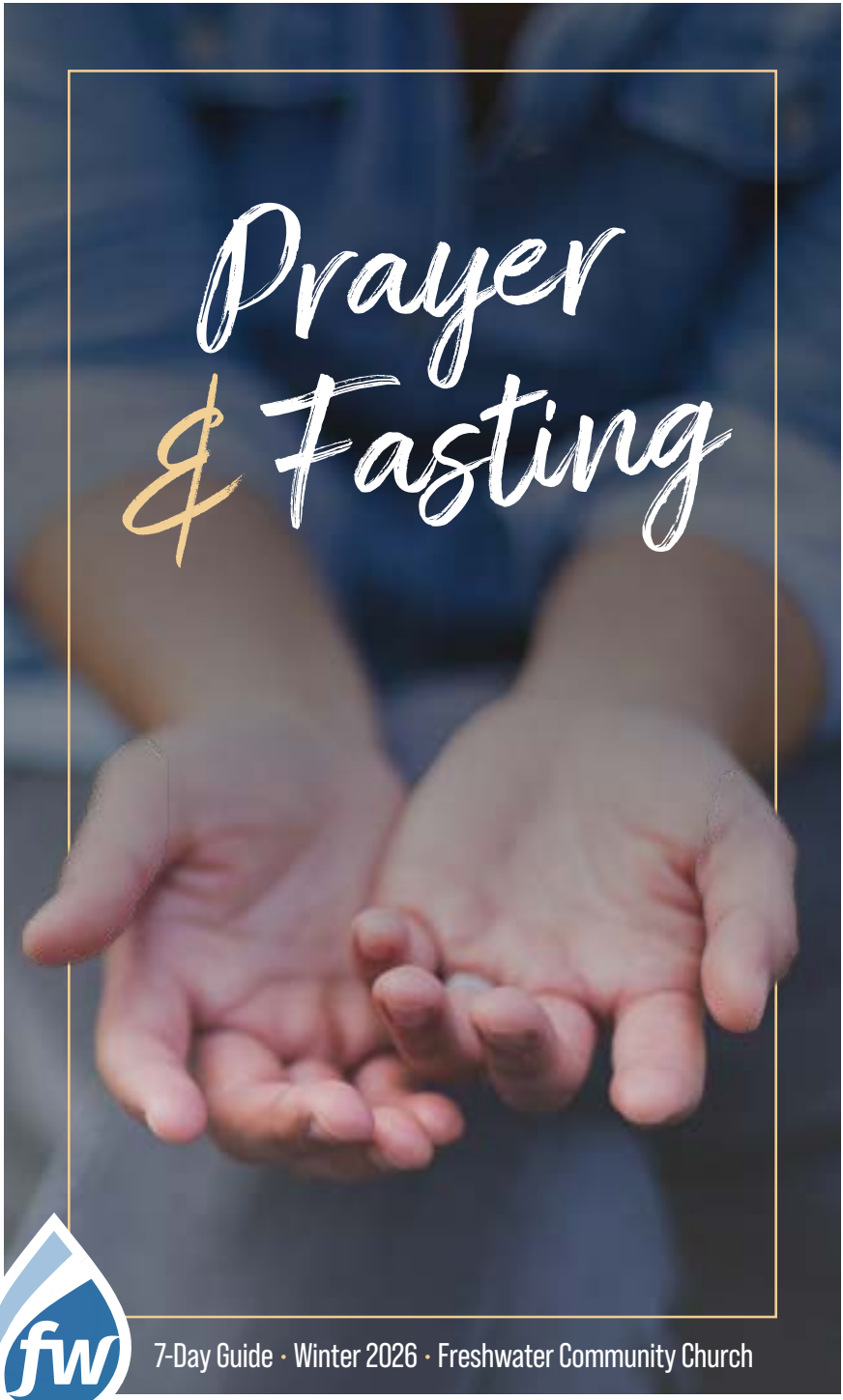


Prayer & Fasting

7-Day Guide · Winter 2026 · Freshwater Community Church

What is Fasting? And why are we doing it?

Fasting is giving up something good (typically food) to intensify our expression of need for something greater (God and His work in our lives). As we fast, we deny our bodily hunger to stir our spiritual hunger for God.

