

**Lomax Temple A.M.E. Zion Church**  
**21 Days of Fasting and Praying**  
**"Drawing Nearer to God"**

**Participation from January 20, through February 10, 2019**

**How do I Participate**

- 1. Participate by:** Committing to read the scriptures and mediation on a daily bases
- 2. Participate by fasting:** Give something up for 21 days ( see Pre-fasting information sheet)
- 3. Participate by calling in and sharing how the mediation for that day effects your life:** Either it affects us because we struggle in that particular area or God has given us victory in that area. Our sharing with each other is crucial to our development and the maturity of others. We will have " 15 minutes testimony sharing" Monday through Friday at two different times. The morning call in time will be at 7am and evening time will be at 7pm. The call in number for both will be (712)775-7300 access code 392357. The expectation is that we will participate in all areas so that we might get maximum results.

**Day 1. Tune In**

John 10:22-30: Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Have you ever been searching for a radio station only to be frustrated by finding static rather than music? You then focus to fine tune the dial again, and suddenly you hear a clear signal. The fact is, the signal always existed on the airwaves; the only difference is that you have adjusted your tuner to the right frequency.

In our hectic lives, there are so many signals bombarding our senses that it can become difficult to distinguish God's voice from the deafening "static noise" of life. Fasting enables us to tune out the world's distractions and tune in to God. As we fast, we deny our flesh. When we deny our flesh, we become more in tune to the Holy Spirit and can hear God's voice more clearly. If you truly listen for God's voice, you will hear it. When you hear it, it will build faith within you.

**Prayer:**

Lord, help me to tune in to You. As distractions and temptations come, give me strength to turn to You. Teach me. Give me eyes and ears to hear Your voice. Open my heart to Your Word. As I'm challenged in the days ahead, please give me what I need to humble myself and honor You. Help me to take time to be holy, to spend time with You in secret, to trust in Your Word. You are the potter. I am the clay. Mold me and make me according to Your will. Thank You for being a God who I can trust. You are so faithful to me. I am Yours.

**Day 2. Unwavering In Faith**

James 1:2-7: Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

What do you expect when you pray? When we pray with earnest expectation, we are exercising our faith. The earnest prayers of people walking in step with God can produce powerful results, and the most earnest prayers come from us recognizing our need for God.

There can be a natural tendency to shrink back when praying for the seemingly impossible, but we must remember that nothing is impossible with God. If we know the promises that God has given us, and understand His character and the principles by which He works, we can pray with confidence and trust Him for the answer. The King James Version of the Bible refers to it as being, "unwavering in your faith." What has caused you to waver in your expectation with God? James reminds us that faith and wavering are actually contradictory – he says, "nothing wavering". Know that God never wavers in His love for you. You can trust Him completely.

- What are you trusting God for in this season?
- How can you line up your expectations with the Word of God when you pray?
- Find promises in His Word that answer your need and write them down today.

**Prayer:**

Lord, please help me to stand firm in my faith as I walk with You. You are my strong tower. I know I can trust in You. Guard and renew my mind, body, soul and spirit in Christ Jesus according to Your will. May each one line up with the Word of God. May my life be filled with faith and expectation that You are working all things for good. Give me faith to move mountains, knowing that You have promised to do the impossible so that You may be glorified. May my life, thoughts and expectations reflect Yours, my King and my God.

### Day 3. Spiritual Food

Psalm 34:8: Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who take refuge in Him.

Your Bible, God’s Word, is life-giving, spiritual food. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He said, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Psalm 19 says this about God’s words: “They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.” Proverbs 4:22 says, “For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”

God’s Word is life changing, miracle working, alive, holy, true, perfect, empowering, encouraging, trustworthy and healing. It guides us, gives wisdom, judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, is a mighty weapon and is to be treasured! Jesus was the Word made flesh, our bread of life. When we open the scriptures, we begin to know Him better.

In John 4, we read about Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman. When Jesus met her, His disciples had gone into town to get food. When they returned with the food, they found Jesus’ hunger satisfied. They were confused by this, wondering if He had eaten while they were gone. But Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” Jesus was sustained spiritually by doing His Father’s will. He then told them in John 6:27, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”

We are spiritually nourished by feeding on God’s Word and by doing His will. Ask God to open your spiritual eyes and ears to receive His Word as life-giving-and sustaining. Drink deeply from His Word. Listen for His voice. Obey His promptings. Trust Him to sustain you as you pray and fast. Believe that God’s Word is, “sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.” He will do more than you can imagine.

