

PRAY FOR...

- Spend time thanking and praising God at the start of your prayer
- That you would experience God's love and joy as you focus on Him
- Your own spiritual growth and increased obedience to God
- Spiritual growth of our members
- Our Church and Community
- People in our community who are lost and need a relationship with Christ
- Our ministry to new people in the community
- Church staff and leadership
- Our Nation
- Our Upward Sports Ministry
- Our church's financial needs
- Other things that come to mind

HELPFUL HINTS FOR PRAYER AND FASTING

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 time you would have used for eating/other activities to spend extra time 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, 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 this season. Get together with friends or members of your small group or Sunday School class. Pray together as a family. Invite others to join you on this journey.



As we follow God's will through worship, prayer, discipleship, and obedience, we seek to reach Creedmoor and beyond with the Gospel.

First Baptist Church Creedmoor

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*Join us as we start
the year with a season of
seeking God through the practices
of prayer and fasting*

PRAYER AND FASTING

FASTING

Giving up food or something special for a spiritual purpose.

PRAYER

Having a conversation with God where you talk with Him and **listen** for Him to speak to you.

REASONS FOR FASTING

Why do we fast? Fasting is a way to deepen our hunger for God and to grow in holiness and hunger for God. More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. (Richard Foster) And so it confronts us with our need to surrender to 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. 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 His face. Whether you choose to fast for one day, several days, or the entire 21 days, the point is to humble yourself in a new way and draw near to God.

HISTORY OF FASTING

The practices of praying and fasting can be found in both the Old and New Testaments. Before Jesus began his public ministry, he fasted for 40 days in preparation. The scriptures listed in this brochure cite other instances of fasting found in the Bible.

TYPES OF FASTS

There are several kinds of fasts, and there is no formula for determining which kind of fast, or duration is most appropriate for you. The following are three Biblical examples of fasting:

Complete Fast

Refraining from eating and only drinking liquids (to maintain strength and electrolytes) for particular days or even an extended period of time.

Selective Fast

Eliminating certain things from your diet. Examples include eliminating sugar, meat, caffeine, or other items that you enjoy. Eating only fruits and vegetables, what some might call a “Daniel fast,” is an example of this type of fasting. This type of fast may be more appropriate if you have certain health issues. For some people, giving up chocolate or coffee may be a real reminder to pray.

Partial Fast

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. You can do this one day a week for three weeks, or every day for the 21 days of Prayer and Fasting, or something in between.

If fasting from food is not possible, you may feel led by the Lord to fast from something else, such as social media, television, or certain times or activities on your cell phone.

MOTIVES

The reason we fast is not to manipulate God to do something for us, but to deepen our relationship with Him. A particular danger in fasting is that our God-centered motives can be tainted by our motives to draw attention to ourselves and impress others. Jesus cautions us to, as much as possible, let our fast be between us and God. We all know that God sees our heart and is never fooled. (Isaiah 58)

If you forget to fast for a day (or several), don't get discouraged and quit altogether. Pick up where you left off and finish the fast with the rest of us. It's not about meeting some legalistic standard of holiness; it's about teaching our hearts to think of God more often and spend time with Him throughout the day. In the same way, if you start a fast and it gets too hard to keep, modify it in a way that lets you continue rather than walking away from it.

VERSES ABOUT FASTING

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| * Matthew 4:1-4 | * Psalm 51 |
| * Matthew 6:17-18 | * Psalm 139 |
| * Matthew 17:14-20 | * 2 Chronicles 7:14 |
| * Joel 1:14 | * Jeremiah 29:10-14 |
| * Joel 2:12 | * Matthew 5-7 |
| * Exodus 34:28 | * Luke 10:38-42 |
| * Acts 13:2-3 | * Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 |
| * Acts 14:23 | * Galatians 5:16-26 |
| * Isaiah 58 | |