears. We can use our faith in God like a shield to protect us. When the devil tries to get us to think that there isn't a God or that He doesn't love us or that we can't do anything for God, we can hold up our shield of faith and stop those thoughts, reminding ourselves of God's promises.*
- **Helmet of Salvation:** *Helmets were important to soldiers because they protected their heads. Our "helmet of salvation" can protect our thoughts, too. Whenever we are tempted to doubt God, we can remember that Jesus died for us—that's how much He loves us!*
- **Sword of the Spirit:** *Soldiers used swords to fight their enemies. One of the swords God gives us is the Bible. If we memorize verses and remember stories, the Holy Spirit will remind us of those passages just when we need them most to fight our enemy, the devil.*
- **Prayer:** *Once we have thought about all the parts of God's armor, the Bible tells us to pray. Pray that God will help us to fight the devil when he tempts us to do wrong and distrust God.*

***TIP:** You can find coloring pages online to print off and copy so that children can have a picture of a child in armor to color. If the kids are older, you may want to print off a word search with the Armor of God hidden in it, or provide some other activity to reinforce the story. One resource for worksheets and coloring pages: www.dltk-bible.com.*

- The prayer theme for 3rd Quarter Day of Prayer and Fasting is “Fighting for Our Hearts.” Please remember World Church prayer requests also.
- Suggested afternoon prayer program and activity: Schedule about two hours for this time, but allow the Holy Spirit to lead. Many plan on prayer for a full afternoon.
- Day of Prayer and Fasting devotional: “We Have an Enemy.” This could be shared before the prayer time or used with the sermon, if desired.
- Additional prayer and fasting resources are provided in the appendix of this handbook. You may also visit www.RevivalandReformation.org and click on the United in Prayer tab for more information.

Things to keep in mind regarding fasting:

While not everyone is able to skip food, encourage those who can to fast from something during the morning and afternoon of this special day.

Possible types of fasting could include: water fast, juice fast, Daniel's fast, dessert/rich foods fast, social media fast, etc. Encourage members to pray and ask God to indicate what type of fast He wants them to undertake.

While fasting is a "given" in the Bible (see Matthew 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" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 280).

However, even if people choose not to fast, we don't want to discourage them from being part of the day's prayer activities. Remember, God knows the heart, and the decision to fast or not to fast (or how to fast) should be between a person and God, not dictated by anyone.

The whole purpose of the Day of Prayer and Fasting is to lay self aside as we intercede for others. 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!"

Suggested Program Format

Place: Gather together in the church sanctuary to begin this time of prayer.

Introduction: After a few songs to set a reverent atmosphere, have the song leader lead everyone in the hymn "Sound the Battle Cry" (Adventist Hymnal, #614).

Follow with this Scripture: "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23).

Opening Prayer and Official Welcome: Have the Prayer Ministries director or a designated leader welcome everyone to the time of prayer. Share the "We Have an Enemy" devotional (page 15) if it has not already been used during the church service. Then go over the prayer theme for the Day of Prayer and Fasting: "Fighting for Our Hearts." You'll find this on page 9.

Prayer Time: Two hours, minimum. This time will go quickly. Many enjoy spending the whole afternoon in prayer. Keep the focus and emphasis on actual time in prayer. This is the day to pray! You'll find a section titled "Prayer Requests" on page 12. This can be copied and distributed to your participants.

Closing: In closing the prayer time, sing a few songs of praise, thanking God for what He's going to do. Encourage members, even after the Day of Prayer and Fasting is over, to continue to pray for people of other faith groups in their community and to seek for ways to reach out to them.

Ending the Day of Prayer and Fasting: Have a special potluck supper or evening meal to break the fast together as a church family.

Prayer Theme: Fighting for Our Hearts

Pointers for Leading the Prayer Time

While people are encouraged to pray multiple times, remind them of the importance of keeping their individual prayers brief. Ellen White writes: "Make short prayers in meetings, and lengthy prayers when you talk and commune with God in your closet" (Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases, vol. 10, p. 130). So, while the prayer time can be long, the individual prayers should not be. Praying short prayers tends to keep the prayer time active and moving. It also binds the members' hearts together and keeps adults and children from growing restless.

We encourage you to start with a time of praise before beginning to really intercede for the prayer theme. Based on Psalm 100:4, we are to enter God's gates with praise. Have people praise God for the things they love most about Him. Encourage people to start a song or hymn that praises God and have everyone join in. Share scripture verses that focus on praising God and who He is. Many Psalms focus on God's character and all He's done for us. Don't rush this time. If you're going to divide up your group to pray, begin this time together as one large group. Then separate into smaller prayer groups after the time of confession.

