



**A GUIDE FOR PRAYER AND FASTING
AT SEVERNA PARK BAPTIST CHURCH
2020**



SEVERNA PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

GROWING GODLY GENERATIONS

40 can be transformational.

- ◇ 40 days and nights of rain cleansed the world of evil (Genesis 7:12).
- ◇ 40 years in the desert prepared God's servant to shepherd people away from slavery (Acts 7:30).
- ◇ 40 days on a mountain top with God revealed the glory of God (Exodus 24:18).
- ◇ 40 years of wandering away from God's promises missed opportunities for a generation (Deuteronomy 8:2-5).
- ◇ 40 days of intercession for a nation showed God's mercy (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25).
- ◇ 40 days to scope the reality of God's promises (Numbers 13:25).
- ◇ 40 years of oppression resulted from spiritual drift (Judges 13:1).
- ◇ 40 days of taunts intimidated a nation's army (1 Samuel 17:16)
- ◇ 40 days of fasting gave clarity to the voice of the Lord (1 Kings 19:8).
- ◇ 40 days warning before judgment resulted in a national revival (Jonah 3:4).
- ◇ 40 days in the wilderness prepared a man who would eternally change the world (Matthew 4:2).
- ◇ 40 days between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus transformed a small group of radicals, who would impact thousands of years of history.

In 2020, I am encouraging our SPBC family to focus their spiritual journey together with a 40-day fast. There is power when we operate together. Jesus believed unity was vital for the church that He prayed for it (John 17:21). Likewise, the New Testament emphasizes church unity numerous times for the purpose of reflecting God's character (Ephesians 4:4-6), and reflecting God's sole mission of uniting a people for Himself (Ephesians 2:14-22; 1 Peter 2:9). Our divided world needs a united church.

One of the ways SPBC can enhance our unity is by starting off the new year with a common spiritual focus. There are **three** items I would like us to focus on each week in the next 40 days.

- 1) Read **weekly** the Bible group lesson guide with accompanying Scriptures.
- 2) Read **weekly** the Scripture passage for the upcoming Sunday sermon.
- 3) Pray and fast **daily** for 40 days to increase our spiritual appetite for God. For the type of fast you could choose, keep reading and see below.

Why fasting?

Fasting is feasting on God. When a person fasts, they voluntarily refrain from selected items that typically have their attention, and they replace that time with a focus on God. Usually, fasting involves abstaining from food. However, it is not uncommon to abstain from other items or luxuries such as watching television, listening to or involvement with various entertainment media, other pleasures, or really anything from which one chooses to abstain. And no, fasting from brussel sprouts or doing laundry doesn't count!

In all, as your pastor, I am calling SPBC to fast for awakening our spiritual vibrancy and to grant us vision for a next season of gospel ministry.



There are many biblical examples of persons fasting...

- ◇ Moses receiving 10 Commandments (Exodus 34:28)
- ◇ Samuel and Israelites for renewal and revival (1 Samuel 7:1-8)
- ◇ King David for his son (2 Samuel 12:15-25)
- ◇ Jehoshaphat during battle (2 Chronicles 20:3)
- ◇ Ezra for spiritual renewal and protection of people (Ezra 8:21-23)
- ◇ Nehemiah brokenhearted for his nation (Nehemiah 1:4)
- ◇ Mordecai brokenhearted for his nation (Esther 4:3)
- ◇ Esther for protection and deliverance of her nation (Esther 4:16)
- ◇ Righteous fasting for injustice to be corrected (Isaiah 58)
- ◇ Daniel fast of meat and sugar for physical well-being (Daniel 1:12)
- ◇ King Darius for protection of a friend (Daniel 6:18)
- ◇ Daniel for national renewal and insight (Daniel 9:3)
- ◇ Joel for national renewal (Joel 1:14, 2:13-16)
- ◇ Ninevites to escape judgment (Jonah 3:7)
- ◇ Anna for national deliverance and seeing the Messiah (Luke 2:37)
- ◇ John Baptizer for spiritual distinction (Matthew 3:4; Luke 1:15)
- ◇ Disciples' for extraordinary healing and effectiveness in prayer (Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:29).
- ◇ Saul-Paul after his conversion for God's revelation on what next to do (Acts 9:9).
- ◇ Paul & Barnabas for missionary work (Acts 13:2, 14:23)
- ◇ Identifying idols of the flesh (1 Corinthians 6:12-13).