As we look ahead to this New Year, we believe that God has great things in store for your life, your family, and our church. And so, as we begin the year, our leadership is inviting you to join us to fast and pray together for one week, asking God to give us fresh manifestations of his Presence – evidenced in repentance, revelation, and the reconciliation of the lost.

During a fast, it is important that you surrender to God and accept the temporary discomfort. Listen for and to that still small voice (aka – the Holy Spirit) to guide you into what you need from God. Times of fasting can sometimes be very exciting with God's voice ringing loudly, and other times it can be quite melancholy, boring and quiet. Either way, pursue the deep things of God, and be prepared for God to do something unexpected in your life. Like anything, you will usually get more out of it if you put more into it.

Why Should We Fast?

1. It's Biblical. Throughout Scripture, God's people fast to repent of sin, grieve a loss, learn God's mind on a matter or decision, strengthen themselves against temptation, and grow in spiritual power. Many of the heroes of the faith fasted to seek after God, including Moses, Elijah, Esther, David, and the ultimate example, Jesus. *(Consider 1 Samuel 7:5-6, Matthew 4:1-11, Nehemiah 1:4, Matthew 6:16-18, Acts 13:1-3, Mark 9:29, Daniel 10:3, Psalm 35:13)*

2. It humbles us. When we fast, we are laying ourselves low, telling God we are desperate for him and in need of him. "For 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5b). *(Consider Psalm 35:13)*

3. It focuses us. As we fast, we turn away from certain things that grab our attention and occupy our thoughts and time, and we turn our focus toward God. As we remove the "clutter," we create room for conviction and connection with Him, and the Holy Spirit can communicate with us with greater clarity and direction.

4. It's a powerful spiritual weapon. When combined with prayer, fasting can invite God to release the power of the Spirit in our lives and bring His Kingdom to earth – evidenced in powerful outpourings of His Presence that may produce emotional and physical healings, conversions, and deliverance. *(Consider Mark 9:14-29)*

Instructions

While there are different types of fasts, and the length of time can vary, we have chosen a one-week fast for this season in our church. This will be a time to seek refreshing and renewal, receive a fresh indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and intercede for Freshwater Community Church. Fast whatever and however you want (e.g., full fast, a meal a day, cut out processed foods/fats/sweets, "Daniel" fast [no meat, dairy, alcohol or any rich foods], etc.), and ensure the fast is coupled with prayer – otherwise it's just a diet. You are also encouraged to fast in community with others and gather throughout the week to pray with each other. A fast is never just about food, but always about an intense pursuit of God by expressing deep sorrow for sin, seeking a move of God, or seeking direction from God.

Depending on your planned level of fasting, you should prepare yourself both spiritually and physically. Spiritually, be ready for God to move and to show you some things you need to know and work on. Be prepared to pray for extended periods of time along the themes for each day of the booklet. Use this guide as a starting place for Scripture reading and prayer but feel free to add to it as the Holy Spirit leads you. If He brings other things to mind or the thought of an acquaintance or friend is strongly consuming your thoughts (even if you don't know why), spend extended time praying for that person. Allow God to lead your time through this.

Physically, you should plan ahead. For example, if you intend to eliminate caffeine (could it be that some of us rely on caffeine more than we rely on God? ☺), then consider starting to wean yourself off prior to the week of the fast. If you plan to skip a certain meal every day, then make a plan ahead of time. If certain foods will be off limits (sugar addiction, anyone?), you may want to tell others in your household or those close to you, and then put those foods in a different place. If you get hungry and cranky (and you will!), increase your water intake. And, of course, if you have health issues, please consult your physician before partaking in a substantial fast.

One last thought: You may want to write down what God is showing and telling you throughout the week. (You can jot some notes down throughout the week in the blank space below or in the margins on the following pages.) Oftentimes, when we focus on getting into His presence, God rewards these special times with amazing words of encouragement, love and direction. You will want to hang on to what He gifts to you and not lose it to foggy memory as life returns to normal.

A Beginning Reflection

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires (the requests, the longings) of your heart." **Psalm 37:4**

Lord, we ask you to stir up a hunger for you beyond all other things. Help us to seek Your face and give us encounters with you. Amen.

