

2019 PRAYER AND FASTING GUIDE

THE ROAD CHURCH
14880 Southfield Rd, Allen Park, MI 8101

As the New Year approaches, I have looked back on the many challenges and successes we have experienced during 2018. While 2018 brought many obstacles, it is with great hope and anticipation that I speak to you about 2019. Although the future may seem unclear to the world, as believers, we are *“confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform until the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)”*

We see throughout the scriptures that God wants three things. First, **salvation** to come to all. Second, He wants a **deeper relationship** with His people. And third, He wants us **to be the very best** we can be for Him. We find a common theme through the writings of the Apostle Paul that *our lives should be the reflection of Jesus* and that *we should walk worthy of the calling* to become Christ followers.

During the last few months of my own personal prayer and fasting, I have asked God a lot of questions. Many questions were about our congregation and the Church as a whole. The answer God put on my heart is simple, “Christians are not being their best for Christ”. Not all, but many, lack the Character, Commitment and Competence required for obedience as a Christ-Follower. This has led us to our 2019 theme:

TO BECOME THE BEST FOR CHRIST

We will become the *best for Christ* if we continually seek what I am calling the 3 C’s:

Character - Commitment - Competence.

If we strive to be the best in these three areas we will in-turn be our *best for Christ*.

We must strive to have Christ-like character and commitment. We also must strive to have the competence of God’s Word so that we can share with others the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We serve a very mighty and powerful GOD. If we truly commit our hearts, mind and strength for HIS purpose and HIS kingdom we can accomplish so much for Christ. I can’t fully imagine what GOD could or would do through HIS Church, but this I know:

We have been called into action to spread the Gospel of Christ Jesus to;
make disciples - **equip** disciples - **unite** believers - **unite** churches
and to **reach** around the globe for His glorious missions.

Let’s be the best for Christ!
Soli Deo Gloria
(Glory to God alone)

Pastor Tim

PURPOSE OF PRAYER AND FASTING 2019:

The purpose of The Road Church engaging in **Twenty-One Days of Prayer and Fasting** is to strengthen our relationship with God as Christ-followers and as a Church. Fasting and prayer go hand in hand throughout the Bible. We find that Jesus fasted before beginning His ministry and the Church fasted and prayed before sending Barnabas and Saul into the ministry. As we begin the New Year it is important to enter it with the same urgency, to pray and fast in the beginning of the year.

The world is full of distractions which attempt to take our attention away from God. This was evident in 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln appointed a National Day of Fasting. In his proclamation, President Lincoln said:

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!”

Prayer connects us to God; **fasting** disconnects us from those things in life that can be distractions. Therefore, as we pray our connection to God becomes stronger, because we don't have distractions holding us back. Remember it was Jesus who said, *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33).

Throughout these **Twenty-One Days of Prayer and Fasting** we are seeking God and His leadership in our lives and in the life of His Church.

2019 FASTING AND PRAYER STRATEGY

1. **PRAY FOR CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER:**

(II Peter 1:1-11, Philippians 2:1-18)

2. **PRAY TO HAVE CHRIST-LIKE COMMITMENT:**

(Luke 9:23-27, 57-62)

3. **PRAY TO BECOME COMPETENT IN THE WORD OF GOD:**

(2 Timothy 2:15, 3:17)

4. **PRAY THAT WE WILL REACH OUR COMMUNITIES FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD:**

Pray for opportunities and workers, and resources for evangelism in our local communities. Pray that each person in the church be involved in outreach opportunities throughout the year (Matthew 6:33, II Corinthians 5:20).

5. **PRAY FOR EXTENSIVE GROWTH AND NEW BAPTISMS:**

Pray that God would lead us in the following areas: Sunday morning service to reach 130 on average Sunday nights 50 on average, Children's ministry to grow by 15 kids. Pray for at least 20 new believer's baptisms in 2017 (Acts 6:1 and 7, Acts 9:31).

6. **PRAY FOR THE ONLINE COMMUNITY TO GROW:**

Pray that God would give the leadership the wisdom to grow the online community and to incorporate them into church membership (Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8).

