
Preparing for January 2017

The Month of Prayer and Fasting

As followers of Jesus fasting is a discipline we use throughout the year. However, at Country Hills Church January has been designated as a Month of Prayer and Fasting for the church as a whole. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to unify in a single minded/heart approach in praying for the church! We also encourage each individual within the church body to include personal and/or family prayer requests during this month. Preparing ahead of time for the Month of Prayer and Fasting is helpful in creating a sense of spiritual and physical preparedness. The following are a few ideas to help you in this preparation.

Spiritually

During the month of December begin praying allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to you about the personal/family prayer requests He wants you to focus on during the Month of Prayer and Fasting. This does not have to be a daily exercise, perhaps once a week during your devotional time. Tell Him you are willing to pray for the things He leads you to pray for. The church will be praying for some main corporate prayer requests next year that are included on the prayer cards you will receive in January.

Physically

At least one week prior to fasting begin to taper off of caffeinated beverages and refined sugars. Cut back on meal amounts a few days prior to fasting to help your body prepare for the fast to come and avoid foods that are processed and/or salty. At least one day prior to fasting make sure you drink a sufficient amount of water (See the "Guide to Fasting January 2017 for more information). **Note:** If you have a medical condition or you are pregnant make sure to consult with your medical Doctor before fasting.

Follow a similar time of preparation for a media fast or partial fast (i.e. one meal a day) by cutting out media gradually a few days prior to your fast and cutting back on the amount you eat a few days prior to fasting if you are doing a partial fast.

PRAYER SHEET

Invitation: Spend time in prayer inviting Jesus to work in the hidden areas of your heart (1 Cor. 4:5).

Listening Prayer: Read Isaiah 58; write down the key things that stand out to you about the kind of fast the Lord was asking of Israel. As repentance is a significant key to fasting, ask Jesus to reveal any possible sin that needs to be confessed and repented of that could hinder you in your prayer time (Ps 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 John 1:9).

Listening Prayer: Ask Him if you are harbouring any unforgiveness towards another (Luke 6:37; Luke 17:3-5; John 20:23; Col 3:13). Ask yourself if you are sincerely willing to forgive. Then spend time in confession. Pray a prayer with a specific blessing for the one you have forgiven.

Prayer: In prayer surrender yourself fully to Jesus as functional Lord of your life (Phil 2:11). Ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18; Luke 11:13). Then pray for an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6) by asking Him to reveal a word of affirmation to you about the commitment you have made to Him.

Commitment Prayer: In prayer, tell Jesus of your commitment to allow Him to lead and guide your prayer and fasting, including continuing throughout the year if He asks you to. Tell Him of your willingness to go through a process of continually re-aligning with Him as you pray, making adjustments to your request and prayers as He shows you.

Listening Prayer: Ask Jesus to reveal to you what kindness He wants you to show to others, starting with those in your own family.

Thanksgiving: Write down all the things that come to mind that you should be thankful for (1 Chron. 16:34; 1 Chron. 16:7-9; Matt 15:36; Rom 1:20-22; 2 Cor. 9:10-12; Eph. 5:4; 1 Thess. 5:18; Rev 11:17).

Especially thank Jesus for becoming poor so that you can experience the richness of His presence in your life.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV) *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

Remember that there may be spiritual opposition to discourage you. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16-17). Commit to praying through anything that arises and have others pray for you as well.