- How can you create time to be in God’s Word?
- Do you believe that it will nourish you and bring life to you?
- Ask God to meet you personally through this time as you seek Him. He desires to teach you. He delights in you.

#### Prayer:

Lord, thank You for nourishing me with Your Word. It is life to my body and soul. Help me to realize the power of Your Word in my life. Open my eyes and ears to know You better as I spend time in the scriptures. Teach me, renew me and make me strong in You. Help me to keep Your words in my heart and to do Your will. Show me how to use Your Word to bring renewal to my life and to bring others to You. I trust You to sustain me. You are more than enough.

### Day 4. Cultivating Spiritual Hunger

Mark 1:12-13: Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Even Jesus disconnected from the world to fast and pray. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. They also describe other times Jesus pulled away from the demands of the crowds, His ministry and even His closest friends to pray.

There are times that we, too, need to pull away from the things of the world and focus on God. “The things of the world” can certainly include more than just food. In fact, in our world, it is more likely to be television, movies, Facebook, Twitter, cell phones and internet that keep us “tuned in” to the world.

None of these things are wrong in and of themselves, but they are avenues for a mental and spiritual “crowd” to gather around us and drown out the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit. Fasting is a means of disconnecting from the distractions of daily life and consciously choosing to bring God into greater focus. Giving up physical nourishment is the first step in engaging that process. If you think about it, though, we nourish our souls as well as our bodies. We do so through reading, talking, socializing, playing and leisure. When we fill our souls up with all those things, we don’t feel a hunger for God.

During this time of fasting, we may feel physical hunger, but let’s be intentional about cultivating spiritual hunger as well. Let’s draw away from the crowds, and lay aside for a season the activities we use to nourish our souls. Instead let’s allow ourselves to enter a state of spiritual hunger — a hunger for righteousness. Jesus said that being spiritually hungry is a blessed state, because we can be sure of being filled with food that truly satisfies our deepest needs. (Matthew 5:6)

During this time, you will find that being still before the Lord will set you in a place of increased strength, peace and hunger for God.

- Are you disconnected from the things that nourish your body and soul?
- What do you need to deny yourself so that this can be a powerful time in your life?
- Take time to pray and read God’s Word during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from. God will honor your heart and commitment.

#### Prayer:

Lord, give me a spiritual hunger that I have never known. Increase my thirst for righteousness, for purity, for holiness, for You! Break the power of sin and worldly habits that keep me from You. Pour Your cleansing, living water through me and make me a vessel that You can use to refresh others. Make me an instrument of Your healing and compassion. Use me in Your service. Help me to remember the brevity of my life and to store up treasures in Heaven.

### Day 5. Fasting With Prayer Removes Unbelief

Matthew 17:18-21: And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, that if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

When we pray and fast, we don’t do so to change God or His will. By praying and fasting, we are the ones changed. Coming into alignment with God helps us curb our doubts and fears. When we pray and fast, one thing that leaves is our unbelief. It is when we have faith to believe, that we can pray with confidence and know that, “nothing will be impossible”, as we live to bring glory to God.

Ask God to strengthen our hearts to fully believe Him and believe His word. It is okay to recognize and acknowledge if you struggle with unbelief. It’s the first step in allowing God to strengthen your faith and bring you into alignment with His plan for your life.

- What is it that you need faith to believe God for?
- Align yourself with God’s Word and will during this fast. Ask the Holy Spirit to free you from your unbelief.
- Pray with confidence, knowing, “nothing will be impossible for you”.

#### Prayer:

Lord, I confess my unbelief. I am weak, but You are strong. Increase my faith. Remind me of the relevance of Your Word for my life. I know it is powerful. Help me to use it to strengthen my spirit and to war against Satan and his efforts against me. Help me to take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. Make me an overcomer as I receive in faith the victory You have for me. I do believe. You are not finished with me yet. I praise You for Your grace and goodness to me.

### Day 6. Reliance On God

Romans 7:18-20 (NLT): And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong, it is sin living in me that does it.

There’s an internal war that often wages within each and every one of us. Paul describes this so well here in Romans 7 — we desire to do the right thing, but in our own efforts, we don’t have the power to and we mess up.

The good news is that we don’t have to rely on our own strength to make right decisions. We don’t have to be dominated by our sinful nature and end up doing the things we don’t want to do. But the only way we can live this kind of life is by yielding to the Holy Spirit and relying on the strength of Jesus Christ, not our own.

