

# Fast 2022

JANUARY 10-16



**7 Day Devotional Guide**

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**Church of the Redeemer**

# Dear Friend,

We're so glad you're participating in this time of prayer, fasting and personal devotion. After an unprecedented and challenging year, we have the opportunity to reset our spiritual compass and allow God to refresh every area of our lives.

This fast is designed to be flexible, so you can participate at any level. Whether you have some experience in fasting for several days or weeks, or if this is your first time, you can start where you are and experience what God has in store for you in a powerful way.

The guide provides practical tools to help you navigate your personal journey. As you read over the information, please consider how it applies to you and your circumstances and convictions.

We pray that you will experience the presence and power of God in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to Him over this time. May the Lord continue to bless you and enlarge you as you seek Him first!

**Matthew 9:15b (NKJV)** *But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

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# Prayer

As you prepare for this time of fasting and prayer, it can be tempting to start thinking of a laundry list of prayers you'd love to see answered. Instead, try to keep it simple. Think about the top two or three things most pressing on your heart and focus on those with God.

Write these down in the space provided below and be open to hearing what God wants to show you in those areas. The breakthroughs, miracles and answers to your prayers will be by-products of drawing closer to Jesus.

Make your primary goal to know Jesus more and experience Him. Give yourself to Him in total surrender and aim to glorify God with your life. Take time to pray each day. Don't overcomplicate this! Just talk to God. Have that place and time where you can seek Him daily. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. If you find it a challenge to disconnect from the busyness of your day, engaging in worship music is a great way to prepare your heart for prayer.

During this fast, I am praying and believing God for:

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# Fasting

**Important Note:** Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

As you prepare to fast, it's important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. Keep in mind that there's nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast. These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do.

Do not let what you eat or don't eat become the focus of your fast. Keep the main thing the main thing, which is drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God. Here are a few tips on this:

# Start Where You Are

We are all at different places in our walk with God. Likewise our jobs, daily schedules, and health conditions are all different and place various levels of demands on our energy. Whether you've fasted before or this is your first time, start where you are. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it. It's very important to know your own body, know your options and, most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Remember, the goal of fasting is not just to go without food. The goal is to draw closer to God.

# Choose Your Type of Fast

While preparing for your fast, it's important to choose ahead of time what type of fast, or what combination, you will pursue. Not only will this help you make the necessary preparations to implement your plan, but as you commit to a specific fast ahead of time and know how you're going to do it, you will position yourself to finish strong.

On the following pages we've listed some options and variations of fasts you can choose from. Please consider how each option may or may not apply to your personal circumstances and convictions.

The Bible describes various kinds and lengths of fasts. You can fast one type of food or all food, or some combination of foods. In this type of fast you omit a specific item (or items) from your meal plans.

For example, you may choose to eliminate all red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. Most people can incorporate this type of fast relatively easily. It can also prove to be a great solution for people with specific dietary needs or medical conditions that may cause certain limitations.

Food fasts can also focus on consuming a specific type of food or beverage. Examples are juice or water fasts. They focus on simply consuming vegetable and fruit juices or water instead of solid food. Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan as well. This is one of the most popular and effective fasts. Even if you choose not to make your entire fast liquids-only, substituting one or two meals for liquids is a great alternative.

In addition to the food fast, many people choose non-food fasts to intensify their focus on God. Non-food fasts can also be good for those who are on very strict diets due to medical conditions and are unable to fast any kind of food or liquid. Non-food fasts can include refraining from luxury or pleasure items—things that take our time from or distract us from time with God. An example of a non-food fast is a media/entertainment fast, including television, social media, and the like.

The decision as to what kind of fast you choose is yours. You may choose to fast one day a week, one meal a day or in whatever way you feel led. This is your personal decision and should be prayerfully considered as it applies to your circumstances. Simply ask the Lord for guidance, and if health issues are a concern (for instance, you are pregnant or a nursing mother), consult your doctor.

# *Begin and Break the Fast Well*

Depending on the type of fast you choose, it's very important to prepare your body ahead of time before beginning the fast. Take a week or so to transition into your fast, otherwise you could get sick. For example, if you would like to go on a fruits and vegetables or juice fast, start eliminating meat, white grains and refined sugars from your diet the week before. Also start to cut back quite a bit on dairy products and some of your caffeine intake.

The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that.

There are also several supplements you can take that will help support the detox process during your fast. Your health-food store can give you recommendations.



# Final Fasting Tips

Here are some other ideas that can help make your fasting experience more pleasant and helpful:

- As you select your type of fast, make a fasting calendar that fits your plan. Determine what each day and week will look like.
- Make it a priority to stay connected to church during your fast. Interacting with other believers will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.
- Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with the items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give into temptation. Choose well when selecting products, stick to raw food as much as you can and limit artificial ingredients.
- If you mess up, don't get discouraged. Just get right back on track and keep going. God's mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23). He wants you to finish, and He will give you the grace and strength to do it.

