



# Mansfield CHURCH OF GOD

## 21 Days of Fasting, Prayer, and Devotion

### CONGRATULATIONS!

We are so glad you have decided to participate in an extended time of prayer, fasting, and personal devotion. There is no better way to reset our spiritual compass and bring about refreshing in every area of our lives than through prayer and fasting as we launch into God's purposes as His church.

Our corporate approach is designed to be flexible so that you can participate at any level. Whether you have done an extended season of prayer and fasting before, or if this is your first time, you can start where you are and experience what God has in store for you in a powerful way.

The suggestions in this guide are practical guidelines to help you navigate your journey. As you read over the information, please consider how it applies to you and your circumstances and convictions. We pray that you will experience the presence and power of God in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to Him over the next twenty-one days. May God continue to bless you and enlarge you as you seek Him first!

*"If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."  
2 Chronicles 7:14*

### PRAYER

As you prepare for the next twenty-one days, it can be tempting to start thinking of a laundry list of prayers you'd love to see answered. But we want to encourage you to keep this simple. Think about the top two or three things most pressing on your heart and zone in on those with God. Write these down in the space provided below and be open to hearing what God wants to show you in those areas. The breakthroughs, miracles, and answers to your prayers will be by-products of drawing closer to Jesus.

When praying, make your primary goal to know Jesus more and experience Him. Pray prayers of total surrender and aim to glorify God with your life. Focus first on what's right about Him, such as his goodness and His greatness, and see everything else through that filter. And most simply, make time to pray daily. Don't overcomplicate this! Just talk to God. Have that place and time where you can seek Him every day. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. If you find it a challenge to disconnect from the busyness of your day, engaging in worship music is a great way to prepare your heart for prayer.

During this fast, I am praying and believing God for:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## **FASTING**

Fasting is designed to interrupt our routines so we can become closely connected to God. As you prepare to fast, choosing a fasting plan that works for you while simultaneously requiring sacrifice is essential. REMEMBER: If it means nothing to you, it likely will not mean anything to God. While this section provides some general information about different types of fasts and suggestions on how to create your fasting plan, it is essential to mention that there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one kind of fast than another. These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do.

Do not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. Keep the main thing the main thing, which is drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits to connect more closely to God.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind before getting started:

### **1. Start Where You Are**

We are all at different places in our walk with God. Likewise, our jobs, daily schedules, and health conditions are different and place various demands on our energy. So most importantly, whether you've fasted or this is your first time, start where you are. Your fast should present a challenge, but it's essential to know your own body and options and, most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Remember, the goal of fasting is not just to do without food. The goal is to draw nearer to God.

### **2. Find Your Fast Zone**

When most people start fasting, there is typically some level of discomfort. However, it is possible to get used to the fasting routine quickly. Quite simply, it would be best if you learned to fast in a way that works for you.

While any true fast involves abstinence from food or at least certain types of food, different fasting combinations work better for others. The goal of having a successful fast is all about finding what we like to call your Fast Zone, and that is different for everybody and can change depending on the season you are in.

The best way to describe your Fast Zone is that it's the place where you feel light and spiritually in tune. Your mind is easily focused on God and spiritual things. You have increased spiritual energy—you can feel the fast working. Just like runners know their target heart rate to see the benefits of their physical training, the Fast Zone is similar in a spiritual sense.

Finding your Fast Zone helps you choose the type and length of the fast. Let's say you go on a Daniel fast (only fruits and vegetables). Should you eat beans? Go ahead if you can eat beans and stay in your Fast Zone. But for some people eating beans takes them out of the zone. Should you eat peanut butter? Probably not. Peanut butter is more of an indulgence, and few people can stay in a Fast Zone while enjoying indulgences. Should you completely cut out caffeine? It depends. The great thing is that when you fast, your body automatically craves less caffeine. Suppose you can stay in your Fast Zone with a bit of caffeine; great. If you are going on a longer fast and want to cut it out of your diet completely, that's great too. But ease yourself off and make it your goal to be completely caffeine free about two-thirds of the way into your fast.

