

# Day of Prayer and Fasting

Materials for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter — July 2, 2016

THEME:

*"Praying for the World Next Door"*

Different Cultures, Immigrants, Refugees, Exchange Students, Tourists, and the Needy

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

## Day of Prayer and Fasting Ideas and Resources

- Suggested sermon theme or topics for church: **Key Verse:** Isa. 58:6

*Prayer and Fasting for the World Next Door*  
*Seeking Christ's Heart for the Distressed and Needy*

- Suggested children's story:

Luke 10:30–36—Share the story of the Good Samaritan. Ask the children what being a Good Samaritan might look like today. Encourage them to be kind and caring to people of other cultures, and especially to the hurting. We are to be Good Samaritans to all those in need whom Christ brings across our path.

- Prayer theme for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Day of Prayer and Fasting: *"Praying for the World Next Door"* as well as World Church requests (see page 4).
- Suggested afternoon prayer program and activity: Schedule 2 hours minimum for this time, but allow the Holy Spirit to lead. Many plan on prayer for full afternoon (see page 5).
- Day of Prayer and Fasting devotional: *"Hope for the Hurting, Light for the Lost"* (see page 9). This could be shared before the prayer time or used with the sermon, if desired.
- Handout to send home with members: *"Promises to Claim as You Continue Praying for the World Next Door"* (see page 7).
- Corresponding outreach ideas to follow Day of Prayer and Fasting: see page 8 and *"Outreach Ideas to Reach the World Next Door."* These ideas will take some time to put into action. (See additional attachments.)
- Fasting inspiration and resources: *"The Biblical Call to Prayer and Fasting"* and *"Spiritual Breakthrough."* (See additional attachments.)

Additional online resources available:

- Helpful, practical resources to reach immigrants, and those of other cultures and languages that live among us: [www.reachtheworldnextdoor.org](http://www.reachtheworldnextdoor.org). This Web site has downloadable prayer cards for different nationalities and religious groups, as well as a downloadable booklet called *Praying for the World Next Door*. Many of the prayers in this packet come from the booklet and are used with permission of the author, Scott Griswold.
- For additional ideas about one-day events for those living in countries where free sharing is restricted, see <https://urbancenters.org/event-planning>.
- Bible studies for multiple languages: <http://www.hopetalk.org>

## 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/or rich foods fast, social media 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, even if people choose not to fast, we still 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!"

## **Praying for the World Next Door**

Emphasis on Immigrants, Refugees, Students, Tourist, and Travelers

- Pray that God will give us a **love for other cultures** different than our own.
- Pray for the **immigrants** who live among us—both the rich and poor, legal and undocumented. They each have challenges, and they each need to know God's love.
- Pray that God **helps us be more warm-hearted** and generous toward strangers.
- Pray for our **publishing houses** to be able to produce more materials to reach the different language groups among us.
- Pray for God to raise up **effective writers** to reach the various language groups around the world that still have limited or few spiritual resources and materials.
- Pray for **those who come from war-torn areas** and places of persecution.
- Pray for **those facing religious persecution** right now because of Christ.
- Pray for **international students** at our local universities to come to know God.
- Pray for **opportunities to witness** to these international students.
- Pray for ministries to be established to reach the **tourists and travelers** among us.
- Pray for ways to reach the **international workers** and **business owners** among us.
- Pray that **we will be a witness in how we conduct our business**, that people from other countries will see integrity and service that attracts them to God.
- Pray for **specific people from everyday life** who come to your mind, people you see and interact with on a regular basis. These people may be at work, the grocery store, the hospital, your school, the gas station, the park, an international restaurant, or maybe have recently moved to your community.
- Pray for **immigrants or those of other cultures you already know** by name.
- Pray **that God would break your heart** for their spiritual needs just as His heart breaks for the lost.

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

- Please pray for the **Mission to the Cities initiatives** going on in many cities around the world.
- Pray for the many **Centers of Influence** being developed around the world.
- Pray for **those in your own region**, including community centers and outreach initiatives that your church is part of.
- Please pray **for people to answer the call** to take the message to those who will otherwise not hear. There are still 43 cities with populations of more than a million people where there are no Adventist congregations.
- Pray for the many **missionaries serving on the front line**. Pray for any missionaries you know by name.
- Pray for those new believers recently baptized in Rwanda, that they will stay faithful!
- 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 Afternoon Prayer Program and Activity*

# Time to Pray!

- **Place:**  
Gather together in the church, a fellowship hall, a 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:**  
After a few songs to set a reverent atmosphere, have a song leader lead everyone in the hymn, "Let Your Heart Be Broken" (*Adventist Hymnal*, no. 575).

