



A Call to a Monthly Time of Fasting – every third Saturday of the month

Corporate Prayer Gathering – 3pm

Why should Christians fast?

The Bible contains many examples of God's people practicing the discipline of fasting. The people of Israel fasted corporately in Ezra 8:23. King Jehoshaphat called on the nation to fast together in 2 Chronicles 20:1–4. The early church fasted in preparation to send workers to proclaim the Gospel in Acts 13:1-3. God gives us a glimpse into the Antioch church, and it seems that the leaders had a pattern of fasting together. As we respond to these examples, it seems clear that fasting should be a part of the spiritual disciplines of believers today.

How should Christians fast?

Jesus gave specific instructions about fasting in Matthew 6:16-18: when we fast, we are not trying to make it known to others that we are fasting. We fast for God, not for people.

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

The goal of fasting is not to make our bodies suffer; rather, it is to intensify our prayers. And indeed it does. Many pray on the go, offering “arrow” prayers throughout the day. Sometimes we can stop and kneel to pray; this practice may lead to a deeper time of prayer. However, we believe that when you fast and pray, your intercession can be deeper still.

It is important to decide in advance what you will do with your fasting time. We encourage you to take the time you would normally spend preparing meals, eating, and cleaning up after meals (or participating in what you are fasting from) and devote yourself to prayer instead.

There are various kinds of fasts. Daniel, when he was at least 85, fasted from tasty foods, meat, and wine (Daniel 10:2). If you are hypoglycemic, diabetic, or have a physically demanding work schedule forced on you, a complete fast from carbs can make you ill and make it harder to pray. Here are options for fasts you can choose from:

A complete fast - Fast from food, but drink water - Fast foods, but drink other liquids

Fast from sweets; eat only vegetables and carbs.

Many find it helpful to fast from social media, television, or gaming.

Suggestions for effective times of fasting:

You may avoid headaches during a fast if you cut out caffeinated drinks for two days beforehand.

If possible, consider adjusting your schedule to allow ample time for prayer during your fast.

The time of your fast is for you to choose also. However, we recommend beginning your 24-hour fast at 11:30 AM on the third Saturday of the month. **While you fast, you are invited to join us for a time of corporate and private prayer at 3pm on the third Saturday in the Worship Center.** Afterward, we may continue our attitude of prayer and fasting into the evening. Your fast can end after our worship service.

Suggested topics for prayer:

Your time of prayer may include intercession for any topic or burden you want to bring to God. During our gatherings, leadership may provide a focus for targeted prayer. Here are some ideas to consider including in your prayer times:

- Personal repentance from sin
- Personal renewed trust in Jesus
- Personal burdens, anxieties, financial or employment stress, health conditions
- Those who don't yet know Jesus throughout our community
- Those immediate and extended family members who do not yet know Jesus.
- Missionaries and those they serve who do not yet know Christ. During our gathering times, leadership will provide information about our HCC-supported missionaries by name, including their fields of service and mission focus.
- Our HCC Pastors, Elders, and Deacons
- Our HCC Lay ministry leaders, including our Sunday Morning ministry teams, Men's and Women's leadership teams, Clothing Closet team, Youth Ministry team, and Children's Ministry team
- Other churches in the High Desert
- The ministry of Hesperia Christian School, including our Administration, Faculty, Staff, Students, and their Families
- Other local schools, the Christian teachers at these schools, and the youth of our community.
- Our governor, our state and US congressmen and senators, our Congress and Senate, our Judiciary, our President. Pray for elections.
- Pray for God's moving in our nation. "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. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:1-4). "Honor the emperor." (1 Pet. 2:17). That emperor was Nero.
- Middle East, Israel and the surrounding nations, the Messianic Jewish congregations, believing Arab peoples, the unbelieving Arab peoples. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." (Psalm 122:6).