If you drink coffee regularly, one of the worst mistakes you can make is fast for one to three days and cutting caffeine out abruptly and completely. Please don't do that, or you will spend this time grumpy and in withdrawal instead of enjoying God's presence.

Mixing things up during a twenty-one-day fast typically works best for people. For example, do a fruit and vegetable fast for a week. Then do all liquids for a while. Try even mixing in a few days of only water if you are ready for that. Then go back to fruits and vegetables for a few days. There isn't one approach that works the same for everyone. Follow the Holy

Spirit, mix it up, find what works for you, and stay in your Fast Zone!

Some people can't stay in a Fast Zone eating solid food, so they prefer all liquids. With today's protein drinks and juicing machines, it is easy to get a healthy dose of all your nutritional needs, even while taking only liquids. Certain people can't do anything other than drink only water. They get out of their zone if they eat a salad or drink a glass of juice. Or if they allow themselves to eat cantaloupe, they will eat twenty cantaloupes a day!

### **3. Choose Your Type of Fast**

While preparing for your fast, you must choose ahead of time what type of fast or combination you will pursue. Not only will this help with making the necessary preparations to implement your plan, but as you commit to a specific fast ahead of time and know how you're going to do it, you will position yourself to finish strong.

You may choose to fast all twenty-one days. Or you can fast several days out of the twenty-one days, such as three or four days a week throughout the twenty-one-day period. You may do that and do three to seven consecutive days. This is your decision and should be prayerfully considered as it applies to your circumstances.

### **Different Types of Fasts**

#### **Specific Food or Activity Fast**

In this fast, you omit a specific item(s) from your meal plans. For example, you may eliminate all red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. Most people can incorporate this fast relatively easily. It can also be an excellent solution for people with specific dietary needs or medical conditions that may cause certain limitations. While fasting typically refers to refraining from particular food items, you may also find it highly beneficial to fast from a regular activity or habit. This might include television, social media, and the like.

Prayer and fasting are not just about connecting to God but also about disconnecting from the world. Try to tune out some of the regular distractions from your day as much as possible. Replace that time with things that will nourish you spiritually.

#### **Daniel Fast**

The Daniel fast is a great model to follow and highly effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline, and purification of the body and soul. It is one of the most commonly referred-to fasts; however, within the Daniel fast, there is room for broad interpretation.

In the book of Daniel, we find two different times when the prophet Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he only ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods. So, based on these two verses, we can see that either of these or combinations of the two, constitute a Daniel fast.

#### **Types of food included in this Daniel fast:**

- Vegetables, preferably fresh or frozen vegetables. Vegetables such as potatoes, beans, and soybeans will help provide substance.
- Pure fruit juices or fruit (no sweetened drinks or sweetened fruit): apple juice, orange juice, grapefruit juice, cranberry juice
- It is advisable to take vitamin, mineral, and protein supplements during the fast. You may also include various nuts to serve as a protein supplement.

#### **Foods not included in this Daniel fast:**

- Sugar and sugar products (desserts, soft drinks, etc.)
- Drinks including caffeine (coffee, tea, etc.)
- Bread, grains, and rice
- Meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, eggs

Again, it is essential to mention that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Just remember to find your Fast Zone.

### **Juice Fast**

A juice fast consumes vegetables, fruit juices, and water instead of solid food. Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan as well. This is one of the most popular and effective fasts. Even if you choose not to make your entire fast liquids-only, substituting one or two meals for liquids is a great alternative.

### **Water Fast**

A water-only fast is the normal fast referred to in the Bible. This is how Jesus and the New Testament church fasted. The water fast is just that—no eating of any food or drinking of any liquids except water.

Periodic water fasts can be beneficial, but extreme precautions should be taken. Some people need help to perform effectively at their jobs and have energy for their families while drinking only water.

