

## ABUNDANT LIFE FELLOWSHIP 21 DAYS PRAYER & FASTING

### \*WHY FAST?

\*First of all -Fasting is not a man- made discipline. Rather **God is the One who instituted & established** this discipline as a spiritual tool graced to us for the acquisition of spiritual breakthroughs in our life and the lives of others about whom we care deeply. It is a **biblical way** to truly humble oneself in the sight of God.

- King David said, ***"I humbled myself with fasting" (Psalm 35:13 NKJV);***

- The High Priest Ezra - proclaimed a fast, at the river Ahava, (why) ***that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. (Ezra 8:21 ESV).***

So much of fasting today has become about mere weight loss and a means to an end- that end: looking good or just being physically fit & healthy.

*Intermittent fasting* has been the craze.

Today in the USA, people have just become over-obsessed about the body- diet plans fill the market and social media- an increase in health clubs - 24 hr. fitness, Planet fitness, Freedom fitness, Gold's gym. Curves international, Zumba & Pilates.

Then there's nutritional supplements, organic foods,

foods enriched in poly-phenols (dark chocolate) plastic surgery, tummy tucks...Madness We've become obsessed with the body

Paul doesn't discount the value of physical fitness. But he certainly doesn't obsess over it either. The NASB renders the phrase - it's "of ***little profit***"

He points out that physical exercise is only temporary.

Intermittent fasting profits a little.

He compares that to the **eternal value of spiritual training. Paul takes a wholistic approach. Training of the Body yes, but of Mind, and Spirit. (the part of us that lasts forever)**

\****Fasting*** enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your **true spiritual condition**, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened.

***Jesus***, before starting his public ministry was in the wilderness. There he fasted 40 days.

***Matthew 4:1-4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*** ...

So, We, at ALF- encourage a partial fast commonly referred to as **“21 Day Daniel Fast.”**

### **WHAT IS THE DANIEL FAST?**

Let me give you a little background into the life of Daniel ... First of all, he was *only* a teenager (scratch that; *1 Tim 4:12*) A *highly favored* teen when he was taken to Babylon. Under the reign of King Jehoiakim, Jerusalem fell to the King of Babylon- King Nebuchadnezzar. He was a narcissistic king...

He and his 3 friends Hananiah, Mishal, and Azariah; who we know more commonly as (Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego) their Babylonian names given. These young were of noble or royal Judean lineage. But they certainly weren't spoiled or entitled teenagers... (Fiery furnace) Resulting in the glory of God!

Daniel, this God-fearing Jew who had an intimate walk with His Lord. He didn't fear men but only God. He was even so bold to tell the half-crazed and mad King Nebuchadnezzar in ***chapter 2:37 You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,***

Daniel was a man in constant communion with God. He delighted himself in His Lord. ***(Daniel 6:10 “Daniel always prayed to God three times every day, he bowed down***

***his knees to pray and praise God. Even though Daniel heard about the new law, he still went to his house to pray. He went up to the upper room of his house and opened the windows that faced toward Jerusalem. Then Daniel bowed down on his knees and prayed as he always had done.) ... as a result- thrown into a den of hungry lions ... Resulting in the Glory of God. (-show picture: of pre-K students praying at window)***

He affirms in prayer that God both ***“changes the times and the seasons” and removes kings and establishes kings.” (2:21)*** He recognized the sovereignty and supremacy of his God. In other words, **Daniel lived in the Awe of God. God was Awesome to Daniel.**

Listen church, God is not bound by the circumstances of human history, political exigencies or agendas, nor is He swayed or deterred by imperialistic ambitions. As the ***“Ancient of Days”*** who changes times, seasons, and rulers. God is above the flow of time and human history. As the Jews have been captured and engulfed once again by a Gentile nation, God reveals from the throne room of heaven His plan to fulfill His covenantal promises. These plans are assured and nonnegotiable and will be carried out in God's own perfect time by His messengers and heavenly agents.

**Two parallel worlds appear in the book of Daniel: One**

*earthly and temporal, the other heavenly and eternal.*  
 The Kings of the Earth (Monarchs, presidents, dictators, rulers of all sorts may hold sway at a particular time and a designated place, but the **Most-High God and His Messiah hold eternal sway over the whole universe and its destiny.**

This is the One True Awesome God in whom Daniel has placed His trust.

### **Why a 21 day fast?**

Turn with me to ***Daniel 10: 1-14***

**10** In the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) had another vision. He understood that the vision concerned events certain to happen in the future (we refer to these as eschatological events) times of war and great hardship.

<sup>2</sup>When this vision came to me, I, Daniel, had been in mourning for three whole weeks. <sup>3</sup>All that time I had eaten no rich food. No meat or wine crossed my lips, and I used no fragrant lotions until those three weeks had passed.

<sup>4</sup>On the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great Tigris River, <sup>5</sup>I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen clothing, with a belt of pure gold around his waist. <sup>6</sup>His body looked like a precious gem. His face flashed like lightning, and his eyes flamed like

torches. His arms and feet shone like polished bronze, and his voice roared like a vast multitude of people.