If starting with praise, you might begin the prayer time as follows: "Dear Lord, we come before You today with hearts full of praise. We want to take a few minutes just to praise Your name. Thank You for being our mighty King and deliverer . . ." Then allow others to pray.

When it's time to move to confession, lead again.

In Psalm 66:18 and Isaiah 59:1, 2, we find that if we want God to hear our prayers, our sins must be confessed and put away. We encourage a brief time for private confession to God first, followed by corporate confession, especially for sins like apathy and lethargy in reaching souls for Christ. Ask God to search hearts, convict of sin, and reveal doubts, insecurities, and weakness. Claim promises of God's forgiveness, such as 1 John 1:9. Then allow time for people to quietly pray. Don't rush this time. As people are praying, the leader should pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a powerful way on each life. This time of confession might be followed with singing "Amazing Grace."

We spend much time praying for others. Especially corporately. We bring requests for friends and relatives who are struggling, facing health issues, looking for jobs, or needing a deeper experience with God. But often we don't ask for prayers for ourselves. This day of prayer focus is a bit different and may feel a little awkward or uncomfortable, but it's also an opportunity to encourage people to pray for themselves and their own battles in ways they may not have done before. We may think it's selfish to pray for ourselves, but it's essential. We possess the greatest power to help or hinder God's work in our lives. Even Jesus prayed for Himself.

Encourage participants to spend time praying for their **relationship with Jesus**. This can include praying for a deeper hunger for God and His truth and for strength to resist the enemy, courage to commit to whatever God asks, purpose and passion, forgiveness for putting other things before time with God, and a renewed commitment to making time with God a priority. Allow time for silent prayers, asking God to search hearts and reveal what comes between Him and us. Confess and renew that commitment to make Him first.

Share that Peter and Paul, after being captured and released, did not pray for God to make life easy or to remove their enemies but instead prayed for **boldness and courage**. Spend time praying for these as well. Pray as a group, but also lead people in praying silently for themselves and for God to show them any specific situations where they need more boldness and courage.

Ask people to turn to 1 Kings 3 and pray as Solomon did for **wisdom, understanding, and discernment** (verse 9). You could do this as a large group, with people praying for themselves and all who are there (for example, "Lord, give us wisdom") or have them break into groups of two or three and pray for each other specifically.

Invite people to turn to 1 Chronicles 4:10 and pray for **blessings, opportunities, and healing**. Lead them in praying as Jabez did:

- Pray that God will bless them indeed.
- Pray that He will enlarge their territory, giving them new opportunities to impact others for Him.
- Pray that God will keep them from evil and from causing harm to others, that He will convict them if they have hurt/offended others, and that He will bring healing and redemption to those relationships.

Have everyone turn to Galatians 5:22, 23 and begin praying for the **Fruit of Spirit** to be manifest in each person: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Pray for each fruit individually, claiming Scripture promises.

Have people lift up **specific needs** and invite others to pray for those needs. These might include jobs, finances, health, relationships, struggles—whatever people are willing to share and have others pray about for them. Remind those praying that everything shared during this time is confidential and not to be repeated outside of this time and that these requests should be for themselves and not for others. Encourage people to continue to pray for each other and connect with each other outside of this prayer time to see how things are going.

As you pray for people, encourage everyone, by your own example, to pray God's Word, claiming His promises. Be specific! Pray in faith! And allow this time to go as long as the Holy Spirit leads.

Feel free to interject, throughout the prayer time, well-known hymns and songs that correspond with the prayers being prayed. "As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer" (Ellen G. White, Education, p. 168).

Encourage the group to agree with each other in prayer, claiming Matthew 18:19. These are ideas to help get started, but it's most important that the Holy Spirit leads!

End this afternoon of prayer by coming back together and spending time in **thanksgiving and praise**.

Fighting for Our Hearts: Prayer Requests

We spend much time praying for others. Especially corporately. We bring requests for friends and relatives who are struggling, facing health issues, looking for jobs, or needing a deeper experience with God. But often we don't ask for prayers for ourselves. We may think it's selfish to pray for ourselves, but it's essential. We possess the greatest power to help or hinder God's work in our lives. Even Jesus prayed for Himself!

