



2023 Prayer & Fasting Guide

*“Consecrate a fast, Proclaim a solemn assembly;
Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the
land To the house of the LORD your God, And cry
out to the LORD.”*

Joel 1:14

Welcome!

As we look to the next season for LBBC we eagerly want to seek God for wisdom, vision, and direction for what He wills next for us. This booklet has been collated to provide a guide for us in seeking God together through prayer and fasting. We have sought to provide a variety of options in how you can engage with this such that it is accessible for everyone. Let us seek God together in unity.

This guide has been based on one produced by CLM Church in Coventry in 2019.



Overview

In this section we will briefly cover the different ways you can engage in prayer over the coming weeks.

Personal prayer

Engage in prayer on an individual basis. You can set aside a portion of time each day to devote to prayer. A guide on how you could use this time has been included later in this booklet.

Pray with a friend

Why not commit to meeting with a friend or two to pray together throughout this time of seeking, maybe you will continue it afterwards!

Home groups

Home groups provide a wonderful opportunity to pray together. Perhaps agree together how you wish to pray each week as we seek God for vision, for our new minister, or for one of the other topics suggested in this guide.

Church prayer meetings

From 15th January we will be hosting weekly prayer meetings before church each Sunday. These will run from 10:00-10:30 in the vestry (or we will find a different location if we can't all fit in the vestry!)

We will also continue to run our prayer meeting on the final Saturday of each month 19:00-21:00.

Fasting

During this time of seeking we are encouraging you to introduce fasting as part of the process. Remember, Jesus said "when you fast", not "if you fast"! We have included recommendations for how you can engage in this in different ways that makes it accessible for all.

How to approach this period of prayer

Ensure you prepare well

Make space in your diary

Clear time for prayer, for devotions, for worship, for waiting on God. Are the prayer meetings in your calendar? What times of the day will you set aside to have time alone with God? When will you meet up with someone else to pray?

Decisions on fasting

Consider how you would like to engage in fasting. Read through the tips provided later in this guide. It's easier to do when you plan it in.

Prayer topics

We have provided guidance on specific topics to pray into in this guide, however you may feel led to pray in to some more than others. What prayer mission has God laid ahead of you for this period?

Prepare what you will read and study over the period

You may find it helpful to work your way through a particular portion of the Bible, one of the recommended books, perhaps a certain sermon series.

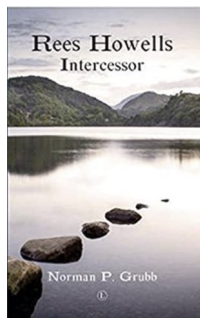
Treat yourself to a journal

This might be helpful to record what God says to you over the period of seeking.

Recommended Reading

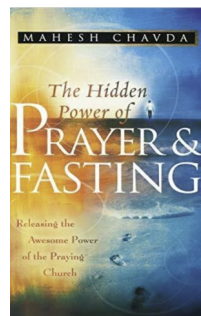
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– Norman Grubb



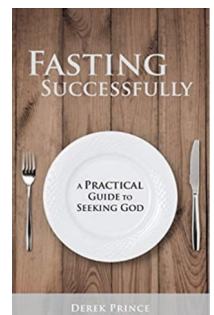
The Hidden Power of Prayer and Fasting: Releasing the Awesome Power of the Praying Church

– Mahesh Chavda



Fasting Successfully: A Practical Guide to Seeking God

– Derek Prince



Structuring time with God

Below is a suggested structure for how you might spend an hour with God. This is by no means the only way, but perhaps a helpful starting point for you! It is advisable to find somewhere quiet and out of the way for this. Remember how Jesus spoke of those in their inner room: *“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”* Matthew 6:6

Worship – 10 minutes

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.” Psalm 100:4

- Read out loud a Psalm or other passage of scripture focused on praising God
- Sing a worship song, you could play one from a CD or YouTube
- Thank God for who He is, for what He has done, and for how He has worked in your life and in the church – Psalm 103 might be a nice starting point