Supremely, Jesus modeled the practice of fasting (Matthew 4:2) and expected His followers to fast as a regular development of their spiritual growth (Matthew 6:16, 9:15). The only question was "when," not "if" Christians would fast, until our union with God in the new kingdom. So, if Christians are not feasting in heaven, then there should be moments of fasting on earth.

Fasting is combined with prayer to express our dependence on the Lord and not the flesh. It is about God's pruning us from worldliness and preparing us for heaven with Him (see end resources). Is God and the gospel satisfying or do we seek security and satisfaction elsewhere? Fasting becomes feasting when God is supreme in all areas of life. In all, we must remember that fasting is not about food or stuff, but God (1 Corinthians 8:8, 10:31; Colossians 2:20-21; Galatians 5:13). Fasting isn't merely self-deprivation but spiritual discipline; using the time and energy to seek God in prayer and His word.

Essentially, there are three types of fasts.

- 1) Absolute Fast: Abstaining from all food and liquids for a narrow amount of time.
- 2) Normal Fast: Abstaining from food but ingesting only liquids for a defined time.
- 3) Partial Fast: Abstaining certain foods/meals and/or indulgent items for a defined time.

Questions to guide your choice of fasting type?

Are you physically able to fast from food?

You may need to discuss a plan with a physician. It is not recommended that anyone fast from water for any length of time, nor all food for the entire 40 days unless you have experience fasting and have a physical action plan.

What is your motivation to fast?

Review the above listed examples of biblical fasting to discern your personal goals and how God may lead you. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading for what and how you should fast (Romans 8:26-29).

Are any items in your life becoming idols?

Reflect on what you are spending time and investing time. Spent time is wasted, but time spent in areas that will last for eternity is worshipful. As we start a new year, a new decade, and a new season, we want to [re]-dedicate ourselves to the Lord (Psalm 119:37; Jonah 2:8; Matthew 6:33; Romans 11:36-12:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17).

How will you start the fast?

The encouragement is to start small. Fast from food in increments rather than "cold turkey" (hmmm, perhaps this a bad expression for this subject!). Take a day and fast from one or two meals. Do this for a few days to prepare for a longer fast of an entire day or

multiple days. Water, fruit juices, and vegetables are appropriate supplements. If there are other items you are fasting (electronics, social media, other), then consider any additional plans you may need to implement to assist with this fast.

- A meal preparation takes about one hour; likewise, our social media totals. Consider dedicating at least one hour each day for focused prayer and Scripture reading.
- Exercise in moderation is important physically. Incorporate prayer during walking or brief jogs. Most other sports are not always conducive during fasting, but dependent upon your own health and schedule may be appropriate.
- Pleasure reading, watching television, or internet scrolling often come in increments of 30-60 minutes. Again, dedicate this time to God. Remember the words of Jesus, “Could you not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:40)

How will you sustain the fast over 40 days?

Fasting is spiritual warfare. The devil approached Jesus during a fast to distract preparations from public ministry. Remember that prayer to God and reading Scripture are essential elements to include during the fast. Additionally, Christian community can be an encouraging wind in your sails during this spiritual discipline of fasting.

How will you conclude the fast?

Longer periods of food fasting may affect the body differently. Consider researching best methods for return eating to not harm your body. Also, for those fasting from certain technology, consider creating a plan for how you will re-use technology, so it does not extinguish God’s ongoing spiritual work in your life.

In all, we do not want to be legalistic in mandating anyone to fast beyond personal convictions or physical abilities. Further, we are not fasting to be commended by others (Matthew 6:18), or even to be justified by God (Luke 18:12-14; 1 Corinthians 8:8). Yet, we do believe there is power in united prayer and seeking the Lord. We trust the Holy Spirit to confirm in your heart how God is leading us as a local body of believers.

