

## Personal Thoughts:



# New Beginnings United Methodist Church

Birmingham, Alabama • A Place of Possibilities and Transformation

## A Pastoral Invitation to 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting January 7-27, 2019

### Introduction

God is always working in our lives; however, we are often consumed with the cares of life that we do not always pay attention. Prayer and fasting are two spiritual disciplines that keep our attention on the Spirit of God at work in our lives. In prayer, we seek to directly communicate with God. In fasting, we deny our bodies of certain necessities (such as food and liquid), enjoyments or pleasures, for a specified period of time for the purpose of building and strengthening our relationship with God. Even though we may be seeking certain blessings or requests, the point of prayer and fasting is not to sustain our will, but to submit to the will of God for our lives.

### Biblical Foundation

According to Biblical scholars, fasting as a way of connecting with God is mentioned at least 70 times in the Bible. Reasons for fasting vary, but there are three primary reasons for fasting: repentance (Deuteronomy 9:15-18), interceding for someone (2 Samuel 12:16-23), and preparing for something significant (Esther 4:16). One will also notice that fasting was an important discipline in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:1-4; 6:16-18) and the apostles in early church (Acts 13:1-3; 14:21-23).

### Our Purpose

There are several reasons for fasting; however, in this season, I am inviting those who are **physically able** and feel **called by God** to join me in 21 days of prayer and fasting to discern God's will and purpose for our lives. I believe that during this time, God will reveal extraordinary things for the Kingdom of God through our lives and the ministries of our church. **if you decide to fast, it is extremely important to consult with a qualified medical professional. If you are in poor health or if you have concerns about your ability to fast, first consult with a qualified medical professional.**

### Deciding What to Fast?

The type of fast you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats, and the only liquid he drank was water (Daniel 1). Others may decide to give up something like television, social media, internet, etc. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.



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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Prayer Guide

### Sunday—Our Hearts

*<sup>1</sup>So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.  
Romans 12:1 (GNT)*

Make worship and prayer the priority of your life. Express your complete dependence on God. Ask for a renewed passion for His presence and fresh revelation of His Word.

### Monday—Our Purpose

*<sup>28</sup>So we preach Christ to everyone. With all possible wisdom we warn and teach them in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature individual in union with Christ.  
Colossians 1:28 (GNT)*

Our purpose is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Pray for people to be saved, connected in a local church, disciplined and fulfilled in their ministry.

### Tuesday—Our Nation, State, and City

*<sup>1</sup>First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; <sup>2</sup>for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct.  
1 Timothy 2:1-2 (GNT)*

Pray for America and our elected representatives of our country, state, county and city, Pray for the Birmingham Metropolitan area. Pray for businesses, schools, police departments, fire and rescue services.

### Wednesday—Our Community

*<sup>14</sup>If my people pray to me and repent and turn away from the evil they have been doing, then I will hear them in heaven, forgive their sins, and make their land prosperous again.  
2 Chronicles 7:14 (GNT)*

Pray for the restoration of our communities—the communities in which we live and the community in which we worship. Pray for families, homes, and jobs. Pray that our communities become a place of security and prosperity for all our neighbors both near and far.

### Thursday—Our Family

*<sup>31</sup>they answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your family." ~ Acts 16:31 (GNT)*

Pray for God's blessing on your family (spouse, significant others, children, grandchildren, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins, etc.)

### Friday—Our Needs

*Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. <sup>7</sup>And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 4:6-7 (GNT)*

Believe God for answered prayer for your specific needs (finances, relationships, health, family members to be saved and other personal concerns).

### Saturday—Our Church

*To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of.  
Ephesians 3:20 (GNT)*

Pray for New Beginnings Church and our ministries. Pray for Pastor Cowser and his family; staff members and their families; those who serve on ministry teams. Pray that God will be so powerful among us that every seat in worship, Sunday school classes, and Bible studies will be filled with persons hungering and seeking a closer walk with God. Pray that lives are being transformed.