### **Eating Disorders**

If you have struggled with an eating disorder, this situation is a battle of the mind you *can win* through Christ (Philippians 4:13). Remember, fasting is a tool used to get closer to God, and it should keep us from being preoccupied with food. If your fasting method causes you to obsess about what you eat in any way, you will need to change your approach or mindset. If giving up food is a stumbling block to you, then consider fasting of television, reading (other than the Bible, of course), social media, or shopping. We use many distractions and ways to stay in control that we could eliminate from our daily routine. We do these things to distract ourselves from the real issues hurting us. If you can identify such other things, maybe you can give those up instead of food. Remember that God's grace covers you. God will show you what to do. His "yoke is easy," and His "burden is light" (Matt 11:30). His way will bring rest to your soul.

## **4. Begin and Break the Fast Well**

Depending on the type of fast you choose, it is essential to prepare your body ahead of time before beginning the fast. Take a week or so to transition into your fast; otherwise, you could get sick. For example, if you want to go on a fruit and vegetables or juice fast, start eliminating meat, white grains, and refined sugars from your diet the week before. Also, cut back on dairy products and some of your caffeine intake.

The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add food back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that. There are also several supplements you can take that will help support the detox process during your fast. Your health-food store can give you recommendations.

### **Creating Your Fasting Menu**

To keep your energy up throughout the day, eating or drinking every two to three hours is essential. If you go longer than that, you can experience an energy lull and be tempted to overstuff yourself at your next meal. Even if you're fasting on fruits and vegetables, overstuffing is never a smart thing to do.

It is essential to drink lots of water while fasting. Drinking about one hundred ounces of water daily will help support your critical liver function. The liver is the filter for the body, so when you don't drink enough water, the liver doesn't function at its highest capacity.

Select your food items wisely. We will not list specific ingredients you "should" or "should not" include in your plan. The key is to prepare a plan ahead of the fast, avoid getting legalistic about it, and choose menu items well. For example, if

you prefer dressing on your salads, choose a healthy, organic option with natural ingredients—and don't pour a gallon of it on your plate. If you're drinking fruit juices, try to go as naturally as possible, and don't drink ones that are heavily processed and laden with sugar. Remember not to let food become the focus of your fast but make wise eating choices.

## **FINAL FASTING TIPS**

Here are some other ideas that can help make your fasting experience more pleasant and helpful:

- Make a fasting calendar that fits your plan as you select your fast. Determine what each day and week will look like.
- Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with the items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give in to temptation. Choose well when selecting products, stick to raw food as much as possible, and limit artificial ingredients.
- Make it a priority to attend church without excuse during your twenty-one-day fast. Being around other believers will encourage you to keep going when fasting is challenging.
- Find someone to hold you accountable for your commitment. Reveal to that person your game plan and invite them to be your prayer partner and support for the next 21 days.
- If you mess up, don't get discouraged. Just get right back on track and keep going. God's mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22–23). He wants you to finish, and He will give you the grace and strength to do it.

God be with you as you begin your fasting adventure!

## **Personal Devotions**

Like prayer and fasting, reading your Bible is about connecting to God more powerfully. It is not about duty but about the relationship. When we engage God through reading His Word, we encounter the very presence of God. His Word is living and active! As we read our Bible, we draw closer to God and position ourselves to hear from Him in particular ways.

Once again, as with prayer, choose the time and the place where you will read your Bible and devotional every day, and come prepared to hear what He wants to tell you.

Here are three quick things we'd like to share with you about how to get the most out of your devotional time with God.

### **1. Read Consistently**

It is better to read a little every day than to try and knock out two hours of Bible reading or devotions in one sitting. It is so essential to digest the Word in absorbable chunks. Don't bite off more than you can chew, and certainly don't compare your "performance" with others. If you miss a few days, pick up at the next reading, but stay with it and don't give up. The key is to keep this simple and make it sustainable.

### **2. Read Prayerfully**

Talk to God as you're reading. Don't rush through. If you come across something you don't understand, pause for a moment and ask God about it. Reading prayerfully is making space and time to talk to God and giving Him time and space to talk to you. Meditating on God's Word is just as important as reading it.

