

# PRAY FIRST

21 DAYS OF PRAYER GUIDE



## Introduction

As we begin a new year, we acknowledge as a church, and as individuals, how dependent we are on God. We need His power, guidance, and provision. For that reason, we want to start the year by uniting our church family for 21 days of fasting and prayer. 21 days can seem like a long time. But we can't think of a better way to boost our faith than to begin the year in concentrated prayer. In every situation, whether good or bad, we can pray before we act. Many times people act first and then want God to bail them out of that situation, but prayer should be our first response, not our last resort. Committing to prayer and fasting for 21 days is an opportunity to go deeper in your relationship with God. Here are a few examples of what fasting and prayer can look like over the next 21 days.

## Fasting

Why do we fast? Simply put, the goal of fasting is to turn us from worldly things and to set our minds and hearts fully on God. It is not a way to manipulate God or coerce Him to hear and answer our prayers, but rather it acknowledges our complete dependence on Him. Fasting awakens us to the reality that we are so often driven by our fleshly desires and appetites. It humbles us and awakens us to our great need for and reliance on God. As you consider fasting, we want to encourage you to listen to the Holy Spirit. Ask God to lead you in this time of seeking Him. Whether you choose to fast for one day each week, several days, or the entire 21 days, the point is to humble yourself in a new way and draw near to God. Here are some ideas for what to fast from:

- Some of you may feel led to engage in a **Complete Fast**, refraining from eating and only drinking liquids for particular days or even an extended period of time.
- You might choose a **Selective Fast**, eliminating certain things from your diet. Eating only fruits and vegetables, what some might call a "Daniel fast," is an example of this type of fasting.
- Another option is a **Partial Fast**, which is refraining from eating for a set period of time each day. You could choose to fast from a single meal or from sunup to sundown.
- If fasting from food is not possible, you may feel led to do a **Soul Fast** from something else, such as social media, television, or certain times or activities on your cell phone.

## Prayer

Prayer is most effective when it isn't something we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate. The heart of this guide is to help you find a new level of purpose, effectiveness, and enjoyment in your prayer life. While prayer does take commitment and can require discipline to develop into a daily habit, we also want to remember that it's a "get to" not a "got to." It's a privilege to be able to come to God in prayer. Each day in this guide, there will be a prayer focus point and one verse or passage to read to guide your praying for specific areas in your life, our church, and interceding for others. Together, let's put our faith into action, trusting in the promises of God for us and for our church. Below are some helpful tips on how to make the most of this guide:

- Commit to a specific time each day to devote to prayer. Find a place where you can be free of distractions and be alone with God.
- Use the prayer points and Scripture in this guide to focus and fuel your praying. Write the Scripture and prayer point on a card and carry it with you, post it on your social media, make it the screensaver on your phone—whatever you can think of to keep these prompts in front of you. Use them throughout the day and invite others to join you in praying.
- You can take it a step further by journaling your prayers each day, simply writing out your prayers to God. It's a great opportunity to hide God's Word in your heart, working to memorize the verses as you meditate and pray.
- In addition, you may consider ways to pray with others during these 21 days. Consider getting together with friends, members of your LifeGroup, or pray together as a family.

Church family, let's earnestly seek God with great expectation as we look for His guidance and instruction through these 21 days of fasting and prayer.

*"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."* Jeremiah 33:3

# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

## WEEK 1 – JANUARY 14–20 – ALL ABOUT JESUS

CHOOSE WHICH DAY(S) THIS WEEK TO FAST. CIRCLE THE DAY OR DAYS & WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU WILL FAST FROM.

### SUNDAY | WORSHIP & REST

Attend worship, rest, and reflect.

*"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* Matthew 11:28-30 ESV

### MONDAY | DEPENDENCE ON HIM

Seek and rely on the Lord to guide you.

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* John 15:5 ESV

### TUESDAY | SURRENDER TO HIM

Surrender all areas of your life to God so that you may draw closer to Him and be conformed to the image of Christ.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* Romans 12:1 ESV

### WEDNESDAY | HIS KINGDOM FIRST

Seek to align your priorities and plans with those of Jesus.