When we’re facing struggles, we must rely on God’s power alive within us through the Holy Spirit. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit resides in us and places in us the desire to do what is pleasing to God. (Hebrews 10:16) The Holy Spirit always wants to do what is right. He always wants to uphold the perfect will of God, pleasing the Father in every way. It is our job to lay down our stubborn fleshly will and yield to the will of God. In that moment, the Holy Spirit will be there to help us in our time of need. Instead of trusting in our own strength, let’s learn to yield to and become totally reliant upon the Holy Spirit.

- Are there areas in your life causing an internal struggle?
- Make a decision today that you will yield to the Holy Spirit and lean on His strength, not your own, to overcome obstacles of sin and selfishness in your life.
- Surrender and release those areas to God, knowing He will help you.

#### Prayer:

Lord, give me the desire to please You in all things. I confess I want to do things my way. Forgive my stubbornness and pride. Help me to choose Your way. I humbly ask You for grace and a willingness to yield to the Holy Spirit who lives in me. May my life reflect Your will for me. Help me to put away childish things and to put on love. Help me to stop actions that are harmful to me and others. Today I put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Give me grace to forgive as You have forgiven me. I love You.

**Day 7. Fervent Prayer**

James 5:16b: The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Fervency speaks of our level of intensity, passion and persistence. Many times, we can lose our passion in prayer or stop praying for certain things altogether because we lose heart or give up. But God invites us to keep them before Him and trust Him for an answer in His time. (Matthew 7:7-11)

The Old Testament prophet, Elijah, practiced a lifestyle of fervent, intense prayer and he witnessed incredible miracles in his lifetime as a result. In 1 Kings 17:17-24, we read of a woman whose only son became ill and died. When Elijah heard the news he quickly took action and did what he knew best — he fervently cried out to God. Elijah fully believed that God could bring the boy back to life, and he didn't pray just once. It is recorded that he prayed three times for the boy's soul to return to him. He prayed fervently, repeatedly and he wasn't going to give up. Verse 22 reads, "then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived."

God honored Elijah's obedience and fervent prayers and brought the boy to life. God hears your prayers as well and will bring an answer in His perfect timing. But don't be discouraged or disheartened if the answer is not exactly what you expected. Commit to praying to God with passion and persistence, trusting the answer will come in God's perfect way and in His perfect timing.

As we close out this first week, continue to pray fervently for the main areas of concern in your life. Trust God to bring an answer as you journal your thoughts and inspirations through this time.

**Prayer:**

Lord, teach me to pray. You have given me the gift of partnering with You in prayer. Stir my heart to pray and give me ears to listen as You speak to me in the quiet places of my heart. Increase my faith as I trust You for the answers to my prayers. Thank You for hearing me. I seek Your face and humbly, persistently ask that You will do a mighty work in my life. Use my prayers to bless and encourage others. Teach me to praise You in my prayers. You are worthy of my praise.

**Day 8. Spoken Word**

John 11:38-44: Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

The story of Lazarus' death and resurrection reflects the power of Jesus' spoken Word. He already knew in His heart the miracle that was about to take place, but His words spoke the miracle into existence.

While prayer is our declaration of our dependence on God, our spoken words can be the manifestation of what's happening in our hearts. There is power in our spoken words — whether they are used to build up or tear down. It is so important to keep our hearts filled with the truth from God's Word so that our words will produce good fruit.

As you seek God in prayer, ask Him for the words and discernment that may help someone today. Pray that your words would be encouraging, edifying and aligned with the truth of God's word. Building others up around us with our words allows us to be God's instrument — a vessel for His good work.

As God continues to fill us through this season of prayer and fasting, He wants to take what is now in our hearts and share it with others. How can you use the power of your spoken words to speak God's truth in the lives of others?

**Prayer:**

Father, Thank You that Your Word is life and power to me and to others. Your Word brings hope to things that appear to have no hope. May Your words take root in my heart so that I can bring life, power and encouragement to others who are weary. Place a deep hunger in my heart for Your words so that I can memorize and recall Your words when needed. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

**Day 9. Humble Yourself**

Matthew 17:14-16: "And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

What a great example of humility — this man approached Jesus and knelt before Him in the midst of a crowd. As the father approached Jesus, he believed that Jesus would bring his son relief. But even in his belief, his approach was humble and submitted to what Christ would choose to do. Looking further into the story, we find the father was also persistent and resisted taking offense. Though the disciples were not able to help him, he set aside his temporary disappointment in their failure and continued to seek after Jesus — the solution to his circumstance, the source of relief through his trial.

