

Abide – Fasting Practice

This week you are invited to take part in a week of prayer and fasting. Don't worry, that doesn't mean you have to fast the whole week! But we would encourage you ask yourself, in relation to the practice of fasting, 'what would be a step of growth for me?' Here are some suggestions of steps you could take:

- Fast a specific item of food for the week
- Fast one meal for one or multiple days
- Fast from sunrise to sunset one or multiple days (In other words, skip breakfast and lunch but eat dinner)
- Fast for a 24-hour period

Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants you to do and remember, as with all the practices, start where you're at. Once you've decided what step you will take, ask for God's grace and help to empower you to do what you commit to do.

Some tips that may help you:

- Each time you feel a hunger pain, use it as a prompt to pray
- When you feel hungry, ask God to starve your flesh and feed your spirit
- At a mealtime, go for a walk so your body is doing something else rather than giving you hunger prompts
- When you're hungry, read some scripture and feed yourself on God's word
- Use some of the time you're not eating as an opportunity for self-reflection. Fasting can reveal the things that control us so listen to how your emotions are reacting and what controlling thoughts or habits they are revealing. Then pray that God would set you free from them.

As we're thinking about fasting as a practice to help us abide in Christ, we've set out a suggested prayer plan based on the description of abundant life that we find in Psalm 23, with the aim being to fast and pray for a deeper experience of this abundant life for both ourselves, the church, and those who don't yet know Jesus.

PRACTICE – PRAYER AND FASTING PLAN	
Monday	<p>'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...'</p> <p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a revelation of Jesus as the good Shepherd and his care for you • For a deeper satisfaction and contentment in Him • For someone you know who doesn't know Jesus, that they would come to experience His abundant life <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the desires of the flesh and the world that you know seek to lure your heart away from Jesus? List those desires and surrender them to Him.
Tuesday	<p>'He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters...'</p> <p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For deep inner rest in Jesus • To be able to recognise and submit to the limits God has placed upon you • For yourself, or someone you know, who is refusing or struggling to surrender control to God in a certain aspect of their lives <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What situations or circumstances are causing you unrest and anxiety? Present them to God and ask Him to fill you with a peace that will guard your heart and mind
Wednesday	<p>'He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake...'</p> <p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For sensitivity to the Shepherds voice, particularly in tough decisions, and grace to follow His way • For the specific activities / responsibilities you have in your day – that you would undertake them all for the glory of God • For someone you know who is still in their brokenness apart from God – that they would find

	<p>eternal life in Jesus</p> <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What brokenness is there in your life? Where does your soul need healing? Present your brokenness to God and ask him to restore you
Thursday	<p>'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me...'</p>
	<p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a deeper sense of God's presence with us throughout the day • That you would know the comfort of God in your suffering or struggles • For those you know who are suffering and / or experiencing darkness – that they would know the hope, light and presence of God in their situation <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your fears? Present them before God and ask him to bring you freedom from them. Pray that your fears would be cast out by His perfect love
Friday	<p>'You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows...'</p>
	<p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit • That your heart would be filled with worship as you 'feast' upon God's delights • That the church would be characterised by overflowing joy <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you recognise the blessings of God in your life? What is your cup overflowing with? Where could God's blessings overflow from your life to bless others? List all the things you have to be thankful for and express your gratitude to God in prayer or praise
Saturday	<p>'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'</p>
	<p>Pray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That you would have a deep confidence in the unchanging goodness of God • For an eternal perspective on your sufferings and for the hope of heaven to break in to your everyday • For someone who doesn't know Jesus – that they would experience His mercy in some way <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where in your life or in the life of someone you know would you like to see God's kingdom (His rule and reign) break in? Jesus teaches us to pray 'your kingdom come; your will be done.' Pray this for your own life / situation or for someone you know.