7. **PRAY FOR THE CHURCH FINANCES:**

Pray that the members of the church will obediently, joyfully, and generously give to the church to make and exceed the 2019 budget as voted on. Pray that new members will see the importance of tithing and sacrificial giving. Pray for those who don't tithe on a regular basis that God would press upon their hearts to tithe consistently (Malachi 3:10, Matthew 6:24, II Corinthians 9:7). Pray that the church will remain good stewards of God's resources so that more may be reached with the Gospel.

INTRODUCTION:

Fasting is a spiritual discipline for the Christian. For years, I thought fasting was not for me, possibly because fasting is rarely taught in churches today. As I grew in my spiritual walk with Christ, I learned that fasting is a spiritual discipline that is not often practiced but something I *need* to do. I have found that misconceptions surrounding fasting seem to be the main reason why most Christians do not fast. Because of these misconceptions, we give excuses for why we don't fast. The reality is that we simply do not have information about fasting to fast.

One reason that we fear fasting is that we believe that it will turn us into something that we don't want to be. We look at it from a worldly perspective rather than a Godly perspective. Spiritual fasting can bring spiritual breakthroughs in one's life and the life of the church. It is my prayer that this time of prayer and fasting will do just that: as we pray, as we fast, we will have a spiritual breakthrough in our lives.

Let me first begin by bringing our attention to two myths about spiritual fasting:

Myth: Only the really spiritual people of the church fast.

Truth: Many people in the church fast, in today's society there are many churches which begin the year fasting and seeking God. In the scriptures it was the church in Antioch which was in a time of fasting and prayer when Barnabas and Saul were set aside to be missionaries.

"while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting the Holy Spirit set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work" (Acts 13:1-2).

Myth: Jesus does not require us to fast.

Truth: Although Jesus does not *command* us to fast, His words express that He *expects* the discipline of fasting to be in our lives.

Jesus' words in Matthew 6:16-17:

¹⁶“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷but when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

When you see the words that Jesus used *“WHEN YOU FAST”* it is clear that Jesus expects His followers to fast.

1. What is fasting?

To simply put it fasting is voluntarily abstaining from eating and/or drinking for an extended period of time, while taking the time you would spend during the meal and instead spending it in reading scripture and praying.

Fasting is giving the time to God that you would otherwise spend doing something else.

The biblical definition of fasting is: *a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.*

Notice that this is a spiritual discipline for Christians. When non-Christians fast, it has no Godly value for them because our reason for fasting is purely spiritual. That is called “Dieting”.

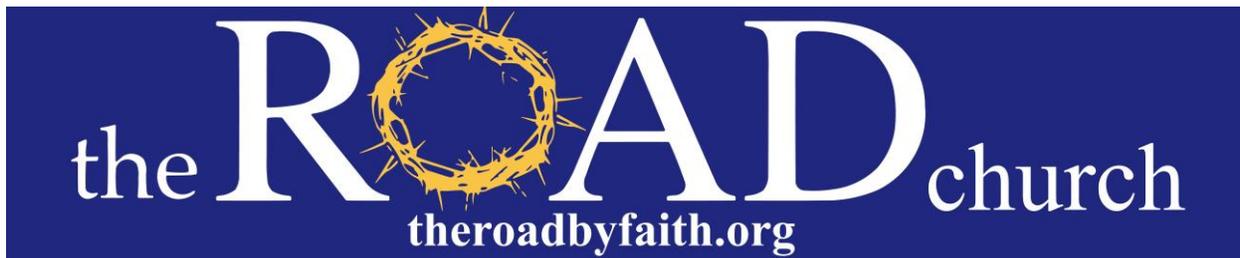
2. What Fasting is not:

Fasting is not a fad dieting concept.

It is not a way that you can earn extra credit points with God; you cannot manipulate God to doing something you want through fasting.

It is not an instrument that you use to gain attention to yourself.

Fasting is not a religious requirement.



3. Reasons to fasting:

The main reason we should fast is to draw nearer to God.

Many spend time fasting for medical reasons.

Many people today, to include Christians, fast for the purpose of their health. When needing to have certain blood work completed, we are required to fast for a period of time. If a person would spend time fasting to take care of their physical body, should we not take time fasting to care for our spiritual body?

“Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1).

It is clear that at certain times of life all people fast, what is unclear is which purpose is greater in their life. The real reward in fasting is getting more of God.