Be still – 5 minutes

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10

- Quieten yourself before God
- Open your ears – ask God to speak to you – Think of Samuel *“Speak, for Your servant is listening”* 1 Samuel 3:10b

Delve into God’s Word! – 15 minutes

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” Psalm 119:130

- Read from scripture, this may be from a plan you are working through in this period, or maybe you are feeling inspired to read something different

Be still – 5 minutes

“...so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

- Meditate on the Word – what is God saying to you through it?
- Pray on what you have read, ask God to use it to bear fruit in your life

Personal prayer – 10 minutes

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4:6

- Lift your personal situations to God, your hopes, any anxieties, your needs
- Pray in faith, trusting in God
- Include “The Lord’s Prayer”

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your Kingdom come, Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever, Amen*

Prayer for church – 10 minutes

- Pray for Long Buckby & Brington Baptist Church
- Use the daily prayer guides for specific topics
- Ask God for vision for the church
- Ask God to show you “what is yours to do” in the church, both now and in the future

Response – 5 minutes

- Thank God for all He has shown you through His word and in your times of prayer and listening to Him
- Write down anything God has shown you in your journal – you can refer to this in future prayer times, and bring along anything your feel is for the Church to the vision day

Church Prayer Topics

In the following sections you will see guided prayer topics. We would love for you to use these as you seek God each day. The Bible says *“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”* Matthew 18:19. Imagine what may happen if such a large group of us are praying in unity!

Topics:

- Vision for the church
- Spiritual growth within the church
- Relationships & unity in the Church
- Church services & activities
- The new minister & appointment process
- Those serving in the church
- Mission & the gathering church

Tuesdays – Spiritual growth within the church

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:16-19

- Pray for each of us at LBBC to have a desire to grow in God, to know Him more and become more like Him
- Pray that we would be empowered by the power of the Holy Spirit, and would be rooted in the love of Christ and filled with God
- Pray that all of us would know that we are sons & daughters of our Heavenly Father, and that we would become more like Jesus
- Pray that we would know the love of Christ for our church

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

- Pray that we would have an open heart, and be willing to confess our sins and repent from our sins, and be obedient to God according to His word
- Pray that each of us would be free from bad habits, bad ways of thinking, “the old man”, and that we would become more like Jesus
- Pray that each of us would grow a hunger and excitement for the Word of God, the Bible; and that we would allow God’s Holy Spirit to help us know it better

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews 11:6

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:18

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:42

- Pray that the Lord would increase our faith and belief in a miracle working God, both in our Church and in the community of Long Buckby and the surrounding areas
- Pray that we would have a desire to meet with each other, just as the early disciples did, and be committed to this time of prayer and fasting

Notes:

Wednesdays - Relationships & unity in the Church

“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” Hebrews 10:25

- Pray that we would be a welcoming church. A loving church. And a Christ-centred church.
- Pray that we would be encouragers, and builders up, not discouragers and tearers down! Like Barnabas – the Son of Encouragement!
- Pray for all ages (0-100 and over if we get there!) within the church to be able to feel at home and loved in our church family

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3

- Pray for God’s blessing & protections for our relationships within the church
- Pray that the unity of the Spirit will be maintained and that we would be protected from anything that would bring division within the church
- Pray that we would treat each other with gentleness and humility, patience and love
- Pray for godly friendships to flourish and that we would spur one another on to grow in our faith
- Pray that as God’s people we would be quick to forgive one another and resolve conflict immediately

“Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.” Hebrews 13:4

“Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”” Matthew 19:14

- Pray for godly marriages and protection over them, and for sexual purity among our young people
- Pray for healthy relationships between parents and children
- Pray that children and young people will grow up knowing that they are loved