Day 1: *Humility*

We start with surrendering our pride and the ways that we have tried to control and be in charge – essentially trying to take God's job. Confess pride and pursue a humble spirit. God absolutely loves a humble spirit! It makes Him want to make a shining example of that person (see Scriptures from James and 1 Peter below if you don't believe it!). Pride is so sneaky, so prevalent, and so terribly destructive – we should not tolerate it in our lives. Come to the Lord in humility, surrender pride to God's wonderful hand (picture yourself handing it over to Him), and just watch Him smile on your life as you allow His lordship to be properly placed.

- "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." **James 4:10**
- "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you." **1 Peter 5:5-6**
- "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." **Philippians 2:3**

Starting Prayer

Lord, I humbly seek your face and your blessing throughout this fast. Thank you for making a way for me to come to you, Almighty God. I confess that all too often I try to take over and I think too highly of myself. I am prideful and I often think that I've got this or that I know better – even though I know I don't. I receive your forgiveness for my pride and I choose to place it into your hand right now. I ask that you would teach me humility in a fresh way. I ask that you would continue to form in me a humble spirit that would excite you! I recognize your lordship over my life and I humbly ask for you to show me the ways in which I have exercised pride instead of humility. I humbly ask for your Son – the perfect example of humility – to be more fully formed in my life. Remove all the sticky and prickly thorns of pride that hinder my walk with you. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Day 2: *Love*

Dwell on and receive God's love for you! The Father's love for you is personal and everlasting. It is not just a general love for all people; He loves you personally! Receive that and remember where you stand with the Father since the Son's blood has justified you and the Holy Spirit indwells you. Confess ways you have not loved others as you ought (critical spirit, unforgiveness, sharp words, not extending grace). We see true love and how we ought to love each other by how Jesus loved the world (see John 13, below). Perhaps you even need to go to someone and confess the times you were unloving so God may restore and refresh in ways that may not even be understood at this point in time.

- "But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him." **Psalm 103:17**
- "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." **Colossians 3:14**
- "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." **John 13:34-35**

Starting Prayer

Lord, it's hard to believe that the Almighty Creator loves ME! You know me inside and out; you know everything I've done, said and thought – and you still love me! Me personally! You love my personality, my quirks, my unique attributes that all show your creativity and design to make me special. I receive more of your love today. I confess that I have been unloving toward others sometimes – even those who are a part of your family. I humbly ask that you would show me now those people whom I have treated or spoken to in an unloving way that I may confess and repent. Holy Spirit, show me more clearly the love of the Father that I may pass that love on to everyone I meet! In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Day 3: *Holiness*

Let's make sure we are clean vessels, holding nothing back from our Lord. Scripture teaches that sin can prevent the Lord from listening to our prayers and it can also put us in a place where we cannot be effective for His Kingdom. How is your heart (see Mark 7:20-23)? Allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind those things that are sinful or even just unhealthy practices that are getting in the way of spiritual growth. You could even ask Him: Lord, show me any impure motives, thoughts, or hidden sins in my life. Listen for that still, small voice to point things out – and don't argue! The Holy Spirit is wiser than we are, so even if something seems trivial or unimportant, don't just dismiss the thought. Confess it to Him and receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9-10). This could be an incredible turning point in your walk with the Lord as you submit to his prompting and redirection for your life.

- "...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely..." **Hebrews 12:1**
- "...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." **Ephesians 4:1**

Starting Prayer

Lord, I often sin – sometimes unknowingly, but sometimes willingly. I desire to be a clean vessel before you. I do not want to hold anything back from you. I humbly ask that you show me areas of my life in which I am holding back. I confess fear or feelings of inadequacy in my spirit which cause me to hold back from all you have for me. I submit to your gentle words and your nudge to show me where I am harboring sin, where I have addiction, or where I simply have unhealthy practices in my life which keep me from experiencing you more fully. I choose, with your power and in your authority, to release these things in Jesus' name and for you to replace these things with the beautiful substance of Heaven. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Day 4: Healing & Freedom

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus healed people, and even now, He still cares deeply about the whole person – emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Perhaps there are physical needs that you are experiencing, and you need a touch from the Lord. Maybe your mind or emotions are frayed and frantic, and you need His restorative and life-giving peace. Maybe there are still wounds from your past that are not yet healed by His gentle touch. Or maybe you need freedom from an addiction or sin pattern. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any area that needs His healing touch. Seek healing for yourself from our Lord. Seek healing for your family wherever it is needed. As Jesus brings others to mind, intercede for those you know who need a healing touch from Jesus.