4. Jesus and fasting:

A. Jesus fasted:

Jesus thought fasting was important enough to do it himself. At the beginning of His public ministry Jesus fasted for forty days, and *“He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end he was hungry”* (Luke 4:2). Not only did Jesus fast, but He spoke about fasting during His Sermon on the Mount.

5. Three spiritual disciplines for the Christian:

Just like the three strands which are not easily broken (Eccles 4:12), Jesus points out three spiritual disciplines which are the source of a Christian’s strength in Matthew chapter 6. As we follow these spiritual disciplines to give, to pray and to fast, they strengthen our walk with God.

It is important to point out that these spiritual disciplines do not ensure our eternal salvation. Salvation can only come as you *“confess with your mouth that Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead”* (Romans 10:9).

Three Spiritual disciplines for the Christian:

1. Giving- *"² So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. I assure you: They've got their reward! ³ But when you give..." (Matthew 6:2-3).*
2. Praying - *"⁶ But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷ When you pray, don't babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. ⁸ Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask Him." (Matthew 6:6-7).*
3. Fasting- *"Whenever you fast, don't be sad-faced like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so their fasting is obvious to people. I assure you: They've got their reward! ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head, and wash your face" (Matthew 6:16-17).*

These are passages that are often talked about when it comes to giving regularly and praying. In fact, most Christians know that giving and praying go along with our Christian walk, but far too often fasting is left out.

In Acts 9:9, after being blinded after his encounter with Jesus, the Apostle Paul fasted for three days. Acts 13:2 speaks about the Church praying and fasting before setting apart Barnabas and Saul for the work of God. And in 14:23, Paul and Barnabas fasted and prayed before appointing elders to the churches.

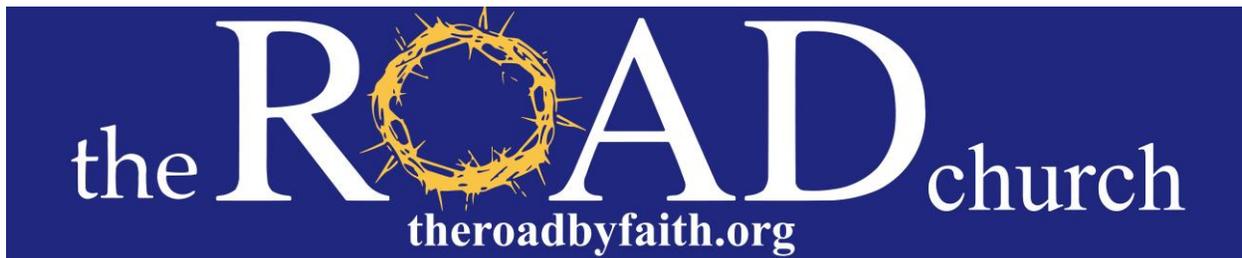
6. Types of fasting:

Full fast (another name for it is a "normal" or "regular" fast):

This is abstaining from everything and drinking only water. (This is the type of fast your doctor has you do before taking blood, or doing a procedure) You select the length of the fast through prayer and seeking God.

The Absolute fast:

This fast consists of a time when there are no foods or liquids taken into the body in any way. Jesus did an Absolute Fast for 40 days and nights after He was baptized. The Apostle Paul went on an absolute fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus: *"For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything."* This is a



very demanding fast; you will need to be sure that God is calling you to do this before going on an Absolute fast.

Partial Fast:

Again, you select the length of the fast, but during a partial fast you give up certain foods. The diet is limited, though some food is allowed. You may give up certain foods, such as meat, breads, or sugar.

The Daniel Fast:

Daniel 10:2-3 says, "At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over." In Daniel 1:12, they restricted their diet to vegetables and water.

There are three kinds of fasting:

- 1. Private fast:** this is the kind of fast Jesus was referring to in the Sermon on the Mount. During a private fast the duration and type of fast come from prayer and communication with God.

You may, through prayer or due to an issue you are going through in your life, want to decide to fast and pray for a day. It could be 12 hrs or 24 hours, 2 days or a week.

- 2. Corporate fast:**

The corporate fast is when people groups are called together to fast.

In Leviticus 23:27 the Mosaic Law required everyone to fast on the Day of Atonement. This custom became known as "the Day of Fasting" (Jeremiah 36:6)

Esther called all of her people to fast for protection against danger (Esther 4:16).

