

**21 Day Fast
Asbury UMC**

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Welcome and Purpose

“Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for taking the time to join this introduction to fasting. Over the next few minutes, we’re going to explore what fasting is, why it matters, and how it can deepen our relationship with God. Fasting is more than just giving up food or other activities—it’s about creating space in our lives to focus on God and hear His voice more clearly. I’ll share some biblical principles, practical tips, and encouragement to help you prepare to embark on this spiritual journey together.”

What is Fasting?

“Let’s begin by defining fasting. Fasting is a voluntary act of giving up something, usually food, for a specific period of time to focus on God. In the Bible, we see fasting as a practice of seeking God’s presence and guidance. For example:

Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness before beginning His ministry (Matthew 4:2).

Esther and her people fasted for deliverance (Esther 4:16), and

Daniel fasted to seek understanding and favor from God (Daniel 10:3).

At its core, fasting is about spiritual realignment. It’s not just about what we give up—it’s about what we gain: a deeper connection with God.”

Spiritual Benefits of Fasting

“Why do we fast? First, fasting deepens our prayer life. When we fast, our physical hunger or longing for something becomes a reminder to pray and draw near to God. Second, fasting creates space for spiritual clarity. When we remove distractions, we are more open to hearing God’s voice and seeking His will. Finally, fasting allows us to express repentance and a genuine desire to align ourselves with God’s purposes. As we fast, we acknowledge that our ultimate dependence is on Him.”



Choosing Your Fast

Different Types of Fasts

“There are several types of fasting.

- **A full fast** involves consuming only water for a set period. This is more intense and not for everyone.
- **A partial fast**, like the Daniel fast, involves giving up certain foods or meals.
- **Intermittent fasting** means fasting for specific hours of the day, such as skipping one or two meals.
- **Non-food fasts** are also powerful—abstaining from social media, television, or anything that distracts you from your spiritual focus.

Practical Tips for Fasting

“Here are some practical tips:

1. **Start small.** If this is your first fast, begin with a partial fast or skip one meal.
2. **Stay hydrated.** Even during a fast, it’s important to drink water.
3. **Pair fasting with prayer.** Use the time you would spend eating or on other activities to pray, read scripture, or reflect.
4. **Be mindful of your physical needs.** If you have health conditions, consult with a doctor before fasting, and consider non-food fasts.

Remember, fasting is about focus, not perfection. Don’t worry about ‘doing it right.’ Instead, focus on seeking God.”

Fasting for Healing: Emotional and Physical

“Fasting can also be a powerful act of seeking healing—both emotionally and physically. In the Bible, fasting is often paired with deep moments of surrender and a cry for God’s restoration. Whether you’re carrying emotional burdens like grief, anxiety, or unforgiveness, or you’re seeking physical healing, fasting can open a space for God’s transformative power.

Psalm 147:3 reminds us, ‘**He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.**’ When we fast, we are inviting God into those spaces of hurt, asking Him to bring wholeness and renewal. Physical healing is also something we can seek in faith during a fast. While fasting itself is not a guarantee of healing, it aligns our spirit with God’s will and strengthens our faith in His power to heal.

If you’re fasting for healing, I encourage you to meditate on scriptures of hope and restoration, like Isaiah 53:5, which says, ‘**By His wounds, we are healed.**’ Let this fast be a time to release pain and trust in God’s ability to restore every broken area of your life.”

Focus on the Spiritual, Not the Physical

“Fasting is not a diet or a test of willpower. It’s about surrendering to God and letting Him fill the spaces we usually fill with food, entertainment, or other distractions. As you feel hunger or longing, let it remind you to pray and draw near to God. Fasting shifts our dependence from physical things to spiritual reliance on Him.”

