

21 DAYS OF

PRAYER AND

FASTING

GUIDE 2019



PRAY FIRST

From the very beginning of Lifehouse Church, we prioritized seasons of prayer and fasting. We've done this regularly and collectively as a church in both January and August of each year. Several years ago, we realized that there were other churches also gathering for seasons of prayer and fasting, and wondered if we would be "better and bolder together." Now, several churches throughout the Tri-State area both join in and gather together for 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting as we start the New Year.

Rather than jumping into our plans for the New Year, we want to seek and trust God for His plans and purposes in 2019. These three weeks are an opportunity for us to come together and both personally and corporately express our deepest need for God to do what only God can do – in our lives and churches, as well as through our lives and churches.

We don't want to get busy and do first. We want to pray first.

PRAYER & FASTING FOR OUR CITY

When I look back on the 15 years I've been privileged to lead in this region since starting Lifehouse Church, there's one clear and reoccurring thought when I reflect on our impact so far, "Only God!" There's the work I can do alone, and then there's what we can accomplish together - since we certainly are stronger and better together. But even synergy isn't enough. God-sized moments and impact only happen when God does what only God can do.

Prayer and fasting creates an awareness of God and a dependency on Him like no other discipline or experience. And, I genuinely believe that nearly everything significant that God does through the Church is birthed in prayer and fasting. This means if we are going to experience God-sized moments and impact in our lives, churches, and city, it will not be as a result of our best efforts. Rather it is going to be through God's blessing in response to our humility and desperation in times of extended prayer and fasting. It's not that prayer and fasting manipulates the hand of God. No! God's not impressed with our fasting. Rather, prayer and fasting opens our hearts and churches for God to impress Himself on us.

In 2019, we are working toward and believing for God-only miracles and movement in our churches and communities. In one statement - we are praying for and believing that the Church will be life-giving and that our city will become life-giving.

Life is only possible as a miracle of the Living God – He creates life and raises dead things back to life. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the temple where a stream flowed under it and became a river. This was figurative of the presence of

God. "Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine," Ezekiel 47:12 (NIV).

Where the river of God flowed, life sprang up and brought healing to what was dying. The presence of God flowing through the temple brought new life, healing life, and abundant life. Jesus used a similar word picture when he spoke to a woman he met at a Samaritan well.

"Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." - John 4:14 (NIV)

As Jesus-followers, we are the "temple" of God, and His presence flows through us into our homes, neighborhoods, and cities. As we come together as the Church, we are united and unified. The stream becomes a river and should begin to bring new life where there was none.

Let's join together as the Church in our region to seek God, humble ourselves in repentance and desperation, and leverage our natural appetites as an alarm clock to focus our attention entirely on God. Let's use the start of 2019 as a time of sacred intensity, as a spiritual bath, and as a time of emotional, mental, and relational renewal.

As "For Our City" churches unified in prayer as the Church, let's pray boldly for: God's Kingdom to grow through local, thriving churches, healing in our communities, transformation in our cities, and new spiritual life to come to our nation and generation.

We unify in a 21-day fast together following the model in the Book of Daniel - claiming breakthrough from God for the spiritual needs of ourselves and our communities, and asking God's blessing over the Church of this region. Let's unite our hearts, focus our prayers, and leverage our desires in order to seek God's face in repentance and humility.

The contents of this packet will provide more instructions about how you and your family can be a part of this city-wide 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting. But I also hope each of you will join me and other area pastors on Sundays, January 6th, 13th, and 20th at 6 PM for an evening of unified prayer and worship. I guarantee this season of prayer and fasting will be the most exciting, challenging, and intense time of the year—both for you individually and for the Church!

THANK YOU for considering how you can join in this life-giving prayer movement.

- PASTOR PATRICK GRACH

WHY FASTING?

Don't ask me why, but the discipline of fasting works. When we use our physical appetites as a constant reminder to pray, read the Bible, or meditate, we grow desperate for God and realize how consumed we are with consuming. Fasting gets our priorities back into the right order.

WHY 21 DAYS?

In Daniel 10:2-13, Daniel prayed and fasted for 21 days, during which time a spiritual battle was fought. After his 21-day fast, there was breakthrough, and Daniel received the answers to his prayers. These 21 days will be a time for us to get reconnected with the Creator of the universe and the Savior of our souls.

WHY NOW?