Thursdays - Church services & activities

Worship

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." John 4:23

- Pray that our hearts would be open & expectant as we meet together
- Pray against any tactics of the enemy that would seek to distract people from entering into worship
- Pray for anointing on the worship team, technical team and those leading the service, that they may have the sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit
- Pray that God would touch the lives of everyone who comes
- Pray that as a church we would have a passion and a desire to meet with the living God

Word

"...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" Ephesians 1:17-18

- Pray for an anointing on the speaker for each service, and that peoples hearts would be receptive to the Word whenever it is preached; that our ears would hear what God is speaking personally to them.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring revelation and understanding through the preaching of the Bible on a Sunday, and also in the home groups
- Pray that we would be totally Bible centred and resistant to error
- Pray that we would not only be hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word!
- Pray for our children and youth; that they would have their own revelation of Jesus Christ to shape their lives.
- Pray for all those involved, both in the main body of the church, and in the children & youth work, that they would have fresh revelation on the Word, and be able to convey it to all who hear.

Fridays - The new minister & appointment process

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." Titus 1:5-9

- Pray that God would grant us a minister who fulfils His requirements
- Pray that we will be a church who supports the new minister in pursuing these requirements, building him up and encouraging him on the journey
- Pray that the minister would have a vision inline with the vision we have for our church, and that he would be able to build on it even further
- Pray for God's protection for him and his family in their pursuit of God's will in the transition

Notes:

Saturdays - Those serving in the church

“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.” Hebrews 12:12-13

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” Colossians 3:23

- Pray for all those who serve in the church particularly at present as many have stepped up to fill the breach!
- Pray for the deacons as they seek to maintain a healthy life in the church during this pastoral vacancy period
- Pray for those who serve with our children and young people
- Pray for the pastoral team as they pick up any pastoral needs
- Pray for the preaching team
- Pray for the admin team
- Pray for the welcome team, and those who serve us with refreshments after the services
- Pray for the fabric team
- Pray for the homegroup leaders
- Pray for the prayer ministry team
- Pray for those serving the community from the church

Notes:

Sundays - Mission & the gathering church

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” Matthew 28:19

“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” Acts 4:31

- Pray that we as a church, and individually, would be bold in sharing Jesus and leading people to Him
- Pray that our lives would cause those we meet to ask about Jesus and want to know Him
- Pray that as a church, we would be looking for ways to outreach in the community and surrounding areas
- Pray for members of your family and friends who don't know Jesus yet to come to know Him
- Pray for people in the village and surrounding areas to be drawn to Him, and that repentance, and faith in Him would follow

“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.” Matthew 25:35-36

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

- Pray that we would be engaged in meeting the physical and spiritual needs of those living in our village and surrounding areas
- Pray for our involvement with the Daventry foodbank, the Wednesday Winter Warmer, and our 3 chosen charities
- Pray for guidance as we seek to nominate new charities in 2023
- Pray that our eyes would be open to needs in our own congregation, and that we would be “cheerful givers”

Notes:

Fasting

This next section will cover an introduction to fasting, and the different ways you can engage with it.

What is fasting?

Simply, fasting is the practice of abstaining from food for a period of time with the objective of humbling yourself before God as you seek Him.

If you have access to YouTube I would heartily encourage you to look up the Derek Prince talk on fasting entitled “Self-Humbling Through Fasting” (see the last page for the link).

Are there different types of fasting?

There are 2 types of fasting we see outlined in the Bible, both of which are outlined below.

Abstaining from food

The normal fast is where you abstain entirely from food for a period of time. This is referred to on multiple occasions in both the new and old testament. This fast may be until a certain time in the day, for example fasting from breakfast and lunch. Or this may be for an entire day, or multiple days at a time. Whilst abstaining from food you may also want to keep what you drink very simple, for example just drinking water, or if you struggle with this perhaps using fruit juice or diluted cordials for a little energy boost! However you will be surprised at how easily you can do this kind of fast when you have your mind set on it with purpose.

