

40 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING



Wednesday, February 29—Easter Sunday, April 8 2012

Dear Peace Church Family,

On Sunday, January 22, we heard about the great things the Lord had done in Rwanda—saving lost people, bringing deliverance, healing the sick and building the church. It was such a joy to report how our God was at work in that season of ministry overseas. In that same message, I announced that we would be entering a time of prayer and fasting during the forty days before Easter Sunday.

Though a few weeks have passed. I pray that many of us are still anticipating this season of seeking God together. If the issue has slipped off your radar, now is the time to recall and remember. Remember that the God who worked mighty things in Rwanda can do great things right here! The Gospel proclaimed is God's power unto salvation. As Jesus said, the fields are white for harvest. We must pray that the Lord will raise up laborers for that great harvest.

Over the last year, we have seen the Lord at work in our church. I believe he has been doing so much: convicting and inspiring our hearts through the Word, uniting us together in ministry, healing and renewing our hope for the future. It has been a humbling joy to be part of this with you. But I believe we have only begun to see the good things God has in store!

My prayer is that these 40 days will accomplish two mighty things in our midst:

First, I believe the Lord wants to ignite a deeper passion in our hearts for reaching out to lost people. Imagine what could happen if every person in our church was regularly praying for five lost or spiritually disconnected people? I believe our lives would be moved by deeper compassion and love. Our focus would become sharper, and our courage to witness would increase.

Second, I believe that the Lord wants us to gain a deeper hope for the Holy Spirit to move in our midst, saving, delivering and healing. Are you willing to pray and believe in faith that God can send his Spirit to touch lives, work in marriages, even heal bodies? Of course, the Holy Spirit has been doing this already. But can we gain faith for even more? Let us pray together for this. Let us pray for revived hearts and increased faith, a faith to believe God's promises in Scripture.

I encourage you not to miss this chance. Over the next forty days, let's join together. Let's do what the first Christians did, gathering together in prayer, expecting God's powerful response. All of this will culminate on Easter Sunday, as we celebrate the Lord's resurrection together. On that morning, we will proclaim the Gospel of God's glory! In faith, we can expect to see the Holy Spirit move, touching hearts, changing lives, saving souls. Are we in this together? I hope so!

For His Glory,

Pastor Adam

Fasting

Types of Fasting

Here is the key to any fast: You're not simply saying "No" to something you like. You're allowing that "No" to become a "Yes" to seeking God, who is much more valuable and satisfying than anything we could lay aside. You're saying, "Lord, I lay this aside so that I can seek you more fully. Lord, you are the true source of my life and joy. I turn to you!"

Fasting from Food: Here are a few ideas for you if you would like to fast from food.

A Chosen Days Fast: Determine a number of days during which you will only drink fluids. Please see above for information on fasting wisely.

A Daniel Fast: Taken from Daniel's example in Daniel 1:8-16, the Daniel Fast focuses on eating only vegetables and drinking only water.

A Designated Day Fast: Choose one day of the week that will be your day to fast, whether for a meal, from sunrise to sunset, or for the whole day.

A Designated Meal Fast: Choose one meal that you will skip during the forty days.

A Designated Food Fast: Perhaps there is a particular food item that you really love. Take these forty days, lay aside that food. In addition to the other prayer times you have set aside during these 40 Days, allow any cravings for your favorite food to be a reminder to pray.

Fasting from Other Stuff: Simply put, you might want to do a media fast (no television, movies, online), a Facebook fast, or some other kind of fasting from normal activity, allowing you time to pray.

Why pray and fast?

Source: <http://www.ccci.org/training-and-growth/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting/02-why-you-should-fast.htm>

If you do not already know of the power and importance of fasting, here are some very important facts:

- Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras. For example, Moses fasted at least two recorded forty-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast, "when you fast," not if you fast.
- Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the "first love" for your Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.
- Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."
- Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.
- The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you!
- Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience.
- Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life and make you a channel of revival to others.
- Fasting and prayer are the only disciplines that fulfill the requirements of II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

If you fast, you ... will discover more time to pray and seek God's face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sin, you will experience special blessings from God.

How should I pray and fast?

Source: <http://www.ccci.org/training-and-growth/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting/03-how-to-fast-safely.htm>

You may have a physical problem that would make fasting unwise or dangerous. Also, if you are under any type of medication, make sure you talk to your doctor before changing your regime. Prudence and caution are in order. When you are assured that you are in good health, you are ready to begin your fast.

In spite of the absolute safety and benefits of fasting, there are certain persons who should NEVER fast without professional supervision. For example:

- Persons who are physically too thin or emaciated.
- Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia, or other behavioral disorders.
- Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- Persons who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases, or who have heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other important organs.
- Individuals who take insulin for diabetes, or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing.

For more information, visit <http://www.ccci.org/training-and-growth/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting/09-maintain-nutritional-balance.htm>

Praying

The List: 5 X 5 X 5

During these 40 Days, we are encouraging everyone at Peace Church to do at least one thing: Accept the 5x5x5 Challenge. Compose a list of five people you know who need Jesus. Pray for them for at least five minutes, five days each week of the fast. See what the Lord will do!

Praying Scripture

Throughout Church History, God's people have allowed God's word to provide a vocabulary for prayer. Praying Scripture might be a new experience for you. The process is simple and, with time, will become a valuable part of your spiritual life.

Begin by reading through the passage once out loud. Then pray through each verse, allowing time between the verses for silence. During this time of silence, inwardly ask the Holy Spirit to apply the verse to your own heart. You can also specifically apply the passage to your life in prayer. For example, when praying through verse 1 of Psalm 51, you can pray the verse then pray something like, "Lord, in spite of my sin, I ask for your mercy. Please forgive me for the way I treated _____ yesterday. Have mercy, Lord"

For Cleansing and Forgiveness

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Psalm 66:17-20

I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue.

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

For Outreach Opportunities

Allow these two passages to help you focus your prayer, reading through, meditating and praying that the Lord will do this work through your life.

Romans 10:14-15

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Colossians 4:2-6

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.



Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

For the Holy Spirit's Power

In this passage, Jesus promises to send his disciples out and fill them with the power of the Holy Spirit. Meditate upon this passage and ask the Lord to empower you in that same way!

Acts 1:6-8

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

In this passage, we are able to join with an actual prayer spoken by the first Christians.

Acts 4:24-31

... they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

"Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Praying and Fasting Together

Meet Us at the Prayer Room

During the 40 Days, Pastor Adam and anyone else who can join him will be meeting in the Prayer Room. We want you to join us! In fact, our hope is that eventually we will need to move out of the Prayer Room because so many have committed to pressing in and praying during these prayer times.

Early Morning Prayer

Wednesdays 6:30 am-7:30 am

Lunch Hour Prayer

If your health will allow it, consider skipping lunch and spending time in prayer with us on Wednesdays. You can pray and fast at your own workplace, or you can join with Pastor Adam and anyone else who comes to our Lunch Hour Prayer

Wednesdays 11:45 am-12:30 pm

Sunday Morning Prayer

Every Sunday, 9:00-9:20 am, in Room 202-203 (adjacent to the Worship Center), the Prayer Team meets to pray for the worship service. Please join them if you can.

Weekly Video Encouragement

Each week during the 40 Days, Pastor Adam will be posting a short video encouragement. This will be posted to the church Facebook wall.



6950 Cherry Valley Road • Middleville, MI 49333
(616) 891-8119 • FAX: (616) 891-8490
office@peacechurch.cc
www.PeaceChurch.cc