



Rev. Ralph S. Emerson, Senior Pastor

Vision:

“We exist to see people move from darkness to light by the transforming power and love of Jesus Christ.”

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting Jan. 6 – 26

As we are graced with a new year, we are privileged with a great opportunity to allow Jesus Christ to be first in our lives. To prioritize God often requires us to empty ourselves, so that we can be full of Him. It is a moment to refocus and also to refuel. This is a call for us to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth involves Fasting, Prayer, and Scripture.

Fasting is a method to clear yourself spiritually and physically, to better hear from God and align your decisions, or in this case, the year with God’s plan for your life. As a church—we want to start the year with a fast. We want to honor God with the first part of our year, aligning with God’s plan for our lives and our church.

As we embark on these 21 days of listening to what God has to say to us, take some time each day to record your thoughts, feelings, and discoveries. While you seek to see God move and get into better alignment with His plan for your life, make sure you are asking specific questions and listening intently.

During each of the 3 weeks, take time to focus on something very specific. Identify the specific things you need to hear from God on, present the concerns of your heart, but also, make sure to leave room for God to speak to you freely.

Any good period of reflection and revelation should be followed by some intentional action planning. So, make sure you are journaling what you hear, taking actionable steps, and join us for Passion Week, January 28-29, 2025, for a time of corporate prayer, worship, and gathering vision. We want to make sure to translate what God has shown us into specific and tangible goals and actions, so we can make sure we are continually moving forward in alignment with God.

With this, it is our goal to help you grow spiritually in Christ and to become a more mature Christian.



Fasting Facts

What is Fasting?

Fasting is emptying myself physically so that I can be filled spiritually.

Fasting is something that God EXPECTS of ALL believers.
(Matthew 6:16)

Stated simply, biblical fasting is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose.

Fasting helps me declutter my life so that I can make room to hear from God clearly.

Why Should I Fast?

I don't fast to pay a price. The price has been paid. I fast to refine my focus so that I might more fully apprehend all that has been purchased.

There is a closeness to God that you simply will not experience from prayer or personal devotions alone. You must fast.

In order to win a spiritual fight, we must use spiritual weapons! (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)

We don't fast to move God; we fast so God can move us.

Why Does Rising Star Church Fast?

To Acknowledge our sin before God (1 Samuel 7:5-6)

To receive direction from the Lord (Ezra 8:21)

To acknowledge a change of direction because of God's mercy
(Jonah 3:5)

To receive protection from the enemy's attacks (2 Chronicles 20:3)

To receive power over our enemy (Mark 9:29)

To receive clarity for our calling (Acts 13:2)

To receive alignment, authority, and anointing for our assignment
(Acts 13:3)



How Should I fast?

It should be PRIMARY:

Fasting before a major decision or at the beginning of the year, invites the presence of the Holy Spirit in to direct that decision or year. (Matthew 4:1-11)

It should be SACRIFICIALLY:

If it doesn't mean anything to you, it doesn't mean anything to God! (2 Samuel 24:24)

Many people will couple their fast from food with a fast from something else they enjoy (i.e., social media, television, etc.).

It should be PRIVATELY:

Fasting is a matter of the heart. (Matthew 6:17-18)

We should not brag about our fasting, compare our fast to others, or make ourselves the "victims" of the fast (i.e., complaining about the headache, lack of food, or desire to finish the fast).

It should be CORPORATELY:

Fasting together releases a corporate blessing and supernatural favor. We can see the results together as we fast and pray together. (2 Chronicles 20:3, Ezra 8:21)

It should be INCREMENTALLY:

Absolute fasts

- No Food, No Water
- Short periods (1-3 days, some may decide to go up to seven days.)

Normal fasts

- No Solid Foods
- Liquids only Fast
- Longer periods (7-10 days, some may decide to go up to 21 days)

Partial fasts

- Abstaining from some foods (i.e., meat, sweets, breads, and or pastas)
- Extended periods (21 days or longer)

**Note: Please consider your personal health condition, and if needed consult a physician prior to embarking on a fast.*



2025 Fasting Guidelines

Something Physical & Something Visual

Something Physical

As stated above fasting has always involved food. We often consume foods that are not only unhealthy but become stumbling blocks to our ability to focus in on what God wants to say to us.

We are asking everyone to sacrifice at least one thing (but you can do more) physical. Suggestions include but are not limited to:

- Sugary drinks (soda, punch, lemonade, etc.)
- Coffee
- Meat
- Snacks
- Bread

Something Visual

In our modern society, food is often not our only stumbling block. Food is not the only thing we “consume.” We are inundated with so many people vying for our attention, that God gets very little of it. We can’t adequately hear God overwhelmed with what the world has to say.

We are asking everyone to sacrifice at least one thing (but you can do more) visual. Suggestions include but are not limited to:

- TV Shows
- News Outlets
- Movies
- Social Media
- Books
- Magazines

It is not enough to empty out, if we don’t fill up. Matthew 12:43-45 describes the condition of someone who has their house cleaned and cleared but leaves it unoccupied and therefore finds himself in a worse condition than he began.



Fasting Devotional Guide

We encourage all parents and caretakers to follow along with the kids devotional guide as means to grow together as a family

Feel free use the kids devotional guide as well as the one below.

Theme: "Renewing Our Passion for God"

Week 1: Pursuing God's Presence

Day 1: Hunger for God

- Scripture: Psalm 42:1-2
- Devotional: Just as the psalmist thirsts for God, this fast reminds us to seek Him above all else. Let your physical hunger be a reminder to hunger for His presence.
- Reflection Prompt: What areas of my life need more of God's presence?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to increase your desire for Him.