**40 DAYS OF PRAYER WITH
SEVERNA PARK BAPTIST CHURCH**

<p>Jan 5 Pray for personal humility and hunger for God.</p> <p>Matthew 6:16-18</p>	<p>Jan 6 Pray for God to convict you of unknown sin in your life.</p>	<p>Jan 7 Pray for God's strength to hate sin and love righteousness.</p>	<p>Jan 8 Pray repentance for distractions in your walk with God.</p>	<p>Jan 9 Pray for personal revival in your life and our church.</p>	<p>Jan 10 Pray for God to place Christians in your life to encourage you and hold you spiritually accountable.</p>	<p>Jan 11 Pray for increased faith in God to do the impossible in your life and our church.</p>
<p>Jan 12 Pray for our church's pastor, deacons, and leadership to guard spiritual integrity and lead with God's wisdom.</p> <p>Joel 1:13-15</p>	<p>Jan 13 Pray for our church's relational unity to grow in love for one another. Pray forgiveness and reconciliation to take place wherever needed.</p>	<p>Jan 14 Pray for our church to grow in volunteers and servant leaders.</p>	<p>Jan 15 Pray our church's urgency to share the gospel with neighbors and outreach in our community.</p>	<p>Jan 16 Pray for other churches in our Maryland network to grow in faith and fervency for Jesus.</p>	<p>Jan 17 Pray for our church to grow godly generations. Pray for former members. Pray for future members.</p>	<p>Jan 18 Pray for those spiritually lost to have open hearts to the gospel of Jesus and open minds to the truth of God's word.</p>
<p>Jan 19 Pray for Spirit-filled worship services.</p> <p>Isaiah 58</p>	<p>Jan 20 Pray for families to be strengthened in marriage, parenting, and overall family life spiritual health.</p>	<p>Jan 21 Pray for healing for those suffering from ongoing pain or hardships.</p>	<p>Jan 22 Pray for healing with those struggling with addiction.</p>	<p>Jan 23 Pray for communities and our country to experience peace and righteousness.</p>	<p>Jan 24 Pray for a culture of pro-life from womb to tomb to permeate our nation/globe.</p>	<p>Jan 25 Pray for civic leaders work together for common good and make godly decisions. Pray for 2020 elections to be civil and grace for godly leadership.</p>
<p>Jan 26 Pray for our church's Bible Groups to make disciples and equip leaders.</p> <p>2 Chronicles 20</p>	<p>Jan 27 Pray for our church's children's ministry to effectively partner with parents to instruct children in God's word.</p>	<p>Jan 28 Pray for our church's American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA Boys groups to grow children of faith and wisdom.</p>	<p>Jan 29 Pray our church's youth ministry to effectively partner with parents to instruct teens in God's word.</p>	<p>Jan 30 Pray our church's men's and women's ministries to cultivate community and equip disciples of Jesus.</p>	<p>Jan 31 Pray our church's deacon ministry to care for members and serve family ministry needs.</p>	<p>Feb 1 Pray our church's building and grounds team to have wisdom and resources to meet the needs of our ministry.</p>
<p>Feb 2 Pray for a culture of generosity with time, talent, and treasure to permeate our church. Pray for God's provision in meeting our budget needs.</p> <p>Ezra 8:21-10:17</p>	<p>Feb 3 Pray for our personnel team to have wisdom and care for our church staff.</p>	<p>Feb 4 Pray for our trustees to have wisdom in serving the church ministries and property.</p>	<p>Feb 5 Pray for our missions local, regional, and international to expand God's kingdom. *ABN/BCMD/NAMB/IMB *Brightview *Bruce Outreach Center *FPU *Operation Christmas Child *Pregnancy Clinic *SPAN *The Well</p>	<p>Feb 6 Pray for schools and teachers in our community to be positive environments and effective in educating children.</p>	<p>Feb 7 Pray for emergency responders and health care agents in our community to have strength in their service.</p>	<p>Feb 8 Pray Matthew 5:9 for your life and our church.</p>
<p>Feb 9 Pray against spiritual apathy in your life and our church (Rev 2:4; 3:20). Nehemiah 1</p>	<p>Feb 10 Pray John 3:30 for your life and our church.</p>	<p>Feb 11 Pray Matthew 13:8 for your life and our church.</p>	<p>Feb 12 Pray Matthew 22:37-40; 28:18-20 for your life and our church.</p>	<p>Feb 13 Pray Ephesians 3:14-20 for your life and our church.</p>		

FASTING RESOURCES

Perhaps the best treatment on the subject of fasting is

- ◇ John Piper's [A Hunger For God: Desiring God Through Fasting and Prayer](#).

You may also consider:

- ◇ Ronnie Floyd, [The Power of Prayer and Fasting](#),
- ◇ Jentzen Franklin's [Fasting](#) or [The Fasting Edge](#). Both would be commended, though with some caveat.

Nutritional Tips And Health Balance links for exploration

- ◇ <https://www.webmd.com/diet/features/diet-myth-truth-fasting-effective-weight-loss#1>
- ◇ <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.9.html>
- ◇ <https://lifeapps.io/fasting/how-to-practice-intermittent-fasting-safely/>