Follow with the scripture, Isaiah 58:6: "Is not this the fast that I have 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?"

**Opening prayer and official welcome:** Have the Prayer Ministries director or a designated leader welcome everyone to the time of prayer, and share the devotional, "*Hope for the Hurting, Light for the Lost!*" (see page 9).

Go over the prayer theme for the Day of Prayer and Fasting as listed above on page 4. If possible, you might print up multiple copies of this for people to have during the prayer time. This might also be a good time to remind people to keep each prayer brief, so multiple people can pray. (See "Points for Prayer Leader" on page 6.)

**Prayer time:** Give at least 2 hours minimum for members to pray. This time will go quickly. Many enjoy spending the whole afternoon in prayer. You can also add time for praises, testimonies, etc. However, make sure you don't limit the prayer time with too much talking or sermonizing or sharing. Keep the focus and emphasis on actual time in prayer. This is the day to pray! The time will go quickly.

**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 the world next door and those of other cultures that they are trying to reach. God will reward these earnest prayers of faith!

Give out the prayer sheet, "Promises to Claim as You Continue Praying for The World Next Door!" for members to take home (see page 7).

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

## Pointers for prayer leader:

While people are encouraged to pray multiple times, remind them of the importance to keep 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” (*Manuscript Releases*, 10:130).

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 and confession** before beginning to really intercede for the prayer themes. Based on Psalm 100:4, we are to enter God’s gates with praise. And, based on Psalm 66:18 as well as Isaiah 59:1, 2, if we want God to hear our prayers, our sins must be confessed and put away!

If starting with praise and confession, you might begin the prayer time as follows: “Dear Lord, we come before You today with hearts full of praise. Before we give You our requests for our brothers and sisters of other faiths, we want to take a few minutes 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.

We encourage a brief time for private confession to God first, and then corporate confession especially for sins like apathy and lethargy in reaching souls for Christ. This time of confession might be followed with singing “Amazing Grace.”

Next it’s time for supplication. Encourage everyone, by your own example, to pray God’s Word as they pray for the world next door. 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” (*Education*, p. 168).

Encourage the group to agree with each other in prayer, claiming Matthew 18:19.

Someone may say, “Lord, please be with the Vietnamese in my neighborhood and help them to know You.” Someone else may add, “And help me to know how to share about Jesus with the Vietnamese lady I met at the hair salon.” Then it moves on quickly to another person’s request.

These are ideas to help get started, but it’s most important that the Holy Spirit leads!

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

## Promises to Claim as You Continue Praying for The World Next Door!

*To help you intercede more effectively, here's a sample prayer you can pray on behalf of someone you are seeking to reach. Pray in faith based on God's Word! You can also search for other promises to claim that are more specific and applicable to their lives.*

Dear Father in heaven, You are the God of all nations. You told me in Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" You alone created all things and have all power. You are the healer and the mighty warrior. Only You have sent Your Son Jesus to die for the sins of all the world. May Your name be exalted everywhere and all around me.

You said in 1 Timothy 2:4 that You desire all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Please fill my heart with Your love and empower me to pray for them. In particular I am asking You to save (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**). You promised that You would send the Holy Spirit "and when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Please convict (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**) now. Open (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**)'s eyes and turn him/her from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that he/she "may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18).

Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself" (John 12:32). Please work in my heart and in my church so that Jesus is lifted up in our lives and let (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**) be drawn to You. Give us unity and deep love for the lost.

In Luke 11:13 You promised, "How much more will Your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" I ask now for the Holy Spirit. Please give me love and boldness to speak to (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**) for You. Please do miracles that will help (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**) to believe in You.

You said, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Psalm 32:8). Please give me opportunities today to care and help me to know what to say to (**\_\_fill in the blank\_\_**) and anyone else You send my way.

You have promised that when Jesus returns You will have redeemed a "great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9). The task is huge. I ask you to send more laborers into Your harvest (Matthew 10:38). Let Your kingdom come!

Finally, Lord, I claim Your promise in Jeremiah 33:3: "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." I ask You to do incredible things to lead the world to salvation. Work in me and through me. In Jesus' mighty and loving name, amen.