Day 2: Seeking First the Kingdom

- Scripture: Matthew 6:33
- Devotional: Fasting aligns us with God's kingdom priorities. What does it mean for you to seek Him first?
- Reflection Prompt: What distractions might be hindering my pursuit of God?
- Prayer Focus: Surrender distractions and commit to seeking His kingdom.

Day 3: Abiding in Christ

- Scripture: John 15:4-5
- Devotional: Remaining in Christ is key to bearing fruit. In this fast, focus on staying connected to Him.
- Reflection Prompt: How can I stay rooted in Christ during this season?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for deeper intimacy with Jesus.



Day 4: A Heart of Worship

- Scripture: Psalm 63:1-4
- Devotional: Worshiping God helps us focus on His worthiness. Let your fast be an act of worship.
- Reflection Prompt: How can I worship God in my daily actions?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to cultivate a heart of worship.

Day 5: God's Word as Nourishment

- Scripture: Matthew 4:4
- Devotional: Just as food sustains the body, God's Word sustains the soul. Feast on His Word.
- Reflection Prompt: What Scripture is God calling me to meditate on?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to make His Word alive in your heart.

Day 6: God's Faithfulness

- Scripture: Lamentations 3:22-23
- Devotional: Reflect on God's unwavering faithfulness. Even in fasting, His mercies are new every morning.
- Reflection Prompt: How has God shown His faithfulness to me?
- Prayer Focus: Thank God for His steadfast love.

Day 7: Resting in God

- Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30
- Devotional: True rest is found in Jesus. Use this day to rest in Him, free from distractions.
- Reflection Prompt: What burdens do I need to lay at Jesus' feet?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to give you rest for your soul.



Week 2: Renewing Your Mind

Day 8: Transforming Your Mind

- Scripture: Romans 12:2
- Devotional: Fasting helps us break away from worldly patterns and renew our minds in Christ.
- Reflection Prompt: What worldly patterns do I need to reject?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for a renewed mind and spiritual clarity.

Day 9: Fixing Your Eyes on Jesus

- Scripture: Hebrews 12:2
- Devotional: Let go of distractions and fix your gaze on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.
- Reflection Prompt: What steps can I take to focus more on Jesus?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to help you stay focused on Christ.

Day 10: Guarding Your Thoughts

- Scripture: Philippians 4:8
- Devotional: Your thoughts shape your actions. Meditate on things that honor God.
- Reflection Prompt: What thoughts do I need to take captive to Christ?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for a mind filled with godly thoughts.

Day 11: Walking by Faith

- Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Devotional: Fasting is an act of faith. Trust God for what you cannot see.
- Reflection Prompt: Where is God asking me to walk by faith?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for trust and boldness in your faith walk.



Day 12: Taking Every Thought Captive

- Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:5
- Devotional: Spiritual development begins with disciplined thinking.
- Reflection Prompt: What thoughts do I need to surrender to Christ?
- Prayer Focus: Ask for help in capturing and submitting your thoughts to God.

Day 13: God's Peace

- Scripture: Philippians 4:6-7
- Devotional: God's peace surpasses understanding and guards your heart.
- Reflection Prompt: What worries can I release to God today?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for God's peace to fill your heart.

Day 14: Living in the Spirit

- Scripture: Galatians 5:16
- Devotional: Walking in the Spirit helps us overcome fleshly desires.
- Reflection Prompt: How can I stay more attuned to the Holy Spirit?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to help you walk in step with His Spirit.

Week 3: Aligning with God's Purpose

Day 15: God's Plans for You

- Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11
- Devotional: Trust that God's plans for you are good, even when the path seems uncertain.
- Reflection Prompt: What dreams or plans do I need to surrender to God?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for clarity and alignment with God's will.



Day 16: Bearing Spiritual Fruit

- Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23
- Devotional: Fasting cultivates spiritual fruit in our lives.
- Reflection Prompt: Which fruit of the Spirit do I need to grow in?
- Prayer Focus: Ask God to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in you.

Day 17: Living as a New Creation

- Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Devotional: Fasting helps us step into the new life Christ offers.
- Reflection Prompt: What old habits or mindsets do I need to leave behind?
- Prayer Focus: Thank God for making you a new creation in Christ.

Day 18: Being a Light

- Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16
- Devotional: Your renewed passion for God can shine brightly to others.
- Reflection Prompt: How can I share God's light with others?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for boldness to be a light in the world.

Day 19: Serving Others

- Scripture: Mark 10:45
- Devotional: Fasting reminds us to focus on serving others as Jesus did.
- Reflection Prompt: Who is God calling me to serve during this fast?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for opportunities to serve with humility.

Day 20: Trusting God's Timing

- Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1



- Devotional: God’s timing is perfect. Trust Him to fulfill His promises.
- Reflection Prompt: What areas of my life require more trust in God’s timing?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for patience and trust in God’s plan.

Day 21: Renewed Vision

- Scripture: Habakkuk 2:2-3
- Devotional: As the fast ends, seek God’s vision for your life in the new year.
- Reflection Prompt: What vision is God giving me for this season?
- Prayer Focus: Pray for clarity, courage, and commitment to walk in God’s purpose.

Closing Challenge:

Reflect on the lessons learned during this fast. Commit to carrying the passion and focus you’ve cultivated into the rest of the year. Let your renewed hunger for God guide your steps!