<sup>7</sup>Only I, Daniel, saw this vision. The men with me saw nothing, but they were suddenly terrified and ran away to hide. <sup>8</sup>So I was left there all alone to see this amazing vision. My strength left me, my face grew deathly pale, and I felt very weak. <sup>9</sup>Then I heard the man speak, and when I heard the sound of his voice, I fainted and lay there with my face to the ground.

<sup>10</sup>Just then a hand touched me and lifted me, still trembling, to my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup>And the man said to me, "Daniel, you are very precious to God, so listen carefully to what I have to say to you. Stand up, for I have been sent to you." When he said this to me, I stood up, still trembling.

<sup>12</sup>Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. **Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.** <sup>13</sup>But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. <sup>14</sup>Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come."

Eschatology refers to the study of the last things. Eschatological events constitute the main theme of this vision. Some events shown to Daniel took place in the third and second centuries BC. Other events predicted in chapter 11 have not yet come to pass and possibly refer to the time of the antichrist in the end times.

The speaker (an angel of the Lord-theophany-a manifestation of Christ towards man) mentioned was sent **in response to Daniel's prayer** ... (Cf: James 5:16- God Responds- when we pray!

)

God honored Daniel's intention to understand God and to humble himself. (A Broken and contrite heart is what God desires)

This angel also came to help Daniel understand the future, specifically regarding his people, the Jews. The "*prince*" [Hebrew: *Sar*] "one who commands" ...of Persia - likely refers to *an angelic being* capable of standing against God and having a territorial assignment, not to the earthly "prince," Cyrus. The conflict is in the spiritual realm (cf: Eph. 6:12) This opposing angel had withstood God's messenger for **twenty-one days** – which, not coincidentally- was the same duration of time during which Daniel was mourning, fasting, and praising and praying. God's messenger also mentioned **being left there with the kings of Persia**. (spiritual-beings whose purpose was to frustrate the purposes of God), implying that he had contended additionally with multiple spiritual

rulers over Persia. The word "*prince*" is also used to identify Micheal, a high-ranking archangel. As one of the chief princes, or archangels. Micheal intervened and apparently ended the standoff so that his colleague could go to Daniel.

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## 7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting and Prayer

**STEP 1:** Set Your Objective Why are you fasting? **Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation?** Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. **Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.**

**STEP 2:** Make Your Commitment. Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15) For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Seek God and talk with your family (it's intuitive and helpful if the entire family is on same type of fast) on the type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often). What physical or

social activities you will restrict. How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word.

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

**STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually** **The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance.** Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart: Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins. *Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).* Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4). *Make restitution* as the Holy Spirit leads you. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15. *Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master;* refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2). *Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others* (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13). Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6). Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17).

**STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically** Fasting requires reasonable precautions. **Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.** Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast. Avoid drugs, even natural herbal drugs and homeopathic remedies. Medication should be withdrawn only with your physician's supervision. Limit your activity. Exercise only moderately. Walk one to three miles each day if convenient and comfortable. Rest as much as your schedule will permit. Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety. Expect some physical discomforts, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness, or the "blahs." Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches. Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness. The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

**STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule For maximum**

**spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.**

Morning – Before work Begin your day in praise and worship. Read and meditate on God’s Word. Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to Philippians 2:13. Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, your church, your community, your country, and beyond. Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will. Noon – Lunch break Return to prayer and God’s Word. Take a short prayer walk. Spend time in intercessory prayer for your community’s and nation’s leaders, for the world’s unreached millions, for your family or special needs. Evening Get alone for an unhurried time of “seeking His face.” If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer. Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus. When possible, begin and end each day on your knees with your spouse for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone. A dietary routine is vital as well. Dr. Julio C. Ruibal – a nutritionist, pastor, and specialist in fasting and prayer – suggests a daily schedule and list of juices you may find useful and satisfying. Modify this schedule and the drinks you take to suit your circumstances and tastes. 5 a.m. – 8 a.m. Fruit juices, preferably freshly squeezed or blended and diluted in 50 percent distilled water if the

fruit is acid. Apple, pear, grapefruit, papaya, watermelon, or other fruit juices are generally preferred. If you cannot do your own juicing, buy juices without sugar or additives. 10:30 a.m. – noon Fresh vegetable juice made from lettuce, celery, and carrots in three equal parts. 2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. Herb tea with a drop of honey. Avoid black tea or any tea with caffeine. 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Broth made from boiling potatoes, celery, and carrots with no salt. After boiling about half an hour, pour the water into a container and drink it. Tips on Juice Fasting Drinking fruit juice will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy. The taste and lift will motivate and strengthen you to continue. The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth. Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach’s sake. Avoid caffeinated drinks.

When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being. STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in

continued good health. Here are some suggestions to help you end your fast properly: Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon. While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following: First day: Add a raw salad. Second day: Add baked or boiled potato, no butter or seasoning. Third day: Add a steamed vegetable. Thereafter: Begin to reintroduce your normal diet. Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruit such as watermelon and cantaloupe. Advance to a few tablespoons of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and baked potato.

**STEP 7: Expect Results If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers. A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh in-fillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God.** A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians. It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your

understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honour you for your faithfulness.

The Fast will begin on Sunday February 5<sup>th</sup> and go until Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup>.

Reach App – Three week devotional guide

Also will be on Bible App – (you'll need to save that) Facebook ... Paper Copy as well.

**“In Jesus Name” (video)**