Throughout the year, things distract and dampen our passion for God, but we want to start off the New Year by clearing out the cobwebs in our hearts and refocusing the "lens" of our spirit. We don't want to wander through 2019 haplessly going about our business. Nor do we want to attempt God-sized dreams without God's presence going before us. We want God-led strategies that will accomplish HIS will in HIS time through HIS power.

WHY ME?

Together, we can accomplish something so much greater and more powerful than any one of us could as an individual. We don't go through this ritual to earn a spiritual merit badge or prove how devoted we are to God. Rather, we partner together in prayer and fasting as a way to partner with God in His purposes, His will, and His Cause for the Church and for every Jesus-follower.

HOW CAN I JOIN IN ON THIS 21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING?

1. MAKE A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO FAST DURING THE 21 DAYS OF JANUARY 6TH – 26TH.

“Fasting” simply means giving up the feeding of an appetite, then setting aside specific times to read the Bible and to pray (both individually and with a group). You can fast from any number of appetites or activities that are a part of your daily routine. The point is not what you are giving up, but what you are going to do with the time you gain. Let this be a challenge to focus our time and attention on God.

2. IN PREPARATION FOR THE FAST, READ PSALM 51 AND ISAIAH 58.

These Bible passages explain that God isn’t interested in our pious sacrifices for Him but in our obedience and willingness to do what He asks. God wants us to become more like Him, and that requires letting go of our own agenda and being “remade” to look, act, and think like Him. It requires time, attention, and discipline.

3. MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR WEEKLY PRAYER GATHERINGS OR ORGANIZE YOUR OWN.

Area pastors will be hosting group prayer times each Sunday at 6 PM. At these gatherings, pastors will provide an atmosphere of worship, a brief teaching or encouragement on fasting, and an extended time of focused prayer. Please make an effort to attend these gatherings, but also feel free to organize your own prayer times at home or with your small group.

4. PAUSE FOR PRAYER EVERY DAY AT 7:14 AM AND 7:14 PM

As another way to unify our church community during the 21 days, we’re encouraging the entire Church to pause for prayer at 7:14 AM & 7:14 PM every day. We chose this time based on 2 Chronicles 7:14, and it’s a simple way to begin and end your day with prayer.

5. USE THE ENCLOSED PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAILY TOPICS AND WEEKLY THEMES.

Enclosed are weekly devotional thoughts and daily prayer requests to unify the Church during this time of prayer & fasting. Place it on your nightstand or refrigerator to help you stay focused each day.