- **Pray for your personal relationship with Jesus.** This can include praying for a deeper hunger for God and His truth and for strength to resist the enemy, courage to commit to whatever God asks, purpose and passion, forgiveness for putting other things before time with God, and a renewed commitment to making time with God a priority.
- **Pray for boldness and courage.** Peter (and Paul, too), after being captured and released from prison, did not ask God to make the work easier but prayed instead for courage to face challenges and/or enemies with holy boldness.
- **Pray, as Solomon did, for wisdom, understanding, and discernment.**
- **Pray for blessings, opportunities, and healing. Refer specifically to the prayer of Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:10:**
 - Pray that God will bless you indeed.
 - Pray that He will enlarge your territory, giving you new opportunities to impact others for Him.
 - Pray that God will keep you from evil and from causing harm to others.
 - Pray for personal conviction about others whom you may have hurt/offended, and pray for healing and redemption in those relationships.
- **Pray for the Fruit of Spirit to be made manifest in your life:** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). Pray for each fruit individually, claiming Scripture promises.
- **Pray for specific needs,** such as jobs, finances, health, relationships, struggles.

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

- Pray for the Women's Ministries Department of every local church to be open to Christ's calling to ministry to the "least of these," like Tabitha / Dorcas in Acts 9.
- Pray for each local church Sabbath School / Personal Ministries Department as they seek God's plan to minister through Bible study & personal witnessing.
- Pray that every member will have an opportunity to be an urban missionary—as a teacher, chef, Bible worker, graphic designer, etc., in their sphere of influence.

Continue to Fight for Our Own Hearts

You can provide tools and resources that encourage members to continue praying for their own hearts and lives, to guard their hearts from the attacks of the enemy, and to connect more deeply with God. Imagine what our churches would be like if members were spending time daily praying and growing like this!

- Encourage people to **commit** to a regular, personal prayer time. During this time they allow God to search their hearts, they confess, and they pray for their own needs and walk with Christ. You may want to hand out commitment cards for people to complete, indicating when they'll spend this time each day. They can place these cards in their Bibles or wallets.
- Encourage people to seek a **prayer partner** to pray with on a regular basis. They might get together in person, over the phone, or through email to share specific requests for themselves and pray for the requests with each other.
- At **prayer meetings**, encourage people not only to ask for prayers for others but also for themselves.
- Share a list of **resources** that can help people develop their personal prayer life. Check with your local Adventist Book Center for ideas. Some options include:
 - *Prayer* by Ellen White
 - *The Radical Prayer* by Derek Morris
 - *Teach Us to Pray* by Tamyra Horst
 - *Pressing into His Presence: Developing an Intimate Relationship with Christ Through Prayer* by Shelley Quinn
 - *Daring to Ask for More* by Melody Mason
 - *If My People Pray* by Randy Maxwell
 - *40 Days of Prayer* by Dennis Smith
 - *Praying for Rain: Mini Handbook for United Prayer at www.RevivalandReformation.org* (click United in Prayer)

APPENDIX

“We Have an Enemy”

Devotional Thoughts for Day of Prayer and Fasting, July 1, 2017

We have an enemy.

The Bible tells us we do. It calls him the accuser (Revelation 12:10). It compares him to a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour (1 Peter 5:8). And it says he has come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). This isn't some “the devil made me do it” enemy. He would love for us to see him that way—the devil tempting us to do something wrong and we just say “no.” Or sometimes “yes,” but then we confess and God forgives and we just need to get our act a little more together. No, the story is much bigger than that.

We are under attack. Every single day of our lives. We just don't often live like it. We try to live good lives. Keep from sinning. And yes, the devil will tempt us to sin, but it is so much bigger than that. He wants to keep us from believing God, believing His promises, trusting Him, serving Him. He wants to keep us from living the lives that God plans for us: abundant lives full of joy, peace, grace, and forgiveness. Lives of impact. And he will do whatever it takes. He studies us and knows what attacks will do the most damage. His goal is always to take out our hearts.

Nehemiah was no different from us. The enemy was out to stop him from doing what God called him to do. But he recognized what was going on and didn't give in.

“Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, ‘Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.’ *But they thought to do me harm*” (Nehemiah 6:2, emphasis supplied).

It sounded innocent enough. Let's get together. Talk. The enemy's attack is often subtle, but always distracts us from God—from who we are in Him, from who He is, from what He's called us to do. Satan desires to keep us from doing what God calls us to do and from being the people God created us to be. Nehemiah wouldn't be distracted.

