

Fasting Bookmark Text



Side 1

Isaiah 58

God's Chosen Fast

In Isaiah 58:6-8, God says He has chosen fasts that:

- ◇ Loosen the bonds of wickedness
- ◇ Undo heavy burdens
- ◇ Let the oppressed go free
- ◇ Break every yoke
- ◇ Give bread to the hungry and provide the poor with housing
- ◇ Allow the people's light to break forth like the morning
- ◇ Cause their health to spring forth speedily
- ◇ Cause their righteousness to go before them, and
- ◇ Cause the glory of the Lord to be their reward (or "rear guard").

Isaiah 58 is a model for the fruits God expects to see from genuine faith and devotion. Rightly used, fasting can help us present Him with those fruits.

Different Types of Fasts

Yes, Everyone Can Fast!

The Absolute Fast. Abstaining from solids or liquids but not from water.

The Partial Fast. Abstaining from certain foods (such as meat) or abstaining from all foods for a portion of the day.

John Wesley Fast. Eating only bread and drinking only water.

The Jewish Fast. Abstaining from food only from sundown to sundown.

Liquid Fast. Abstaining from solid food but allowing for liquids, such as fruit juice.

Media Fast. A fast that involves abstaining from exposure to the media, especially social media.

Phone Fast. A fast that involves abstaining from the use of your mobile phone.

Widow's Fast. A fast to provide for the needs of others, especially their humanitarian needs such as food and clothing.

So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer (Ezra 8:23)

A Season of Seeking and Sacrifice

50 days of fasting and prayer

February 25 – April 15

We pray for ourselves and on behalf of others. When we pray in identity with others, we acknowledge our place amidst a sinful people. Let us pray like this . . .

Monday—That governmental leaders will be examples of righteousness to our society; that they would experience God’s wisdom in their deliberations; that they may advance God’s justice; that they would be divinely restrained from hindering the service and worship of Jesus Christ; that they would come to know, honor and follow Christ.

Tuesday—For solid, God-centered relationships among family members; for families dismantled by divorce to be healed; that Christ’s forgiveness would undo the evils of unresolved anger; that parents would be bold to instruct their children in God’s way of living and lead their families to pray together.

Wednesday—Prosper those who base business practice in righteousness and virtue; for the gospel to spread in the marketplace; to frustrate plans which escalate injustice; to shake the dominion of gods of mammon and greed; to free those trapped in empty pursuits.

Thursday—Move quickly and act on behalf of the poor. In your awesome goodness we ask you to lift and exalt and honor the poor with new dignity. Grant those who are wealthy the honor of extending your hand of blessing.

Friday—For God’s healing touch to be upon the sick and elderly of our community; that they would be comforted; that God would provide financial needs; for their caregivers and families; that many will renew their trust in Christ and follow Him boldly, even in affliction.

Saturday—Help us to turn together as a community, from the patterns of hatred, fear and anger; remove violence from our land.

Sunday—Heal the divisions that may exist between pastors, churches and denominations. Pray that the world will see the corporate Body of Christ love one another.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN PRAYER



- 1. Recognize the appointed leader of the prayer meeting.** Look to this person to give direction.
- 2. Use prayers that bless, are biblical, and brief (the 3 B's).**
 - ◇ Bless: Are others built up or torn down? (See 1 Corinthians 14:26)
 - ◇ Biblical: Does my prayer align itself with the Word of God? (See John 15:7)
 - ◇ Brief: Am I respectful of others who also want to pray? (See Matthew 6:7)
- 3. Be sensitive to others in the group who may be from various religious backgrounds, doctrine, and giftings.** What is appropriate in your own personal prayer time may not be appropriate when you are praying with others.
- 4. Direct prayers God-ward.** Avoid prayers that teach, counsel, or give information to others in the group.
- 5. Agree in prayer.** Bring your thoughts into captivity. Do not let your mind wander. Instead of thinking about what you are going to pray next, listen to the one praying. Giving a sincere word of agreement such as “yes” and “amen” can stir faith in the one praying.
- 6. Speak up when leading out in prayer.** This enables others to come into spiritual agreement with you. It is important to pray not only with humility but also with boldness and confidence.
- 7. Model faith-filled prayers.** Pray with an attitude of expecting a miraculous answer. Focus on God’s faithfulness and ability rather than the problem.
- 8. Flow with the spirit of prayer as you discern the direction of the Holy Spirit (repentance, thanksgiving, praise, warfare).** Exercise caution when changing the subject or direction of prayer once a topic or emphasis has been established. Generally speaking, we should saturate a subject in prayer until the level of faith for it has been exhausted. If you are in question about changing the course of prayer, wait for the leader to do so.
- 9. Assume that all matters of prayer are confidential.** To share even with a close friend or spouse could violate the trust of another person. If you want to share a request outside the prayer group, ask the person who requested prayer.