Scriptural Encouragement

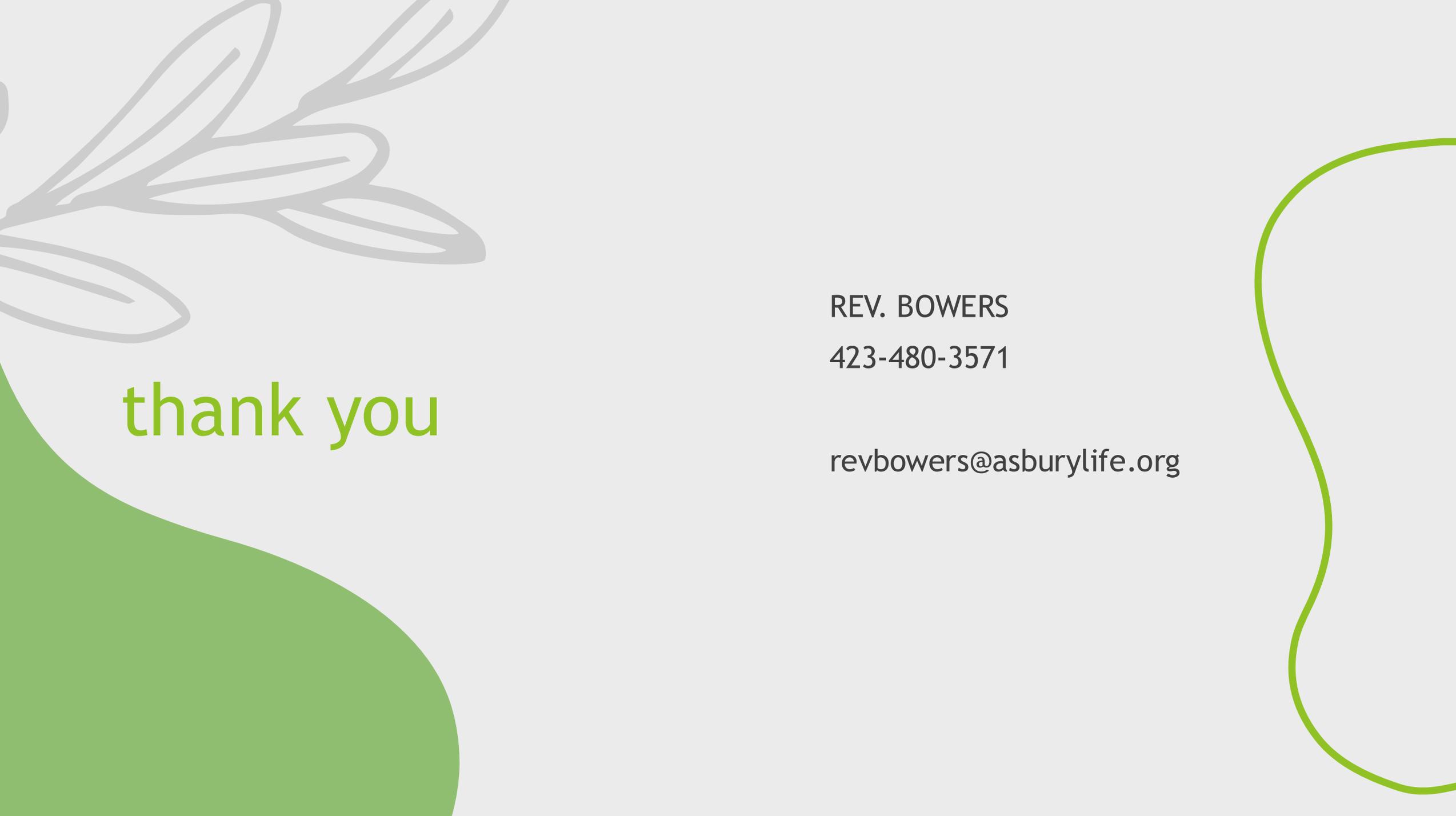
“Let’s take encouragement from scripture:

- Isaiah 58:6-9 reminds us that true fasting is about loosening the chains of injustice and seeking God’s presence.
- In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus teaches us to fast humbly, seeking the Father’s reward, not human approval.
- Joel 2:12 says, ‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’

These verses remind us that fasting is a spiritual act of worship and renewal.”

Next Steps

“As we close, I encourage you to take some time tonight to pray and ask God how He’s leading you to fast. Tomorrow, we’ll begin this journey together. If you’d like, feel free to share your fasting commitment with someone here for encouragement and accountability. I’ll also send out a few resources to help guide you during this time.”



thank you

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