*For more practical ideas on how to reach out, visit: [www.reachtheworldnextdoor.com](http://www.reachtheworldnextdoor.com).*

## *Corresponding Ideas for Reaching the World Next Door*

After spending time in prayer for the world next door, it's time to look for practical ways to help the world next door. These ideas won't come to action overnight but will take time to plan and implement.

### **First of all, remember Christ's method in everything you do!**

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me' " (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

To start with, consider tangible ways that you might be able, as a church family (or individually), to reach out to new immigrants or refugees in your area.

Moving to a new country or region can be both exciting and extremely difficult. Immigrants, refugees, and international students face many challenges as they adjust to a new environment and seek first to survive and then thrive. You can help them in many ways.

If you had just arrived in a new country and a new neighborhood, wouldn't you love to receive a warm welcome?

Here are some ways you can help recent arrivals feel at home:

- Stop by and introduce yourself, and get acquainted
- Give a Basketful of Necessities
- Host a welcome dinner
- Host a welcome dinner as a church
- Lead a "tour" through your town
- Adopt a family as a family

To get more specific tips on how to implement these and other ideas, read the attachment, "*Outreach Ideas to Reach the World Next Door.*"

Once you've made a special connection with someone or with a family, follow up on this connection by staying in touch, reaching out to them periodically, taking them baked goodies or treats when you can, sharing inspiring resources or literature (in their native language) if they show an interest or openness. Eventually you may invite them to a health seminar or evangelistic series, or other faith event. For starters, just focus on friendship evangelism. And whatever you do, *don't stop praying for the world next door!* God brought you into their life for a reason. He doesn't want to see them left behind!



## *"Hope for the Hurting, Light for the Lost!"*

Devotional Thoughts for Day of Prayer and Fasting, July 2, 2016

Paul came from a large Samoan family but was born and raised in New Zealand. While his parents dedicated him to the Lord as a child, hoping he would one day become a preacher, through a series of tragic events Paul ended up living on the streets by eight years of age. Crime and drugs became his life, and as the years passed he barely got by. However, not long after he eloped with his girlfriend Fiona at age 17, Paul's life began to take a turn for the better.

A friend whom Fiona had known from the Adventist church began inviting Paul and Fiona to Bible studies. They didn't want to go, but their friend was relentless. Finally they accepted. Then they couldn't stop going. The gospel was too good to be true. "Did God really send His Son to die for me?" they wondered.

Next they attended an Adventist camp meeting, where a preacher made an appeal to follow the Lord. While Paul was deeply convicted, it took two weeks for him to fall on his knees and give his heart to God. Then he couldn't stop weeping as relief and peace flooded his soul. "What do You want from me?" he asked the Lord in prayer that day.

"Paul, I want you to be a preacher," the Lord told him.

After that, doors began to open providentially, and Paul was accepted into the theology program at Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea. After finishing his training, he and Fiona returned to New Zealand, where he served as a pastor in the North New Zealand Conference.

After 13 years, Paul was impressed to further his education, and with doors once again miraculously opening for him, Paul and Fiona, along with their children, moved to the United States. During this time, although visitors themselves in the United States, they began reaching out to the immigrants around them. Traveling all around Southern California, the couple ministered to second- and third-generation Pacific Islanders by bringing them food and encouraging them. Through this special ministry, many church plants were established.

In 2010, the family returned to New Zealand, where Paul now serves as the director for church planting. He is also the ministerial director for the North New Zealand Conference.<sup>1</sup>

And all this started because someone was willing to step out of their comfort zone and reach out. Someone cared enough to share Jesus!

### **One Miracle at a Time!**

Paul and his wife Fiona are examples in one miracle, and they have in turn been used by God to bring many more miracle stories to the Kingdom. And that's all God is asking from us. We might not be able to reach the whole world, but we can reach one person, one family, one student, one lost struggling soul at a time.

Ellen White writes, "By all that has given us advantage over another,—be it education and refinement, nobility of character, Christian training, religious experience,—we are in debt to those less favored; and, so far as lies in our power, we are to minister unto them. If we are strong, we are to stay up the hands of the weak."<sup>2</sup>

As we seek to reach the world next door for Christ, what better way than to start with a day of prayer and fasting on their behalf.

Ultimately, the goal of true fasting should be the fulfillment of Isaiah 58. This is the kind of fast to which God is calling us.

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.<sup>3</sup>

We are living in a world of great darkness, a world that needs the light. As we pray, we are also to work. We are to be good Samaritans to the lost, to the hurting, to the outcast, to the underprivileged, and to all we meet. We are to bring them the light of heaven.

Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn.

All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery.

Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.

God calls not only for our gifts for the needy, but for our cheerful countenance, our hopeful words, our kindly handclasp. When Christ healed the sick, He laid His hands upon them. So should we come in close touch with those whom we seek to benefit.

There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul

sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.<sup>4</sup>

And that's why we are gathered here today, to pray for these souls, to bring them to the foot of the cross.

We must also remember that even in the upper ranks of society, there are weary pilgrims looking for light. Acts 8 tells the story of God leading Philip to meet an important man from Ethiopia who was searching for truth.

This Ethiopian represented a large class who need to be taught by such missionaries as Philip—men who will hear the voice of God and go where He sends them. There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.

An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, *and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts.*<sup>5</sup>

As we take time to pray and fast today, let us place ourselves in Paul and Fiona's place. Let's place ourselves in the Ethiopian's place. Let's put ourselves in a little Syrian refugee boy's place. We are in need of prayer. We are in need of the light of God's truth. We are in need of the gospel. Will someone help us? Will someone reach out? Will someone care?

We must remember, if it were not for God's abundant goodness and mercy, we ourselves would be the world next door, the ones who do not know Christ. But we have been given a great privilege of knowing the truth. And with it comes a responsibility for others.

In *The Great Controversy* we are told, "Only in eternity can we rightly estimate the loss of a single soul."<sup>6</sup>

So let this be our prayer today: Hope for the hurting, light for the lost! Let our hearts be broken for the world in need.

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<sup>1</sup> This story, written by Gina Wahlen and originally titled "Lost and Found," is condensed from the *Youth and Adult Mission Quarterly*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2016, featuring the South Pacific Division. Used with permission. For this and more mission stories, visit <https://am.adventistmission.org/mq-adult>, and "like" them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/missionquarterlies/](http://www.facebook.com/missionquarterlies/).

<sup>2</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 440.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>4</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 417, 418 (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109 (emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

# Reaching the World Next Door—Outreach Ideas

It is fun to make new friends with people of other cultures. They see things from different angles. They help us experience life in new ways.

Besides the fun of new friendships, often those of other cultures or ethnicities have a different religion than our own. We learn fascinating things as we explore their values and our own more deeply. Thus when we build friendships, we will have the privilege of sharing with them the beauty of Jesus and the rich wealth of truth that is in the Bible.

Let us pray for God's guidance as we look for ways to love and tangibly help those who have come to live among us. Remember that moving to a new country can be both exciting and extremely difficult. Immigrants, refugees, and international students face many challenges as they adjust to a new environment and seek to first survive and then thrive.

If we had just arrived in a new country and a new neighborhood, wouldn't we love to receive a warm welcome?

Here are some ways practical ways you can help recent arrivals feel at home:

## ***Give a Basketful of Necessities***

Newly arriving refugees often come with very few possessions. Imagine their joy at being welcomed by you with a basketful of useful items for life in their new country or city.

Here are some suggestions for what to pack in those baskets from Terri Saelee, director of Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministry (ARIM) for the North American Division.

### **Welcome Packets**

- Laundry basket
- Laundry soap, hand soap, shampoo, conditioner, dish soap, sponges and scrubbers
- Roll of quarters for laundry
- Blankets/quilts (especially soft, easily washable blankets), sheets, pillows, pillow cases
- Towels (Dish towels, hand towels, bath towels)
- Shower curtain
- Basic kitchen utensils and supplies: (e.g., cutting board, knife, wok, sauce pan, serving bowls and spoons, silverware, dishes)
- Calendar
- Pens and pencils
- Paper

- Scissors
- Stapler
- Paper clips
- Rubber bands
- Band Aid adhesive bandages
- World map
- U.S. map
- Local city map
- Local bus schedule
- List of important phone numbers
- Any other items God brings to mind

### ***Host a Welcome Dinner***

Everyone likes to eat, and everyone likes to be warmly welcomed. You can give this kind of special experience to people who've just arrived in your community through a welcome dinner.

You might say to them, "I know we've just met, but we'd really like to get better acquainted. Would you come and eat a meal with us at our house? We like to do this for people who've just arrived. It's our way of saying, 'Welcome to our community!' Maybe it feels unusual to have a stranger invite you to eat with them, but we think anybody in a new place might enjoy making some new friends. Can you join us?"

