# A DAY OF PRAYER & FASTING

PRAYER GUIDE



## INTRODUCTION

#### WHY PRAYER AND FASTING?

It's always a good time for God's people to fast and pray! If you're new to the practice or want to learn more about what the Bible says about fasting, this sermon is a great start. CLICK HERE TO WATCH SERMON

Fasting for Christians can be an act of humility, lament, surrender, justice, seeking God's will, presence, and direction—any or all of the above! Our hope is that this practice and all that it entails becomes more and more a regular habit for those of us who call The Journey our church home.

## WHY AN ENTIRE DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING AS A CHURCH?

While anytime is a good time for us to seek God together as a church, this weekend seems like an especially good time, as it marks one year since COVID-19 first caused us to close down our public worship services, along with disrupting so many other aspects of our lives. This is an opportunity to look back and look ahead. But most importantly, as we do all of this, we are to look to God. Psalm 105:4 calls us to "look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always."

This guide is meant to help us do just that, and we hope you find it helpful. It is divided into three sections:

- First is a personal devotional to start the day focused on the goodness of God's Character.
- Second is a guide to lament and confess. At noon we will have an opportunity to gather on Zoom to pray through this corporately; if you are unable to make it, feel free to use this on your own or with a small group at some point during the day.
- Finally, at 5pm we will have another Zoom gathering to pray with expectant hope for spiritual renewal and revival in our lives, in our church, and in our city. Again, feel free to use this guide on your own or in a small group if you are unable to join us at 5.

## MORNING DEVOTIONAL

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." Psalm 136:1

#### FIND A QUIET SPACE AND PRAY

See suggestions below:

- Have your Bible open
- Grab a notebook to write down prayers, reflections and verses, or anything the Lord may be saying to you
- Name any distractions or things that pre-occupy your mind and heart
- Listen to worship music to prepare your heart and focus on God

#### REFLECT ON THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Read Psalm 103 and Psalm 145. List out different characteristics of God.

#### **GIVE THANKS**

Thank God for specific good things He has done and the good gifts He has given you.

Read Romans 5:1-11. Thank God for His good work in you during the trials of this past year. And thank Him for the greatest gift of all—peace and reconciliation with God through His son, Jesus.

#### **COMMIT YOUR DAY TO GOD**

Invite God to have His way in you as you fast. Perhaps pick one or two verses from this morning devotion to meditate on throughout the day.

# $NOONTIME\ PRAYER:$ $LAMENTATION\ \ CONFESSION$

"My soul is in deep anguish. How long, Lord, how long?" Psalm 6:3

#### "LAMENT"

"The prayer of lament is a place to begin as we seek to respond to the sin, the brokenness, and the complexity of our life together as human beings... The prayer of lament is that unsettling biblical tradition of prayer that includes expressions of complaint, anger, grief, despair, and protest to God."

Ruth Haley Barton

#### PERSONAL LAMENTATION:

- Read Psalm 142
- Name before God some things that you are personally grieving (ie, losses, disappointments, unmet hopes, suffering)

#### LAMENT OVER EVIL IN THE WORLD

- Read the prophet Habakkuk's complaint in Habakkuk 1:2-4
- Cry out to God over various kinds of evil and wickedness in our world

#### **CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN**

- Read Nehemiah 1:4-9
- Confess on behalf of you and "your people" ways you have sinned against God

#### CLOSE BY READING ISAIAH 52:13-53:12

• Meditate on Jesus, who bore our griefs and sins

# EVENING PRAYER: CONSECRATION & EXPECTATION

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

These "evil days" are loaded with opportunity for the Lord to move in powerful ways. Let us close our day of fasting and prayer by crying out to Him to work powerfully in our city and in our lives and submitting and surrendering our lives to God and His purposes.

#### PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

- Read Jesus' prayer for his followers in John 17:15-26. Join him in praying that we would be one and that we would be sanctified (set apart).
- Read Proverbs 16:9. Pray for our church and its leaders, for God's direction in our plans for what is ahead.

#### PRAYER FOR OUR CITY

• Read Jeremiah 29:7. Pray for the "shalom" of Worcester—for its leaders, its schools, its neighborhoods (especially Bell Hill and Quinsigamond Village), its various institutions, and anything else God puts on your heart.

#### PRAY FOR MANY TO COME TO FAITH IN JESUS

- Read Luke 10:2, Luke 19:10, and Ephesians 6:19-20.
- Pray for lost people who don't know Jesus and for boldness to make him known.

#### PRAYER FOR OURSELVES

- Read Romans 12:1-2. Offer yourself anew to God to be transformed by Him into all He wants you to be.
- Read Philippians 3:13-14. What is God inviting you to leave behind? What do you need from Him for what is ahead?

Be sure to make a note of any ways that God met you or spoke to you during this time of fasting and prayer. And tell someone—a friend, small group leader, pastor, etc. It's important to remember and celebrate what He's done and to discern His voice in community!