“So I sent messengers to them, saying, ‘I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?’” (verse 3). Nehemiah recognized that God had called him to do “a great work.” And he wouldn't let anything keep him from it.

But the enemy wasn't easily deterred. He was persistent and relentless and tried other tactics. “Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king” (verses 5, 6). Nehemiah couldn't be distracted, so the enemy created rumors about him to take out his reputation and misrepresent him and his motives to others. The enemy attacked his character.

This can be a temptation for many of us. We want to defend ourselves. We care what others think about us and what we're doing—sometimes too much. The enemy knows this and knows how to make it personal. The Bible calls him “the accuser” for a reason.

Nehemiah refused to be defensive or leave what he was doing. "Then I sent to him, saying, 'No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart'" (verse 8). Nehemiah knew the truth. He didn't feel the need to argue or defend himself with the enemy. He trusted God with what others thought about him and just kept working. Like Nehemiah, we can trust God with what others think about us. Tell ourselves the truth and keep working, letting God protect us and our reputations.

There was a reason for the persistent attacks. Nehemiah knew the enemy's goal. "For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done'" (verse 9). The enemy wanted them afraid so that they would stop building. Sanballat knew that if they kept going, they'd be successful in rebuilding the wall and protecting Jerusalem, and he wanted to keep them from their task. Our enemy also knows what will happen if we do what God has called us to do, believing, like Nehemiah, that what God has asked us to do is a "great work" and that we are needed to complete it.

Nehemiah kept working.

Sanballat hired a friend of Nehemiah's to take him out. "Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah . . . who was a secret informer, and he said, 'Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you'" (verse 10).

Sounds like a good plan, doesn't it? Let's go to church. Hide there so that no one can harm us. Church is the house of God. It's good to go there, right? Nehemiah would be safe there. And the message came through a friend who cared about Nehemiah, right?

But Nehemiah realized that this was another attack of the enemy. The enemy was attempting to make him afraid for his life, to make him sin by hiding out at church. (Note: Nehemiah may have been a eunuch and thus not allowed to be inside the temple.) It would also be quite the story that the person in charge of the rebuilding was hiding inside the church while others were risking their lives to rebuild the walls under constant attack. The enemy used one of Nehemiah's friends to tempt him to leave his work and hide out in a place God hadn't asked him to go (verses 11-13).

It seemed plausible and possibly even good. Many times the enemy tries to keep us from the work God has for us by keeping us busy or distracted with good things. Even with church things. But when it keeps us from doing what God has called us to do, it is sin. And sometimes the enemy will use our friends to tempt us away from what God has called us to do or away from the way He has asked us to live.

Nehemiah recognized this and kept working and praying. "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands" (verse 9). He prayed for himself. He'd prayed for others often, but this time the battle was personal, and he prayed for his own strength and courage. Nehemiah understood that he was living in a battle zone and that he needed to guard his heart. He reminded himself of the truth. God had called him to a great work. He resisted the temptation to defend his actions or reputation and just kept

working, not caring what others thought or said, as long as he was doing what God had asked. He even recognized when a “friend” was the one tempting him to act contrary to what God had commanded. And through it all, he prayed, staying connected to the One to whom he had committed his life.

God calls us to do the same thing. His Word challenges us to make this one of the most important things we do: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23, NIV).

God calls us to guard our hearts because He knows two things. First, our hearts are under attack. We have an enemy who wants us to lose heart and give up. Second, everything we do and everything we are comes from our heart. That’s why the enemy works so hard to take out our hearts. He doesn’t want us to be the people God called us to be. He’s afraid of us. He’s afraid of what will happen when we live believing that God is who He says He is and that we are who He says we are. He will persistently and relentlessly look for ways to distract us, question who we are and our motives, create doubt and fear in our minds, or tempt us to sin—even by doing what seems like a good thing—in order to keep us from accomplishing what God has called us to do.

Like Nehemiah, we resist the enemy by praying not only for others but also for ourselves. We guard our hearts by believing we have an enemy and watching for his lies and attacks. We protect our hearts by staying connected to God and continuing to do what He has set before us. God will do the rest. He has promised we can be confident “that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, NIV).

Summary—Just to Recap

The enemy makes the battle personal. He is relentless and will try lots of different ways to keep Nehemiah from accomplishing what God has called him to do.

- He attempts to distract him by calling him to a “meeting.”
- He attempts to damage his reputation and put him on the defensive.
- He wants to make him afraid so that he stops building.
- He tries to get him to sin—even by going to the temple.