Remember that many people of other cultures are too polite to say "Yes." They don't want to take advantage of you. They want to make sure you really mean it. So expect a "No, thank you." Try inviting them a couple of more times. "We really would love to have you come for dinner. It would be no trouble at all. If you can't this Wednesday, how about next Sunday?"

Maybe you don't like to cook. Maybe you feel too nervous to have strangers at your house. In that case, you can take them out to eat. Some newcomers might feel more comfortable going with a stranger to a restaurant the first time anyway. You might say, "We'd like to welcome you to our community by taking you out to our favorite restaurant. The food may be strange to you, but I'll show you the foods I think are really tasty. Sometime I'd like to try the foods from your country."

Try to move eventually to the home atmosphere. There's no place like home, the saying goes, and you will draw your new friends closer to your heart when you can be in each other's homes.

You can even get all your neighbors involved in a welcome dinner by planning a "block party," for which everyone on your block contributes some food and gets better acquainted, especially with the newcomers.

## ***Host a Special Dinner as a Church***

If there is a large group of diverse cultures in your community or you have newly arrived immigrants, refugees, or international students, you might consider getting your friends or the whole church involved in a “We Want to Bless You” dinner.

Plan a fellowship meal where you ask lots of people to bring food, and if possible, various ethnic dishes.

You can even make tickets for the event and take some free tickets to the people you want to invite. Write down their names if they confirm that they will come.

When you prepare the tables, set name cards by the plates, mixing the special guests with your friends and church members.

Meet beforehand to pray and to talk about how to be friendly. Write up some good questions to ask.

Remind your fellow church members that this is an initial friendship contact, so they should show true Christian care, not focusing on differences or challenging topics like politics and religion. Have the members listen for needs among these guests that they can follow up with later.

If your guests are willing, have them register their names and contact information. Tell them, “We want to do other special things to let you know we’re glad you’re in our town.”

## ***Lead a "Tour" Through Your Town***

Your community is familiar and comfortable to you. For a newcomer, everything is strange and unknown. You can take newly arrived refugees or international students on a tour of the community.

Visit educational places like museums, the library, or an adult learning center. Show them parks, sporting areas, and tourist attractions right in town or nearby. Point out churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques. Show them government and private places that offer various programs that might help them. Point out where they can find used items at thrift shops and food at discount prices.

You’ll have plenty of good ideas on your own, but you could also ask a recent immigrant for his/her suggestions. They might think of things you might never have thought of, like showing new arrivals how to find a restroom in public places or that it is safe to drink water from the tap.

## ***Adopt a Family as a Family***

Invite all the members of your family to join you as you adopt a refugee or even a needy family in the community.

You can also host an exchange student. Many families in places like China and Saudi Arabia pay to have their son or daughter stay with an English-speaking family in the United States or elsewhere for a year. It is a great learning opportunity for your family to have someone from another culture stay with you. It's also an amazing opportunity to witness to them through your family as you work, pray, play, and struggle as Christians.

### ***Other Ways to Reach Out Once Friendships Formed***

- Leave a card at their door to let them know you are glad you met them!
- Send a birthday or get-well card when appropriate.
- Take them homemade goodies.
- Share encouraging literature.
- Take an interest and ask questions about their life (without being too nosy!).
- Ask if you can pray for them, and if so, how.
- Invite them to your home for a meal.
- Invite them to join your family on a friendly outing, to the zoo, a park, or some other restful place. (Be prepared to cover fees if money involved.)
- Be authentic about your love of God and joy of life!
- Share personal testimonies. People can argue with beliefs, but no one can argue with a personal testimony.
- Seek to introduce them to others of the same ethnic background within your church. That will create even stronger bonds.
- Invite them to special meetings, or church programs, or an evangelistic series.
- Pray for God to keep giving you more ideas how to reach out!
- Most of all, keep praying, praying, praying!

These are just a few ideas to get started! Praying for the world next door is very important. But we must continue to follow these prayers with specific action.

*Thanks to author Scott Griswold for compiling these ideas. For more resources and excellent ideas on how to reach those who come to live among us, visit:*  
[www.reachtheworldnextdoor.com](http://www.reachtheworldnextdoor.com)

# 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!<sup>1</sup>
- We should fast when seeking heavenly wisdom that God has promised!<sup>2</sup>
- We should fast when seeking God's direction in making important plans.<sup>3</sup>
- We should fast when dedicating our talents to God's service.<sup>4</sup>
- We should fast when requesting God's help in crisis.<sup>5</sup>

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

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.

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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](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

**W**ould 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

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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. 🙏

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## 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**