The “Daniel” Fast

This fast is referred to in Daniel 10. Instead of abstaining from all food, the Bible tells us how Daniel abstained from “choice foods”. I have typically interpreted this in the past as a sugar free vegan diet, kept simple. If you choose this type of fast then see how God leads you in terms of what foods you feel are allowable. Daniel carried out his fast over a 21 day period.

What if I have a health condition that prevents me from fasting?

For those who have limitations due to health conditions or to allow them to take certain medicines, a Daniel style fast may be a better option, or abstaining over shorter times, for example just missing one meal. Alternatively, some people may choose to abstain from other things such as a “digital fast” where they keep away from TV, their mobile phone etc. This is still a way that you can humble yourself before God, which is the main aim of fasting.

Practical tips

If you have never fasted before then you may want to start fasting for a shorter period. For example up to 16:00 once or twice a week. For those who regularly fast you may feel led to undertake a longer fast, for example over a 3 day period. But please do ensure you are safe! Seek God on what the right fast is for you, He will sometimes lead you differently than how you might expect.

One caution is to think about your motivations on fasting. Sometimes it can be easy to slip into a “diet” mindset, where your motivation becomes “more about losing weight, than about seeking God. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus in this process. Please also be cautious if you are someone who struggles with an eating disorder that it does not become a route to play to that habit. Perhaps instead try a Daniel fast or digital fast.

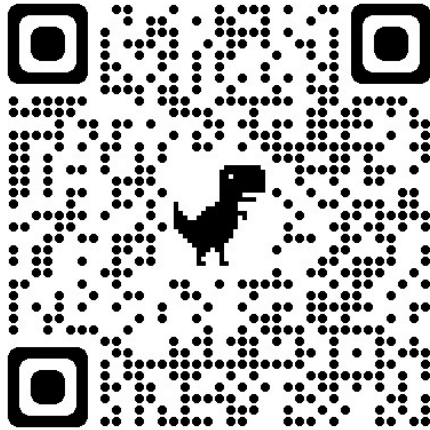
Ensure you make time for prayer during your time of fasting! This sustains you far better than food ever could as it keeps your mind on God. Also use the word, after all the Bible says, *“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* Matthew 4:4.

- Plan your fast well: Think ahead to when you plan to start and finish. If using the Daniel fast option, it may be helpful to create meal plans.
- If you start to feel fainthearted read Isaiah 58 from verse 6, this passage never fails to encourage on the benefits of fasting!
- Coming off caffeine & sugar: If you drink a lot of caffeinated drinks or consume a lot of sugar, you may experience headaches for a day or two from coming off them, but once you’re through you’ll be amazed at how good you feel! Stick with it 😊
- You may lack energy versus normal as you take in less fuel, so don’t plan in too much on your fast days, try to take them a little easier. For the same reason, you may also find you feel colder than normal – wrap up warm!
- If you find that not eating leads to bad breath consider cleaning your teeth more often, or using mouthwash or chewing gum.
- You may find that when fasting that you have heightened emotions. It isn’t uncommon for you to become more irritable. Fasting refines us, and part of the refining process is to bring the rubbish up to the surface, but trust that God is working through it and be aware so you can try and control this.

Finally, when returning to normal eating after fasting please do take it slowly. You won’t be used to eating much, so slowly reintroduce normal foods. The rate you do this will depend on how long you have been fasting for.

To access the recommended YouTube video on fasting either scan the QR code below or type the URL code into your internet browser:

<https://youtu.be/z0jhgste9ps>



A screenshot of a YouTube video player. The video title is "Self-Humbling Through Fasting" by Derek Prince. The video is currently at 0:01 / 59:17. The video content shows an older man with glasses, wearing a blue polo shirt, speaking and gesturing with his hands. The YouTube interface includes a search bar at the top, a play button, a volume icon, a progress bar, and a "Subscribe" button. The video has 1.1K likes and 300K subscribers for the channel "Derek Prince With Subtitles".

“...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”

Matthew 28:20