Two-Hour Concert of Prayer Suggested Format



Following the pattern of concerts of prayer over the past 250 years, as well as prayer movements emerging nationwide and worldwide today, here is one model of a format for a two-hour Concert of Prayer. The approach provides not only a satisfying experience during a prayer Concert, but can be adapted back in the churches, fellowships and ministries from which we come—so that the vision and ministry of united prayer may spread.

Celebration (10 minutes)

Praise in hymns and choruses, focused on awakening and mission
Reports of God's answers to prayers offered up during previous Concerts
Prayers of praise for God's faithfulness, for His Kingdom, for His Son

Preparation (20 minutes)

Welcome to the Concert
Overview: Why are we here?
Biblical perspectives on what we're praying toward (i.e., awakening, mission)
Preview of the format
Teaming-up in partners and in huddles

Dedication (5 minutes)

Commitment: to be servants through prayer and to be used in answer to our prayers
Thanksgiving: for the privilege of united prayer and for those with whom we unite
Invitation for Christ to lead the Concert and to pray through us
Hymn of praise

Seeking for Fullness/Awakening in the Church (30 minutes)

In partners—for personal revival
In huddles—for awakening in our local churches and ministries
As a whole—for awakening in the Church worldwide
Pause to listen to our Father

Chorus

Seeking for Fulfillment/Mission Among the Nations (30 minutes)

In partners—for personal ministries
In huddles—for outreach and mission in our city
As a whole—for world evangelization
Pause to listen to our Father

Chorus

Testimonies: What has God Said to Us Here? (10 minutes)

On fullness (awakening)
On fulfillment (mission)

Grand Finale (15 minutes)

Offering ourselves to be answers to our prayers and also to live accordingly
Prayer for God's empowerment in our own lives for ministry
Prayer for prayer movements locally and worldwide
Offering praise to the Father who will answer our Concert of Prayer
Leave to watch and serve "in concert"

Guidelines for Interdenominational Prayer and Worship Gatherings



The multicultural and religious traditions of each participant will greatly influence the spiritual atmosphere of any prayer meeting. For this reason, our foremost priority must be to focus on the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to walk in an attitude of love (1 Corinthians 13) and humility (Philippians 2:1-18). We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 2:1-6).

We desire that you feel a complete freedom to worship our Lord during this meeting. Feel free to sit, stand, raise your hands, kneel or anything else you believe God is leading you to do. We only ask that you be sensitive to the diversity of religious Christian traditions represented at the Summit by keeping all activities both in word and deed on scriptural foundations (1 Corinthians 14:40).

If your natural style is highly expressive, or if you normally use a prayer language, please be considerate of those whose style may be more modest, so as not to distract or offend your brother. We are not expecting one style of worship or prayer to subordinate to another. We are confident that all attending the summit will conduct themselves in a spirit of humility, regarding one another more important than themselves (Philippians 2:3, 4). Our spirituality is not measured by our spiritual giftedness or our doctrinal understanding but in our love expressed toward one another. In all things love is patient, kind, is always forgiving and forbearing (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Be sensitive to the length of your prayers, allowing everyone the opportunity to pray. Please do not counsel, correct, or condemn anyone in your prayers. Let us seek to focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ and to edify one another in love.

The Harmony of Interdenominational Praying

A good way to help people visualize how to pray together was developed by Every Home for Christ (Dick Eastman).

The moment we unite in prayer we become a symphony. As such:

- ◇ We blend together in unity respecting the fact that we represent all of Christ's body.
- ◇ We realize that, like a symphony with its different instruments, there are a wide variety of traditions when it comes to prayer.
- ◇ We commit ourselves to accepting one another as we are, while disciplining ourselves to use wisdom and caution if we think anything we might do would offend a brother or sister.