Being humble before God is realizing our need of Him, submitting to His will, pursuing Him and being confident the outcome will occur in God's perfect timing.

Be encouraged that approaching God with a heart of humility will always position you to find relief in Jesus. Don't be ashamed to humble yourself before God, even in the midst of others looking on. Offenses and disappointment may come but continue in your pursuit of Jesus. You may not get relief right away but know that God is never late and His solution is always perfect.

Prayer is a posture of humility. Humble yourself before the Lord each day and bring your cares to Him. You may want to consider how you present your body to the Lord in prayer. Getting down on our hands and knees or stretching out on our faces on the floor puts us in positions of humility that can help us focus. He wants to meet you where you are and answer your every need. Is there discouragement in your heart today? Write it down and release it to our perfect God

**Prayer:**

Lord, I bow before You realizing You are sovereign, almighty, and all powerful. I thank You that in Your greatness You still love and care for me. Your ways and thoughts are so much higher than mine, and I acknowledge my need for You. May I have a meek and humble spirit like Jesus. Remove pride from my life, for I confess I am nothing without You. I submit my life to You once again. I pray You remove disappointment and discouragement from me as I trust in You and Your perfect will. Help me to be humble and gentle to those around me. Thank You for working in my heart. I love You.

**Day 10. Clean House**

Romans 8:5-6: For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Have you ever looked up at your ceiling fan blades or in the deep recesses of your couch cushions and noticed the filth that builds up over time? Even though we might clean on a regular basis, there are times when we need to go... a little deeper. We realize that what appeared to be clean on the surface was in all actuality, quite filthy.

The same thing can happen spiritually. As we go about our daily lives, there are things that can build up over time. Even if we regularly worship, pray and read our Bible, the different pressures and cares of this world can quietly build up, and end up consuming our lives. Without even realizing it, we can lose our peace, our joy, and our passion for the things of God. Our service to God, which used to fill us with life and excitement, becomes a duty that we must fulfill.

Fasting is the deep cleaning that helps us take our mind off of the things of this world and instead have a refreshed focus on the things of the Spirit. It is an incredibly effective way to get into the nooks and crannies of our soul and bring all those dusty old habits, broken mindsets and rusty attitudes out into the light of God's truth. In fasting and prayer, our service to God returns to something we want to do rather than something we have to do.

As you pray and fast today, ask God to show you any areas where you could use a refreshed spiritual focus. Like David, in Psalm 51:10-12, pray that God will cleanse your heart, renew your spirit, and restore the joy of your salvation. Pray with confidence, knowing that He wants to fill you with His life and peace.

**Prayer:**

Lord, at times I grow tired and lukewarm in my love and service for You. Forgive me for allowing the distractions of the world to take my focus off of You. Please renew the joy of my salvation and give me a fresh passion for You. I want to love You more than life. Thank You that You never grow weary and that Your passion for me is always secure.