- "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction." **Matthew 9:35**
- "Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security." **Jeremiah 33:6**
- "...with his wounds we are healed." **Isaiah 53:5**

Starting Prayer

Lord, I continue to recognize my weaknesses in a broken world among broken people. I have been hurt by others and I have hurt others. I thank you that you can heal every disease and every affliction! I humbly ask that you show me the ways and times that I have been hurt. I submit each of those instances and the feelings associated with those times to your healing touch. I also ask you to show me if there is any area that I need freedom. Lord, break the stronghold in this area of my life. If I have a need for physical healing, I also submit that to your healing touch. I humbly ask that you show me those whom I have hurt that I may confess and repent. And now, Lord, I bless my family and my church and those specifically that need it with healing from you. Would you pour out your healing power on specific people and on our church in general wherever it may be needed. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Day 5: Surrender

We each have a way of living that we think is right; but your life is not your own. You have been bought with a price – the blood of Jesus – and your life is now His. Is there an area that He is calling you to surrender to Him? Are you holding something back from Him? Maybe it's your schedule – your life is so cluttered with responsibilities and tasks and commitments that it's hard to hear from Him. Or maybe you need to step up in greater obedience or service of others. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any area of your life that you are keeping from Him. Surrender it to God. And as you give Him greater control, ask Him for a greater filling of the Holy Spirit.

- "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." **Romans 12:1**
- "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." **Proverbs 3:5-6**
- "And do not get drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit..." **Ephesians 5:18**

Starting Prayer

Lord, I know I am holding back areas of my life. First, I confess anything that is keeping me from giving this area of my life over to you: lust of the flesh, pride of life, fear, comfort, spiritual apathy, or the unknown. My time, my schedule, and my life are not mine. They are yours. Spirit, show me any areas that are not surrendered to you, and as you do, I submit it to you. As I submit this to you, will you fill me with a greater portion of your presence? In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Day 6: Revelation

God has a perfect purpose and a design for your life. He created you for good works. You weren't just meant to slog through your days and check off your tasks. He wants to set you off on a life-giving mission in His Kingdom. There are no bench-sitters on God's team. As John Wimber once said: "Everybody gets to play." Where might God be calling you to step up in His Kingdom? This could be inside the church or outside the walls – ministering to a hurting world. What is his unique mission for you in this season? He has called you up to something. But a word of caution: Don't rush into just anything. Instead, ask him: Lord, what is the Holy Spirit assignment that You have given me? Will you reveal to me my specific role in your movement? He will show you, and when He does, obey.

- "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." **Ephesians 2:10**
- "...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." **Matthew 6:33**
- "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" **Acts 13:2**

Starting Prayer

Lord, I confess that I get caught up in my normal, everyday life. I'm often too busy worrying about just making it through the day that I have no capacity to do your work; but I thank you that you have greater callings and purposes for me than just the mundane, daily activities. I thank you that you are inviting me to join the work of your constantly-advancing Kingdom. Will you show me the assignment you have for me right now? I'm not going to worry about my life purpose 10 or 20 years from now. Instead, please reveal to me what you want me to do today or this week. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Day 7: Extend the Table

God calls us to extend the table of His grace to a lost and hurting world. Who is God calling you to extend the table for? Over the last few years, our leadership has regularly asked this question: Who are your three? Who are the three people that you are praying for to see come to know Jesus in a personal way? Take this day to intercede for them in a more intensive and special way – believing that God will change their life this year. The mission is in front of us. The harvest is plentiful. Ask God to fill you up with what He wants you to pour out on the world.

- "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" **Matthew 28:18-20**
- "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **Acts 1:8**
- "...The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." **Matthew 9:37-38**

Starting Prayer

Lord, you have shown me who you are. Jesus, I have seen you save and heal and set free and restore. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit to be a witness of these things that I have seen – to show them to others. They need to know who you are and they need to see your glory. Will you soften the heart of [one of your three]? Will you empower me and give me boldness to share with them? Will you give me eyes to see others that are seeking you? In Jesus' name, AMEN.

"When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?'"

Luke 24:30-32

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