WEEK ONE | January 6-12

FOCUS: FOR YOUR PERSONAL LIFE AND FAMILY

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” - Psalm 42:1

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

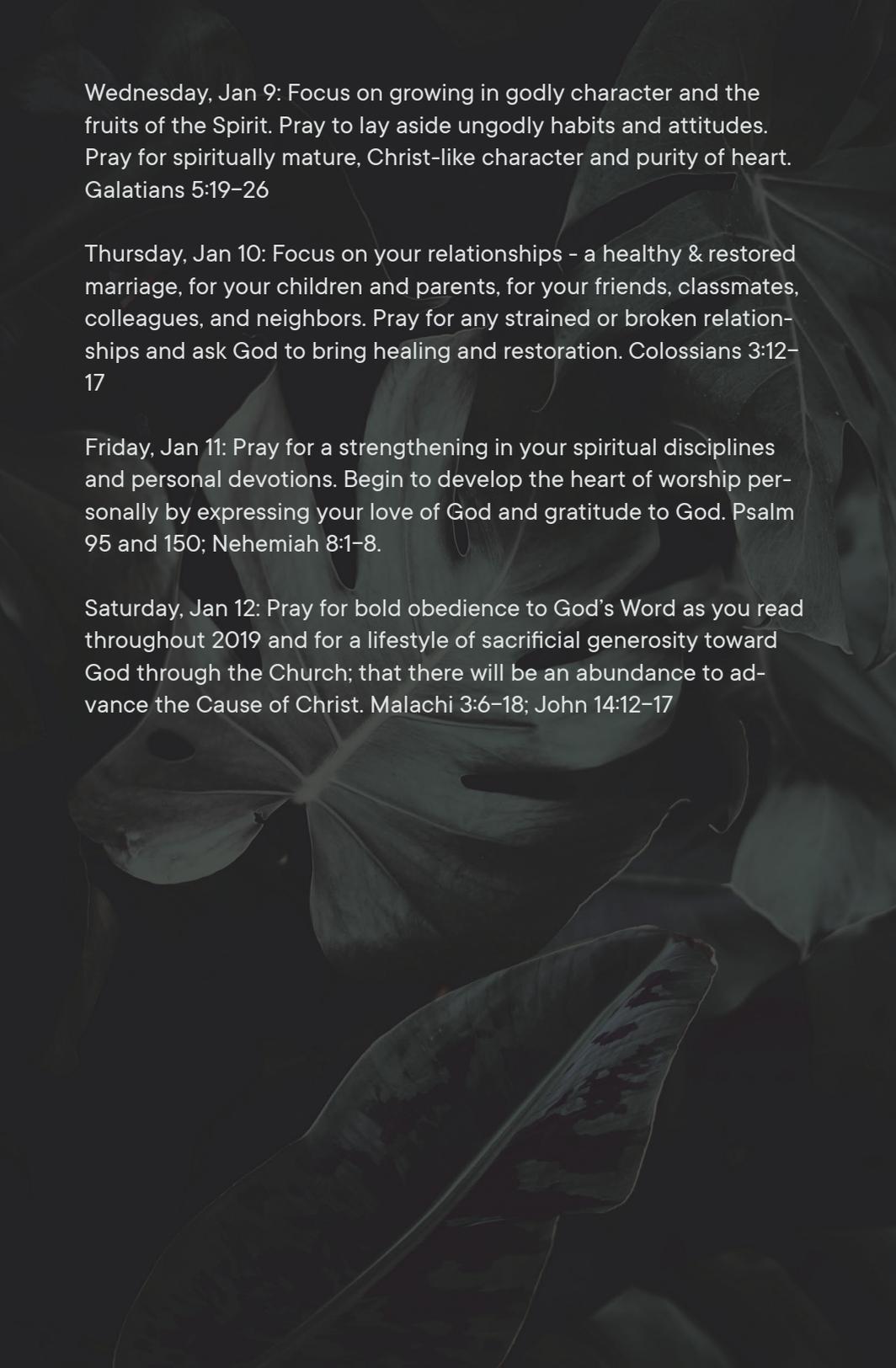
Before God does something great through us, He does a great work in us. We must be emptied of ourselves - our sinful attitudes, desires, and habits. We must also be filled with God's Spirit, renewed by His Word, and strengthened in our faith. Do a spiritual health check-up by asking if there are any obstacles in your relationship with God? How vibrant is your prayer life? Are you regularly going to God's Word as your source of faith, wisdom, and guidance for life?

As we enter this season of prayer and fasting, let's start by focusing our attention on our own personal lives - our hearts, minds, souls, and families. Daily, take time in prayer, Bible reading, worship, and devotion to God. Re-establish these basic habits of spending time with God and renew your spiritual vitality.

DAILY PRAYER REQUESTS

Monday, Jan 7: Use today as a time to allow God to prompt your heart in how He wants to change you during these 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting. Journal what specific changes need to happen in your life spiritually and in your thinking and emotions. Read Isaiah 58 and discover what God wants us to accomplish during times of fasting. Nehemiah 1:1-6.

Tuesday, Jan 8: Focus on personal repentance from sin and receiving forgiveness from God. Pray for corporate repentance of sin and that God's righteousness would be a safeguard for the Church. Psalm 51; 1 John 1:9; Nehemiah 1:6-11.



Wednesday, Jan 9: Focus on growing in godly character and the fruits of the Spirit. Pray to lay aside ungodly habits and attitudes. Pray for spiritually mature, Christ-like character and purity of heart. Galatians 5:19-26

Thursday, Jan 10: Focus on your relationships - a healthy & restored marriage, for your children and parents, for your friends, classmates, colleagues, and neighbors. Pray for any strained or broken relationships and ask God to bring healing and restoration. Colossians 3:12-17

Friday, Jan 11: Pray for a strengthening in your spiritual disciplines and personal devotions. Begin to develop the heart of worship personally by expressing your love of God and gratitude to God. Psalm 95 and 150; Nehemiah 8:1-8.

Saturday, Jan 12: Pray for bold obedience to God's Word as you read throughout 2019 and for a lifestyle of sacrificial generosity toward God through the Church; that there will be an abundance to advance the Cause of Christ. Malachi 3:6-18; John 14:12-17

WEEK TWO | January 13-19

FOCUS: FOR YOUR CHURCH AND THE CHURCH

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“...you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” – Ephesians 2:19-22

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

The Church is made up of all who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior by faith. We are joined together as a community for the purpose of worshipping God together, growing in love and faith together, and sent out together to share and show the love of God with people who are far from Him. We don’t go to Church, we are the Church. We don’t “do” Church, we are called to be the Church.