Day 11. What's Your Assignment?	Day 12. Don't Worry – Pray Instead	Day 13. Praying Boldly	Day 14. Alignment With Heaven
<p>Luke 4:1-2, 14-15: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry...Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him.</p> <p>Fasting and prayer are helpful to receiving a clear vision of God's specific path for our lives. Many times following a season of prayer and fasting we can have a more defined understanding of the part that we play in the body of Christ and a greater sense of our particular spiritual giftings. (1 Corinthians 12)</p> <p>This chapter in the Gospel of Luke describes the circumstances surrounding the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Notice that He went into the desert "full of the Holy Spirit." However, He returned to Galilee, "in the power of the Holy Spirit." Being full of the Spirit is knowing God and his character; walking in the power of the Spirit is when we know that we have the God-given strength and authority in our lives to walk out His will.</p> <p>The power of the Spirit is essential for us to accomplish the assignment God has for our lives. God could be leading you to fast so that you can receive His specific instructions for your life. He will empower you, not just to know Him, but to walk in His power to accomplish what He has called you to do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there areas of your life that need more clarity?</li> <li>• Are you walking in the power of the Spirit and living in God's purpose for your life? Write down those things God is speaking to you.</li> <li>• As you continue your fast, pray that God continually reveals His purpose and gives you ever increasing clarity and strength to walk it out</li> </ul> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Holy Spirit, thank You that Your power lives within me. I want to live more in Your power, so I ask that You come into my soul and fill me again. I do not want any sin in my life to block You, so I ask You to cleanse my heart. I know You have a purpose for my life, but I don't always know what that is. I ask for a clear calling and discernment as I desire to live out the assignment You have given me. Thank You that when You call me to do something, You also completely equip me. I pray that You alone will work through me and that others will see You in me. Thank You for choosing me and giving me a purpose. May my life shine brightly for You!</p>	<p>Philippians 4:6-7 (MSG): Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.</p> <p>Worry seems to be an inescapable fact of modern life. No doubt there is plenty to worry about: our future, the economy, global warming, war, disease... the list could go on forever! Sometimes it might seem that worry has even replaced Jesus as the focal point of our lives. Jesus Himself admonished us several times not to worry. The great apostle, Paul, tell us in the passage above that there is an antidote to worry...prayer.</p> <p>When we worry about something, we are spending energy on it, wondering what might happen, rehearsing the "if only's" and "what if's" in our mind. Why not take that same energy and refocus it on prayer instead? When we worry, we are simply talking to ourselves about our fears, but when we pray, we are taking those fears to God. We can't control the future, but in the words of Anne Graham Lotz, God is already there! He knows exactly what is going to happen and He promises to be with us every step of the journey.</p> <p>As we continue this season of prayer and fasting, let's make an effort to convert our worry into prayer. As Paul says in the verse above, "let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers," and you will find that the peace of God will guard your heart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there things that you consistently worry about?</li> <li>• As you go through your day today, recapture each worried thought and send it up to God as a prayer. See how dramatically your outlook improves when the peace of God is activated through prayer</li> </ul> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Lord, You know how often my mind goes to worry and not to trusting You. May my thoughts be quicker to turn into prayers to You, my Almighty God, because You know the plans You have for me, and they are plans to prosper me and not to harm me. Thank You for Your peace that surpasses all understanding as I place my confidence in You and believe You are at work in my life.</p>	<p>I Kings 18:36 (KJV): And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant..."</p> <p>The sacrifice referenced above was a declaration that Elijah was a servant of the Most High God. Elijah belonged to God, and he represented God to the people. However, Elijah's boldness was not a result of who he was; it was the result of knowing God!</p> <p>As children of God under the new covenant of Jesus, we don't have to be timid or fearful when coming to God in prayer. We can approach God boldly. The Amplified Bible puts it like this: Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it]. Hebrews 4:16</p> <p>It's hard to imagine taking a fearless, confident, bold attitude when coming before God in prayer. Yet this is exactly what we are admonished to do! God has already settled the issue of our access to Him, but we can be assured, our access is not because of our own righteousness. It's because of what Jesus did on the cross. We can come to the throne in such outrageous boldness because Jesus was outrageously righteous! When we pray, we come to God in the authority of Jesus' name, and we can be confident that we will find grace, mercy and perfectly- timed help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you approach God with timidity of confidence?</li> <li>• Seek God boldly today knowing you are fully forgiven and Jesus has made you righteous. When you approach God in prayer, seek a fresh revelation of who He is in your life.</li> </ul> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Father, I thank You that I can approach You boldly and with confidence because I am righteous through Christ. Lord, please give me a boldness in asking from You. Nothing is too difficult for You, and I pray for a renewed revelation of who You are today. You hold all things in Your hands and have a perfect plan for my life. Thank You. I love You.</p>	<p>Matthew 6:10 (KJV): "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."</p> <p>We have all heard the phrase, "just like heaven on earth." When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, in Matthew 6:9-13, He provided some insight into what "heaven on earth" might look like. In reality, heaven is a place where God's will reigns supreme. If we want to have a taste of heaven on earth, then our prayer should be like Jesus': "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done..." The purest motivation for our prayers is that God will be glorified and that His will would reign supreme in our lives, just like it does in heaven.</p> <p>On a more personal level, we can pray that His will be unhindered in our own lives. Rather than imposing His will upon us, God gives us the choice to surrender to it with trust and gladness. As we yield to the Lordship of Christ over every area of our lives, we come into agreement with Him. We experience alignment with heaven and position ourselves to taste a little bit of heaven here on earth. His will then becomes what we desire and the thing we most seek after. We enter into the incredible adventure of participating in God's plan to move His kingdom forward on the earth. This is where we find the most fulfilling and joyous life, but it all starts with one, personal "yes, Lord" on our part.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does God's will "on earth as it is in heaven" look like in your life?</li> <li>• Do the desires of your heart line up with the will of God?</li> <li>• As we seek God together, let's pray as Jesus taught us, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."</li> </ul> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Father, Your word is very clear about what Your will is. You desire for us to reach out to the lonely, oppressed, marginalized and lost. You have great compassion on them and desire us to be Your hands and feet. Please help my will to line up with Yours. Please enable me to care about others being lost more than I care about the comforts or problems in my life. May Your kingdom come, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And may I be willing to bring Your kingdom to earth by the way I treat others around me. Please open my eyes to who You want me to bless today.</p>