[Taken from 1999 "Code of Conduct" Arizona Prayer Summit and AD 2000 Movement Memo]

All Night Prayer

The Watch of the Lord



"A church has a Watchmen Ministry when there is in place, a (1) warning system to inform people of God's command for the hour, or an impending attack by the enemy; (2) a strategic plan to sound the alarm and take appropriate action; (3) a designated meeting place for regulated and focused prayer, preferably as 24 hours of praise and prayer." Matt 25: 13; Lev. 6:13
Julie Touvell, Prayer Coordinator, The Valley Cathedral

God needs the prayers of His people—not only in conferences and weekly prayer meetings, but continuously. Today, thousands of Christians worldwide are meeting corporately to spend the night in prayer, fasting, and worship. They are establishing "The Watch of the Lord" for their families, pastors, churches, and cities. Historically, and biblically, "The Watch" is a military term used to define segments of time during which sentries would guard their city from harm, alert citizens of approaching enemies, or announce approaching ambassadors of goodwill. These guards would remain until their "watch" was complete and another replaced them.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for "watch" is *gregoreo*. It means to be awake or be vigilant—this is where we derive the term "prayer vigil." Webster's dictionary defines watch as keeping awake in order to guard, to give close observation, to be on alert.

Prayer vigils or watches can be scheduled to last all night, all day or for several days. Seven things combine into a wonderful mix that, when led by the Holy Spirit, create an atmosphere conducive to the presence of God: praise, worship, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession, prophecy and proclamation.

One church's all night watch schedule looked like this: (You and your church leadership can plan a schedule suited to your prayer focus)

8:00 p.m.	Worship
9:00 p.m.	Motivational teaching on prayer
9:30 p.m.	Prayer for worldwide revival
10:30 p.m.	Break
10:45 p.m.	Worship
11:30 p.m.	Prayer for the local church body, pastor and leadership
Midnight	Quiet, individual prayer and reflection
1:00 a.m.	Special prayer requests for the city, schools, police force, government agencies
2:00 a.m.	Break
2:15 a.m.	Scripture proclamation/repentance for the nation.
4:00 a.m.	Worship
5:00 a.m.	Testimonies, thanksgiving and communion service
6:00 a.m.	Concluding worship and praise

The right combination of flexibility and structure keeps the meeting focused and open to the Holy Spirit. Following are some suggestions for organizing a successful all night prayer watch.

- ◇ Take a nap before the watch begins and even during the watch if necessary
- ◇ Welcome children and youth – they can come with sleeping bags.
- ◇ Fast from food, sleep and socializing to give full attention to the Lord.
- ◇ Give permission for those who come to leave early if necessary.
- ◇ Incorporate worship with prayer to invigorate weary intercessors.
- ◇ Use flags, maps, globes, and pictures to assist in focusing prayer.
- ◇ Encourage times of silence to help the group wait on the Lord to determine His agenda.
- ◇ Consider ending your prayer time with communion.

Two Pillars of Prayer Meeting

GOD-CENTERED FORMAT	INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES
<p>Focus on God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Who He is -What He can do -Presence -Perspective -His View <p>Respond from the heart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -God-centered -Faith -Honesty -Repentance -Dependence -Praise <p>Seek first the kingdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Awakening -The lost -The backslidden -Missions -VBS <p>Present your requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sick -Marriages -Bereaved -Financial -Families <p>Close in celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thanksgiving -Proclamation -Praise -Declaration 	<p>Focusing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leader's words -Scripture -Music -Testimony -Drama <p>Participation activities</p> <p>NUMERICALLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ask people to have different roles in leading, testifying, reading Scripture, etc. -Singing -Small groups -Individually praying out loud all at once -Responsive reading -Large group sentence prayer, etc. <p>PHYSICALLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Come to the altar -Kneel -Stand in pairs -Banner rotation -Go to someone else during the prayer meeting -Writing a prayer card note -Prayerwalking <p>Ministering Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sincere love for one another -Praying for one another -Bearing each others burdens -Blessing one another -Encouraging unity

Your Plan For Prayer Meeting

GOD-CENTERED FORMAT	INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES
<p>Focus on God</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Respond from the heart</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>Seek first the kingdom</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>Present your requests</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>Close in celebration</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>	<p>Focus on God</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Respond from the heart</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>Seek first the kingdom</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>Present your requests</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>Close in celebration</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>