The Church is led by God-called and Spirit-empowered leaders who train and shepherd the believers. All believers are called and responsible to “do the work of the ministry” (Ephesians 4:11-13), and to build each other up in love. Each person is responsible to do their part within the Church so that the whole Church is built up in love.

The Church is not one denomination or location but is made up of many unique churches, groups, and gatherings. Together, in unity, we make up the Body of Christ.

May God strengthen and renew the leadership of the Church and call new leaders, pastors, and missionaries so that God’s Kingdom is radically advanced.

DAILY PRAYER REQUESTS

Monday, Jan 14: Pray that God would call many people to serve and lead within each church - as volunteers, small group & ministry leaders, pastors, church planters, and missionaries. Matthew 9:35-38; Nehemiah 4:6.

Tuesday, Jan 15: Focus specifically on the names of each of your church leaders, starting with your lead pastor and his family to each pastor and ministry leader. Pray for protection, boldness, and courage. Ephesians 4:11-16; Nehemiah 3.

Wednesday, Jan 16: Pray for the Church to multiply. Every healthy organism grows and multiplies, and the Church must as well. Pray that Christians will be bold witnesses of Jesus, that leaders will train other leaders, and that churches will start new churches. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Nehemiah 2:18.

Thursday, Jan 17: Pray for protection over the Church, for unity and peace, and for provision in the Church, so the vision of the Church can be accomplished. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; Ephesians 3:20-21; Nehemiah 6:9.

Friday, Jan 18: Pray for the Church of our city and region to be unified, that the Church would expand and have an increased impact in this area. Pray for revival in the Church and for godly leaders to preach the Gospel in love. Pray for the persecuted church around the world. Acts 4:29-31; Ephesians 4:1-6; Nehemiah 10:39b.

Saturday, Jan 19: Pray for the spread of the gospel to foreign nations. Pray that the gospel would be shared to every nation, especially the unreached people groups of the world. Name each missionaries and ministry leader in partner churches, campuses, and countries around the world - for their protection and courage, their marriage and children; for boldness, provision, and for fruitful ministry. Acts 11:22-26

WEEK THREE | Jan. 20-26

FOCUS: FOR OUR CITY AND THE SURROUNDING REGION

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“So the wall was completed...in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.” - Nehemiah 6:15-16.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

As Jesus-followers, we are called to a God-sized vision For Our City. In spite of great opposition, Nehemiah accomplished God’s purpose in Jerusalem. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our city. We can speak life into our city because God is For Our City.

We can speak God’s love into poverty, addiction, homelessness, disunity, and other problems. Seeing God move in our city begins with prayer and fasting.

We are called to pray for our neighborhoods, our city, and the surrounding region. We pray for the regional centers of influence – business, government, education, family, religion, media, and arts and entertainment.

DAILY PRAYER REQUESTS

Monday, Jan 21: Pray for your neighbors, neighborhood, friends, peers, co-workers, and classmates. Pray that they would not only hear the gospel, but respond through faith in Jesus. Matthew 28:19

Tuesday, Jan 22: Pray For Our City. Pray for peace over our city, for protection, for prosperity and blessing from God. Pray for God to guard our city from division and disunity. Pray for God to work in the midst of poverty, addiction, homelessness, and other problems. Jeremiah 29:6-7; Nehemiah 2:4-5.

Wednesday, Jan 23: Pray for a spiritual awakening in our region, for the salvation of many souls and the expansion and growth of the Church as many new people come to faith in Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 29:11-14; Nehemiah 9:6.

Thursday, Jan 24: Pray for the community, regional, and national government – for our leaders, for justice, and for wisdom to rule in our land. Pray for government officials, as well as government agencies. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Friday, Jan 25: Pray for the regional centers of influence – business (for economic well-being, for care and compassion to rule our finances), media (for truth, honesty, and fairness to rule), arts and entertainment (for godliness and holiness to be promoted while vileness and rebellion would not receive fame and promotion). Proverbs 3:9-10; Exodus 35:30

Saturday, Jan 26: Pray for the students and children in our region, for the education system and the educators, for protection over our children, and for all who influence them. Pray for opportunities to show Christ's love in both public and private schools. Matthew 7:28-29; Proverbs 10:14