**Day 15. Confession**

Psalm 51 (NLT):  
 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds; they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner; yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the heart, so you can teach me to be wise in my inmost being.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me, now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to sinners, and they will return to you. Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Unseal my lips, O Lord, that I may praise you. You would not be pleased with sacrifices, or I would bring them. If I brought you a burnt offering, you would not accept it. The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise. Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will be pleased with worthy sacrifices and with our whole burnt offerings; and bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Consider the things that come between you and God, and starting with the words below, hold them up to God as a confession. Confession causes us to face our nature, and can be a frightful thing, but it is also a bridge to God. Sincere confession is always followed by God's drawing near in forgiveness. As you read, don't be limited by what is written here. Add your own words as you are moved to.

Holy and merciful Father: We confess to You... that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed; by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. We have been deaf to Your call to serve, as Christ served us... We have grieved Your Holy Spirit.

**Day 15. Confession (Continued)**

Father, I confess to You my great pride, impatience, self indulgence, prejudice, contempt, cruelty and dishonesty. I confess my exploitation of others, envy of those more fortunate, lust for worldly goods and comforts, negligence in prayer and worship, and my failure to stand firm and be a witness to Your reality. Father, by way of the cross and passion of Your Son our Lord, teach me the joy of resurrection.

As the scripture says, "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong" (1 John 1.9). Now is the time to search our hearts and to be fully known by God. As we focus on the cross and resurrection, we need to be honest with God, hiding nothing. Remember as well that there is no darkness too deep for God: His own Son suffered death on a cross under a greater burden than any have known before or after Him — He descended deeper into the darkness. There is no depth to which we may sink, where He has not been, or where we will be out of reach of the mercy of God.

Suggestion: For fasting from various media, continue the practices from last week and add to them if you can. Cut back on, or eliminate, TV, the radio, the internet, the computer, etc. And finally, whenever you have free time because you have given something up, be sure to give the time to God.

- Have you acknowledged your sinfulness to our Most Holy God?
- Have you repented and turned from your ways?
- Please spend time asking God to reveal the sins you need to confess. Name the sins and take ownership of them. After listening for His Spirit to reveal your sins repent and turn from those sins.
- After you are finished, please close with this prayer

**Prayer:**

Father, I often find myself buried under the weight of my own dark thoughts, and so fearful of these thoughts that I cannot even face them. But Lord, You promised, that because of what Jesus did, I am not to be punished according to my sin. With this promise and the hope of freedom, God help me to face my own heart: shine Your light inside of me. I want to be known by You. Help me to let You in.

**Day 16. Pride and Humility**

James 4:1-10: What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: **"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."** Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Our godliness can often be measured by the line between our pride and humility. Scripture tells us that God has placed a spirit of "fierce desires" in us. Pride can ignite these God-given desires into an occasion for doing wrong. Humility, on the other hand, makes room for God, who tempers and directs our desires, and guides us to lasting fulfillment.

Scripture tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (a more humiliating event could not have been imagined). So we practice humility as a way to follow Jesus, and to cast off all our ineffective, prideful attempts at self-promotion, self-salvation and self-satisfaction.

When we remember that Jesus' death is our only hope, and that all our efforts to save ourselves are at best, short-term solutions and doomed to fail, we weep for our condition. But we also need to remember that humiliation and remorse, both appropriate responses to God, are temporary. Through Christ's resurrection, the humble are lifted up, and those who mourn are comforted with an everlasting comfort.

- In what area of your life or in what relationship do you need to ask God to grant you humility?
- Is there someone you need to humbly approach and ask for forgiveness?
- Is there an area you need to surrender to God and no longer seek your will, but to trust in Him for His will to be done?