We, too, have an enemy out to keep us from being the people God created us to be and doing the work He created us to do. We can learn from Nehemiah’s response:

- Recognize that there is an enemy and that he is out to destroy.
- Resist the enemy’s lies and temptations.
- Pray and ask God for strength.
- Keep doing what God has called you to do.

Praying Like Crazy

What the Bible Says

"Be anxious for nothing, but in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6, 7

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

"As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." 1 Samuel 12:23

Steps to Praying Like Crazy

1. Be Connected to God
2. Believe the Battle
3. Believe God Answers
4. Believe the Promises
5. Be Thankful
6. Be Persistent
7. Be Radical

How We Live It

1. Pray with Others
 - Ask God to remind you to pray for them
 - Ask Him what to pray about—how do I pray for them/me; what do You want?
2. Pray Continuously
 - Life prompts
 - Driving
 - When you wake up at night and can't go back to sleep
3. Pray Scripture
 - Record the prayers in your Bible
 - Mark and date them
 - Journal

Prayer is not a magic wand. There are no "right" words that will cause God to finally answer. It's a journey of trusting and believing. Prayer will change things. Especially you.

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What Do I Pray About?

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
Ephesians 3:14-19

1. Spiritual walk
 - An intimate, real walk
 - To experience God
 - To comprehend God’s love
 - Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23)
 - God’s favor (1 Chronicles 4:9-11)

2. Relationships
 - Friends
 - Co-workers and bosses
 - Classmates and teachers (school and church)
 - Bullies/enemies, difficult relationships
 - Spouse and girl/boyfriend
 - Parent/child

3. Personal
 - Purpose and passion
 - Wisdom, understanding, and largeness of heart (1 Kings 3:9; 2 Chronicles 1:10; Colossians 1:9, 10)
 - Character
 - Sin and temptation
 - Forgiveness
 - Health
 - Struggles and challenges

When praying for others . . .

- Pray with them
- Email prayers to them
- Text them prayers
- Send them prayers in notes and cards
- Pray over the phone
- Follow up and ask what God has been up to

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The Discipline of Fasting

By Dr. Derek Morris

A. Fasting in the Scriptures

a. Types of fast

- i. Normal fast—Luke 4:1, 2.
- ii. Partial fast—Daniel 10:3.
- iii. Absolute fast—Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9.
- iv. Supernatural fast—Deuteronomy 9:9.

b. In the teachings of Jesus

- i. Study Matthew 6:16-18 and 9:14, 15.
- ii. What can we learn about fasting from the teachings of Jesus?

B. Insights on spiritual fasting in the writings of Ellen White

- a. "The fasting which the word of God enjoins is something more than a form. It does not consist merely in refusing food, in wearing sackcloth, in sprinkling ashes upon the head. He who fasts **in real sorrow for sin** will never court display. The object of the fast which God calls upon us to keep is not to afflict the body for the sin of the soul, but to aid us in perceiving the grievous character of sin, in humbling the heart before God and receiving His pardoning grace" (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 87).
- b. "The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance. 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" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 188).
- c. "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" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 188, 189).
- d. "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*, pp. 187, 188).
- e. "The spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 189).
- f. "All the fasting in the world will not take the place of simple trust in the word of God" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 189).

- C. The purpose of a spiritual fast
 - a. Fasting helps us to focus our attention upon God.
 - b. Fasting calls us to prayer.
 - c. Fasting exposes those things which control us.
- D. How should we fast?
 - a. Plan a 24-hour partial fast.
 - b. Eat sparingly of very simple food, or you may wish to drink only fruit juices.
 - c. Drink plenty of pure water.
 - d. Begin your fast with prayer following a wholesome breakfast. Break your fast the following morning with a light meal of fresh fruit and a special time of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord! Remember that you should not "advertise" your fast. Such an attitude leads to spiritual pride and robs you of the special blessings that God desires to bestow during this time.
 - e. Consider setting aside a day each week for this type of spiritual fast.
- E. Plan a normal or absolute fast in times of great need
 - a. In times of crisis, God may impress you to enter into a normal or absolute fast.
 - b. Realize that you must severely limit your activities during such a fast. (You should consult your physician if you suspect that such a fast might endanger your health.)
- F. Do not become extreme—there is no virtue in a marathon fast
 - a. Ellen White writes: "You are not called upon to fast forty days. The Lord bore that fast for you in the wilderness of temptation. There would be no virtue in such a fast; but there is virtue in the blood of Christ" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 189).

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