*May the Lord bless and keep you as you navigate this fasting adventure!*

# Personal Devotion

Reading your Bible is about connecting to God in a more powerful way. It's not about duty but about relationship. We engage with God as we read His Word and we experience His presence. His Word is living and active! We are drawing closer to the Lord and positioning ourselves to hear from Him through the Scriptures.

Choose the time and place where you're going to read your Bible every day, and come prepared to hear what God wants to tell you. To get the most out of your devotional time, here are three simple keys:

## 1. Read Consistently

It's better to read a little every day than to try and knock out two hours of Bible reading or devotions in one sitting. Digest what you read as you take in just enough to absorb. If you miss a few days, pick up at the next reading, but stay with it and don't give up. If you need a daily Bible devotional, you can download one from our website ([church-redeemer.org/fast](http://church-redeemer.org/fast)).

## 2. Read Prayerfully

Talk to God as you're reading. Don't rush through. If you come across something you don't understand, pause for a moment and ask God about it. Reading prayerfully is making space and time to talk to God and giving Him time and space to talk to you. Taking time to meditate on God's Word is just as important as reading it.

## 3. Read Expectantly

You are about to partake of the bread of life, so foster an attitude of expectancy. Believe that God is going to speak to you through His Word. With meditation on the ideas and thoughts recorded in your journal, be prepared to do something with what He shows you. A great, simple way to journal your devotionals is to use the **SOAP** method.

# The SOAP method

S

## Scripture

Read prayerfully. Take notice of scriptures that catch your attention and mark them in your Bible. When you're done, reread the verses you marked and look for one that particularly speaks to you. Write it in your journal.

O

## Observation

Focusing on that scripture, tune in and listen to what God is saying to you through His Word. What is it about this scripture that specifically stands out? What does God want to reveal to you or teach you? Ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide and show you what God is saying.

A

## Application

Think about how this verse applies to your life right now. Perhaps it provides instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or correction. Use your journal to write out your thoughts.

P

## Prayer

Wrap up your SOAP time in prayer. Talk to God about what you've just read. This can be as simple as thanking Him for revealing a truth from the scripture, or it may be asking Him for greater insight or wisdom as to how it applies to your life. Remember, prayer is all about relationship. It's a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say.

# Additional tips

That's it! SOAP. It's as simple or deep as you want it to be. If you want to go deeper in your study, here are additional tips:

- Reread the daily passage in a different Bible translation or paraphrase.
- Use online resources, such as those available from [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com).
- Use a commentary, such as those at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).
- Cross-reference your daily reading, using the footnotes in your study Bible.
- Research words in their original language using a Strong's Concordance.

We pray that your passion for God and His Word will be ignited and you will develop a greater hunger for His presence as you seek Him!

**Romans 12:11 (NIV)** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

# The Next Seven Days and Beyond

We are excited for what God is going to do in your life during this fast! We encourage you to be intentional about the next seven days, believing that you will experience God in a fresh way.

The principles you will practice over this time of fasting are easy to sustain long-term. Prayer, fasting and personal devotion can be incorporated into your everyday life. Simply make the practices you have learned a priority each day.

Fasting is a lifestyle you can continue. We encourage you to establish a frequency and consistency of fasting. Identify what works for you, commit to it and make it a part of your life.

**Most importantly, make a commitment to living life full of passion for God.** Keep the fire for Him burning in your heart and do whatever it takes to feed your spiritual hunger for the Lord!

# Look Up

**Psalm 8:1,4 (NIV)** Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. ...What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

The best way to begin your new year is with the right focus. If your focus is in the wrong direction on the wrong things, you will get off course in a hurry—and waste a lot of your time trying to get back on track.

The right focus is found in looking up to the God who made us. The One who created us with a purpose. The Lord of all who rules over our lives.

The Psalmist directs us to acknowledge God's greatness, His majesty, His glory—but he also reminds us of the amazing truth that this great God cares about people. We certainly can identify with David's question in verse 4 of this psalm: How could it be that the King of the whole universe is concerned about a lowly human being like me?

The answer is that He is a God of love. He is majestic in His love, great in His mercy, abounding in loving kindness (Psalm 103:8). He gave His one and only Son to die on the cross to demonstrate this beyond any shadow of a doubt (Romans 5:8).

As you look to God in worship and awe, you can be assured that He loves and cares for you and your needs. Honor Him first in all you do this year and He will guide you into His best for your life.

# Look In

**Colossians 1:27b (NCV)** This secret is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory.

Fasting is one way we prepare to live more fully committed to the Lord. But it's important to realize that living for Christ in this new year will not be easy. There are a lot of obstacles and much opposition in the world around us for those who choose to follow Jesus.