**Prayer:**

God grant me the ability to see myself as You see me. Yet protect me from what I find in my own heart, for surely it is more awful than I can bear. Forgive me, and carry my burden of grief when I see my failings. And God, don't let me take credit for the good things You have given me. In Your mercy help me to see the pride in my own heart. Heal and renew my spirit; refine the passion of my heart; and help me to walk in humility.

**Day 17. Passion for God**

Matthew 21:9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Jesus entered Jerusalem before His death and resurrection on what we call Palm Sunday. It was the beginning of what is called "the week of Christ's passion". The word 'passion' comes from a Latin word which means 'suffering'. The suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross has always been referred to as The Passion. There is even a movie by that name. In modern times, we have come to apply the word passion to mean any kind of strong feeling, or commitment, even though it more properly it describes a suffering for some worthwhile thing.

In many ways we have lost this sense of the word, in part perhaps, because there is so little of this kind of passion left in the western world. We ascribe the word passion to how we feel about sports teams, music, or our political views. Would you be willing to suffer for those things?

How different is the passion of Jesus: directed by God and willingly accepted. Jesus actively chose His path and the sufferings that followed. In Jesus we see not only the full depth of God's passion for us and the suffering that was a necessary part of it, but also the full depth of one perfect human's passion for God (in Jesus): obedience that led to death.

How do we respond to God's call to follow Him? Are we passionate? Or passive? To walk with Jesus, who said, "take up your cross and follow me," we must accept God's direction and choose to follow the path laid out for us. This is a path of certain passion (suffering), but also certain hope because of the victory we have through Christ's resurrection.

- How are you passionate in your love for the Lord?
- In what areas do you actively choose God's ways and desire to live for Him?
- Or, do you passively follow Him?
- In what ways do others look at your life and see your passion and consuming love for Jesus?
- Ask God to enable you to passionately love and follow Him

**Prayer:**

Lord, thank You for Your passionate love for me that You would die for me. And thank You for Your passionate love for the Father, that You would obey Him, even to death. Lord, I am so often harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd—how can I find my way unless You help me? Have mercy on me. Lead me Lord. Come, and give me the strength I need to follow You in doing the Father's will. Bless the time I give to You this week. Pour Your blessing over me. Give me a passionate love equal to Yours.

**Day 18. The Suffering Christ**

When we think of Jesus' death on the cross we also remember all those who were together with Him in the last days. Imagine being in the disciples' shoes during what was certainly the darkest period of their lives. Through the Scriptures we see Jesus' followers as they fall asleep, betray Him, deny, flee, despair and generally fail to "get it." Imagine what it would have been like for them to watch their friend, mentor, King, their Savior, be arrested, whipped, humiliated, stripped naked, crowned with thorns and hammered to a wooden cross. The week before Christ's death is often referred to as Holy Week but it looks very unholy.

Jesus knew that by dying, the Jews could not only be saved from the perceived tyranny of any military power, but from a far worse tyranny, that of sin and evil. Jesus chose the path of suffering and death so that they—and we—could be free forever from the punishment due to us because of the evil in our hearts. He took our place on the cross.

Because of Jesus' suffering, we also have an advocate when we suffer. No matter what we are going through, no matter how tough or terrorizing, one thing is sure: Jesus understands. He has endured far worse, for our sake. When we are tempted to wonder, "Where is God and why won't he rescue me?" Remember, Jesus has experienced the limit of suffering and He is able to meet you where you are.

**Prayer:**

Father, teach me Your way this week. Teach me how to leave my selfish, sinful ways at the foot of the cross, and teach me how Jesus my Savior is willing to bear those sins in His own body and be punished for them. Lord, how can I thank You for this great salvation? I worship You and Your amazing power: Jesus is greater than death, and could not be conquered. When He died, I knew that my sins were destroyed: it happened "once for all time." When You raised Him three days later, You taught us that we too could be raised. I confess my many sins Lord Jesus: I lay them down at the foot of the cross. I turn away from them and ask You to give me a new way of living in the world. Walk with me this week, Father. Teach me Your way.

**Day 19. Love**

John 13:3-5 NLT Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

At the last supper Jesus washed the disciples' feet. He also gave them a new commandment, "Love one another as I have loved You." The disciples don't fully comprehend how deeply Jesus has loved them. After all they had been through, it took a king on His knees with a towel around His waist to prove to them the loving, servant heart of God. What if we humbled ourselves to serve one another. Not just those we want to serve but those we have difficulty serving.