Acts 13:1-2 tells us the church in Antioch was praying and fasting as Barnabas and Saul were set apart to become missionaries "*while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting the Holy Spirit set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work*".

A Corporate fast is a joint fast of believers for a specific purpose that can have extremely powerful results. It is also very much a private and personal experience between you and God.

- 3. National fast:**

The response of King Jehoshaphat to an invasion in 2 Chronicles 20:3 was to call a national fast; he called his nation to a time of prayer and fasting. President Abraham Lincoln called for a national fast in 1863.

7. Length of Fasts:

A. One night

The whole Israelite army went to Bethel where they wept and sat before the Lord. They fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the Lord” (Judges 20:26).

“Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him, and he could not sleep” (Daniel 6:18).

B. One day, from sunrise to sunset.

“The whole Israelite army went to Bethel where they wept and sat before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD” (Judges 20:26).

“They mourned, wept, and fasted until the evening for those who died by the sword--for Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD's people, and the house of Israel” (2 Samuel 1:12).

C. Three days:

“Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days, day or night. I and my female servants will also fast in the same way” (Esther 4:16).

D. Seven days:

¹¹When all Jabesh-gilead heard of everything the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹²all their brave men set out and retrieved the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh. They buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh and fasted seven days” (1 Chronicles 10:11-12).

E. Ten Days:

12“Please test your servants for 10 days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then examine our appearance and the appearance of the young men who are eating the king’s food, and deal with your servants based on what you see.” 14 He agreed with them about this and tested them for 10 days. 15 At the end of 10 days they looked better and healthier than all the young men who were eating the king’s food” (Daniel1:12-15).

F. Twenty-one days:

“In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three full weeks. I didn’t eat any rich food, no meat or wine entered my mouth, and I didn’t put any oil on my body until the three weeks were over” (Daniel 10:2-3).

G. Forty days:

Moses - *“Moses was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. He wrote the Ten Commandments, the words of the covenant, on the tablets” (Exodus 34:28).*

Elijah- *“Then on the strength from that food, he walked 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 He entered a cave there and spent the night” (1 Kings 19:8).*

Jesus- *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. 2 After He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry” (Matthew 4:1-2).*

1“Then Jesus returned from the Jordan, full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for 40 days to be tempted by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over,[a] He was hungry” (Luke 4:1-2).

8. Benefits of Fasting:

1. Your focus on God becomes clearer.
2. Removes distractions from your spiritual life.
3. Spiritual fasting can help you overcome bad habits.
4. Spiritual fasting helps you unplug from this world and concentrate on God.

5. When Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah fasted (Daniel 1:15-20):
 - a. They looked healthier and better nourished (verse 15).
 - b. God gave them knowledge and understanding (verse 17a).
 - c. David saw and understood dreams and visions (verse 17b).
 - d. God gave them wisdom and understanding (verse 20).

9. The 2019 Call to Fast for Members of the Road Church is:

1. For the purpose of drawing closer to God by praying for our seven-point prayer strategy.
2. A Corporate fast
3. Full or Partial Fast
4. **For a duration of twenty-one (21) days***

*This year, you are encouraged to **fast from something for the full 21 days.**

Why?

Each day you will be reminded of that thing you are missing. Each day you will be reminded to pray. Ask yourself: what's that one thing you could never give up? Then consider fasting from that thing. Does that sound hard? Good. Sacrifice is *meant* to be hard.

Some items include:

1. Caffeine (coffee, soda pop)
2. Fast food
3. Snacks (candy, chips etc...)
4. Added salt/sugar (this is harder than you may think).
5. Use of ANY alcohol/tobacco products.

The above items may have many health benefits beyond the fast.

Other non-consumable fasting ideas include:

1. Social Media (Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.).
2. Video games
3. Television
4. Gossiping (stop those passing it to you, and do not pass it on to others).
5. Negativity (speak only uplifting, encouraging, and godly words to others.)

Again, these will have many benefits beyond the Fast: discipline, discernment, building Godly character.

2019 Fasting Journal

The goals of the fasting journal are to track your progress; to review what you have prayed for during your fast; and, to see where God has moved in your life and the life of the church.

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