### **3. Read Expectantly**

You are about to partake of the bread of life, so foster an attitude of expectancy. Believe that God is going to speak to you through His Word. With meditation on the ideas and thoughts recorded in your journal, be prepared to do something with what He shows you.

A great, simple way to journal your devotional is to use the SOAP method.

**SOAP** stands for **S**cripture **O**bservation **A**pplication **P**rayer

The **SOAP** method works like this:

**S for Scripture:** Read prayerfully. Notice which scripture(s) catches your attention and mark it in your Bible. When you're done, reread the verse(s) you marked and look for one that mainly speaks to you. Write it in your journal.

**O for Observation:** Focusing on that specific scripture, tune in and listen to what God is saying to you through His Word. What is it about this scripture that specifically stands out? What does God want to reveal to you or teach you? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and show you what God is saying.

**A for Application:** Think of how this verse(s) applies to your life. It may be instruction, encouragement, a revelation of a new promise, or a correction for a particular area of your life. Use your journal to write how this scripture applies to you today.

**P for Prayer:** Wrap up your SOAP time in prayer. Talk to God about what you've just read. This can be as simple as thanking Him for revealing truth from the scripture or asking Him for greater insight or wisdom regarding how it applies to your life. Remember, prayer is all about relationships. It's a two-way conversation, so listen to what God should say.

That's it! **SOAP**. It's as simple or profound as you want it to be. If you want to go deeper in your study, here are additional tips:

- Reread the daily passage in a different Bible translation or paraphrase.
- Utilize online resources, such as those available from [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com).
- Utilize a commentary, such as those by Matthew Henry, or online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).
- Cross-reference your daily reading using the footnotes in your study Bible.
- Research words in their original language using a *Strong's Concordance*.

Our prayer for you over the next twenty-one days is that your passion for God and His Word will be ignited and that you will develop a hunger for His presence that is greater than ever!

*"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."* Romans 12:11 NIV

### **The Next Twenty-One Days**

We encourage you to be intentional about the next twenty-one days...and the twenty-one days after that...and so on. Remember, keeping the fire and zeal for God burning in your heart will keep your relationship with Him fresh and new. It will allow you to continue serving and obeying Him from a position of want to, and you will experience the joy of your salvation every day—regardless of what life brings your way.

The principles you have practiced in these twenty-one days are elementary to sustain long-term. Prayer, fasting, and personal devotion are all relatively simple to incorporate into your everyday life. Over these last twenty-one days, you've created space for God to fill. The best way to continue these same practices is to keep that space open indefinitely. Please don't allow it to close!

Protect that time and space with God and make it your daily priority. Just like reading your Bible, praying, and attending church, fasting is also a lifestyle. We encourage you to establish a frequency and consistency of fasting in your life. Remember, this is not a legalistic thing. This is an "I get to experience God" thing. It is like going into heaven for a tune-up to keep our passion for God and enjoyment of Him at a high level. We encourage you to do the same. Figure out what works for you, commit to it, and make it a part of your life. Don't settle for anything less than a life full of passion and spiritual zeal for God. Keep the fire for God burning in your heart and do whatever it takes to feed your spiritual hunger for God.

**My 21 Days of Fasting, Prayer, and Devotion Plan:**

1. My accountability partners:
  
2. My daily appointments with God for devotion and prayer:  
  
 Monday:  
 Tuesday:  
 Wednesday:  
 Thursday:  
 Friday:  
 Saturday:  
 Sunday:
  
3. Week 1 Strategy for fasting:
  
4. Week 2 Strategy for fasting:

5. Week 3 strategy for fasting:
  
6. My Bible reading goal for the next 21 days:
  
7. My top three prodigals:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

The apex of all Christian endeavor is to place the jewel of a soul in the crown of our Savior so that the Lamb who was slain may receive the reward for his suffering.

**January 2023**

**Mansfield Church of God 21 Days of Fasting, Prayer, and Devotion**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Day 14	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Day 21						

Eastern Time Time Zone

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