We live in a very proud and egotistical culture. It is now considered acceptable and even normal for people to promote themselves, to praise themselves, and to put themselves first. Pride is considered a virtue by many. Humility, on the other hand, is considered a weakness.

The preoccupation with self-esteem, self-love, and self-glory is destroying the very foundation of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus repeatedly taught against pride, and with His life and teaching He constantly exalted the virtue of humility.

Sadly, too many people stand on dignity when they ought to be kneeling at the feet of their brother or sister. The desire for prominence is death to love, death to humility, and death to service. One who is proud and self-centered has no capacity for love or humility.

When you are tempted to think of your dignity and your prestige, remember Jesus, the son of God, kneeled down and washed the feet of his disciples. Also remember, Love has to be more than words. The apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:18, "Let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth". Love that is real is love expressed in activity, not just words.

- Whose feet do you need to wash in humility and love?
- In what areas of your life and in what relationships do you need His Spirit of love and humility?
- How can you serve others, especially those you are the closest to? How can you grant another the peace He has freely given us?

**Prayer:**

Wash me clean Lord. I want to receive all You have for me. I am blessed and honored when You serve me; I am humbled by Your humility. Help me remember Your healing and cleansing. Don't let me forget my salvation. In darkness help me call on Your name. Jesus. In darkness, be the light of my heart; may I never be afraid. I am longing for Your sunrise, Jesus. In Your mercy, give me the gift of hope, and by Your love, help me to love others. Teach me Your way in the coming days. Help me to understand how You have loved me, and how You love me still.

**Day 20. Encouragement in Betrayal**

Luke 22:47-48 "While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

The phrase that hurts me most for Jesus in this verse is "one of his twelve disciples." Jesus is betrayed by "one of his own." Not only that, he was betrayed by an act of love. Everything about this event is hurtful and horrifying. How can someone with whom you've shared your most intimate moments and deepest truths give you up to those who hate you? Unfortunately, it happens all too frequently. However, if there is any good news to be gained from this text is this: when we go through such trials, we can be assured that Jesus knows our pain and lovingly draws alongside us to comfort us. He has been there. He has suffered excruciating pain that comes with disloyalty or the betrayal of one of his closest friends. So in our hurt, let us draw near to him and know that he is there to help us make it through our hours of deepest despair.

Have you ever experienced the pain of betrayal?

Are you over it or still struggling with betrayal?

**Prayer**

Father, thank you for being so close and personal. Thank you for not being far off and detached from me. Thank you for experiencing our earthly pain when Jesus was one of us. I now draw near to receive your grace and help in my time of need. In the name of Jesus, my Lord and Savior, I pray. Amen.

**Day 21. Victory**

Luke 23:46 Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Father into your hands I commend my spirit and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

As we finish our 21 days of fasting and praying what better scripture to reflect on than Luke 23:46. These are the final words Jesus uttered on the cross. These are the last words Jesus says before he "gives up the ghost" and dies. "

The word "commend" means to commit, entrust, or commit the keeping of. Jesus has nearly bled to death, nails through his hands that fix him on the wood of the cross, nails through his feet, hanging there, naked, barely able to gasp, and probably suffocating slowly to death. Jesus, takes charge of his life. He takes his life out of the hands of his tormentors and places his life in the hands of his father. He refuses to let his crucifiers have the last words.

Jesus' final words are not words of a victim. We live in a culture of victimization. It is good that we recognize injustice and the fact that injustice leave scars in the lives of those who are victims. But victimization should not be something that forever names us. To be a perpetual victim is to always have your life named, claimed, and determined by the victimizer. It is to give the perpetrator of injustice power over who you are.

As we come to an end of this 21 day time of fasting and praying, let us commend our lives or entrust our lives into the hands of God Almighty. Let us be like Christ and let God determine the purpose for us. Let us also remember that we are not victims but victors. Just like our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Whatever and who ever tried to keep us down, thanks be to God we did not stay down. We were not destroyed or defeated. We have the victory in Christ Jesus

\* What are some things that have happened in your life that could have affected your life in a negative way but God gave you victory over it?

\* Are you struggling in an area you suffered victimization?

**Prayer**

God I thank you that I am not a victim but I am a victor. No matter how things might look right now, I believe that you will turn it around for my good. The bible says in Romans 8:28 "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose". Even in the area of my struggle, I thank you in advance for victory. In Jesus name Amen