We need to understand the real source of our strength and hope in this journey. The Apostle Paul equips us for this with one simple but powerful truth—a "secret" that has been clearly revealed to us as believers: Christ himself is in you, and He is your hope for glory. Paul calls us to look into our hearts and recognize that Jesus has come to live in us. Think about it: the Son of God who conquered death, hell and the grave now resides in you!

Jesus empowers you from the inside to conquer any foe, overcome every obstacle and grab hold of hope in every trial. As 1 John 4:4 puts it, "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

# Look Around

**Matthew 9:36-38 (NIV)** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

When Jesus walked the earth and looked around at the hurting and confused people in our fallen world, He was filled with compassion. Not condemnation. Not mere pity. He looked and loved with a deep desire to help alleviate real pain.

Matthew tells us that this was not just His burden; it was also His commission to us. He calls us to look around with compassion. People are hurting all around us. They are “harassed and helpless” by the throes of life.

At the core of these issues in every hurting person—including each of us—is the need to know God. When Jesus told His disciples to “ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers,” He was talking about the harvest of bringing people to faith in the living God.

Practical help is valuable and important as part of our outreach to the world, but the needs of the human heart are only satisfied in a personal relationship with God through faith in His Son (John 3:16).

Take time to look around. Really “see” people and their great need to know the Lord. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to them—and be one of the workers.



# Look Down

**Proverbs 6:6-8 (NIV)** Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

God gives us wisdom in a variety of ways. Certainly, we can ask and believe Him for it and He will answer (James 1:5). But He also uses the ordinary and mundane to catch our attention and impress wisdom on our minds.

Ants are ordinary. Most often we ignore and miss out on their activity—unless, of course, they invade our house with it. Yet, in these verses God directs our attention to the ant so it can teach us something useful.

“Consider its ways”—think about how diligent, efficient and strategic the ant is with what God has given it. Wouldn’t it be wise to be like that in our lives?

The point is that God’s world is full of “wisdom nuggets” waiting to be mined. Don’t miss the lessons of the ordinary. Take a moment to look down. You might just be a little wiser for it.

# Look Out

**Luke 12:15 (NIV)** Then [Jesus] said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

We all have to look out for potential danger every day. When you approach an intersection in your car, you watch out for pedestrians and vehicles to avoid any collisions. You make sure the food you eat isn't contaminated or harmful to you and your family. You also wouldn't leave your front door wide open and invite strangers to invade your home!

Jesus warns us to watch out for intruders that can invade our hearts. These can be more subtle than physical threats, but they are often just as deadly.

In these verses, the danger is greed—the driving desire to have more of what you have enough of already. To want more because someone else has it. To lust for something simply because your sinful nature craves it.

Jesus' point is clear: don't fall for the lie of greed (and all sins) that promise life but deliver only death. “Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” Don't go for the false advertising.

Look out—be on the alert—so you can avoid destructive, sinful choices and be content with the abundant goodness of the Lord, “who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Timothy 6:17b).

# Look Over

**Proverbs 19:11 (NLT)** Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.

Have you ever had someone wrong you? Seems like in every relationship, there's at least some kind of wrong at some point that we have to deal with.

The question is not if we deal with wrongs, but how we respond to them. Our gut reaction may be to get back at the person in some way, holding their feet to the fire for what they did to us.

Perhaps the hardest response to a wrong is to overlook it. It doesn't feel very good to think that the other person is "getting away" with what they did. And certainly there are appropriate situations for accountability where the responsible party should own up to what they did and perhaps make restitution.

In our hearts, we can choose to respond to the wronging person with anger and a vengeful spirit. We can hold on stubbornly to a grudge.

But the Scripture says that "sensible people" choose to overlook offenses. They choose to forgive, just as in Christ, God has forgiven them (Ephesians 4:32). They choose the God-kind of love that "keeps no record of wrongs suffered" (1 Corinthians 13:5). And they earn respect along the way.

Sounds like overlooking wrongs is a better way to go. Choose this more sensible and God-honoring path and see what a difference it will make in your relationships—and in you.

# Look Ahead

**Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV)** “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Plans and goals are all about the future—what’s up ahead. They look toward what can be. They count on upcoming opportunities and possibilities.

God wants us to anticipate by faith what He has in store. Although we don’t know the details of His plan, He encourages us to expect His purposes to unfold in His time with His blessing. He assures us that there’s great hope in what He will do!

At the same time, the most important aspect of His plan and your future is a growing relationship with the Lord. He invites you to “call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.” His vision is that “you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

As you look ahead into this new year, keep your eyes on the Lord and draw near to Him. Seek to know Him better and better and you’ll find everything you need in the depth of His love and grace.