*"But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* Matthew 6:33 ESV

### THURSDAY | BROKEN BEFORE HIM

Confess your sins and trust in God's grace and mercy as you receive His forgiveness.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.* Psalm 51:17 ESV

### FRIDAY | LISTENING TO HIM

Still yourself before the Lord so that you can hear His voice.

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."* Revelation 3:20 ESV

### SATURDAY | CASTING YOUR CARES ON HIM

Place your trust in Jesus over whatever is causing you stress or anxious thoughts and commit yourself to His care.

*Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.* 1 Peter 5:7 ESV

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## WEEK 2 – JANUARY 21–27 – GOD’S WORK IN ME

CHOOSE WHICH DAY(S) THIS WEEK TO FAST. CIRCLE THE DAY OR DAYS & WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU WILL FAST FROM.

### SUNDAY | WORSHIP & REST

Attend worship, rest, and reflect.

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exodus 20:8 ESV*

### MONDAY | MY FREEDOM

Thank God for the freedom you have in Christ.

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1 ESV*

### TUESDAY | MY RELATIONSHIPS

Pray for those closest to you – immediate family, loved ones, close friends, your LifeGroup, etc.

*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26 ESV*

### WEDNESDAY | MY GROWTH

Ask God to help you grow and mature in your faith.

*Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:14-15 ESV*

### THURSDAY | MY CALLING

Thank the Lord for the calling He has placed on your life to serve Him with your unique abilities, gifts, and passions.

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9 ESV*

### FRIDAY | MY HEALING

Praise God for the ways He has healed you in the past and continues to heal areas of brokenness that need His touch.

*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24 ESV*

### SATURDAY | MY BLESSINGS

Give thanks to God for the many blessings in your life right now.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17 ESV*

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## WEEK 3 – JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3 – INTERCESSION

CHOOSE WHICH DAY(S) THIS WEEK TO FAST. CIRCLE THE DAY OR DAYS & WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU WILL FAST FROM.

### SUNDAY | WORSHIP & REST

Attend worship, rest, and reflect.

*Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places. Leviticus 23:3 ESV*

### MONDAY | OUR LEADERS

Lift up in prayer all those in authority over you, including parents, teachers, pastors, local government officials, state leaders, and national leaders, even if you disagree with their ideologies.

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV*

### TUESDAY | OUR MISSIONS

Pray for those serving as missionaries and for TCF's missions partners. Lift up specific individuals or organizations you know who are committed to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him.

*But 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 ESV*

### WEDNESDAY | OUR CHURCH

Ask God to bless, sanctify, and empower His bride, the Church, so that we'll continue to be salt and light to a dark world. Pray for Pastor Kyle and for our church staff, Elders, LifeGroup leaders, and student and children's ministry volunteer leaders.

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV*

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 ESV*

### THURSDAY | OUR CHILDREN

Pray for the children in your own family as well as other children you know – in your neighborhood, schools, church, and community.

*Jesus said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Mark 10:14 ESV*

## FRIDAY | THE LOST

Pray for all those who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, that they may come to know His love, grace, and forgiveness through repentance and faith. Lift up specific people by name whom you know need the Lord.

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 ESV*

## SATURDAY | OUR PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Give thanks to God for this prayer experience over the last 21 days and for the ways He has spoken to you through it.

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV*

Dear TCF Church Family,

Thank you for joining me in these 21 days of prayer and fasting! I hope your prayer life has grown richer through this experience. Praying and fasting in a concentrated way and for an extended period of time is truly a spiritual adventure with the potential to significantly impact your faith journey with Jesus. It is my prayer for you that your commitment to God has grown deeper and your focus on knowing Jesus has become sharper. I also hope that this experience has helped you to develop a daily prayer rhythm in your life so that...

Before the day begins...

Before you go to bed...

Before you go to work or school...

Before you eat, drive, or travel...

Before you send that text...

Before you react...

In every situation you will go to God and PRAY FIRST!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Riddle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Pastor Kyle Riddle