



# Church Call to 30 Days of Fasting & Prayer for Discernment

## Scripture & Prayer Guide

Week 1 July 17, 2022



### **30 Days of Prayer and Fasting**

During the worship service on Sunday, July 17, Pastor Chris called our UM Temple family to a time of prayer and fasting for 30 Days to help our leadership and church family discern what is God's will and direction concerning whether to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church or remain in the denomination. He stated that much more information will be given to the congregation about all the issues and facts concerning such a process in the coming weeks/months, but that we need to begin with prayer and fasting so as to make sure we are following God's leading. This email was created to give you some scriptures on fasting and also to give you a guide to

use, if you like, during your prayer time this week. What you fast is your choice, it can be anything you would choose to do without to help you focus in prayer. I would recommend you choose something you will really miss. It is the times you feel yourself missing whatever it is that should spur you to pray about our focus. So TV or Internet or just about anything can be fasted. But don't choose something easy that you won't really miss.

**Why would you choose food?** Fasting food provides *physical* reminders to pray. Every time you feel hunger pangs, pause and pray for God's discernment. This discipline teaches us that we don't need food as much as we think we do (not as much as we need God), and it also develops a more regular, habitual prayer discipline throughout the day (beyond any set aside time to begin or end each day).

**FIRST: YOU WILL STILL NEED WATER!** Even if you're fasting food, your body still needs water, so please don't let yourself dehydrate. If you're new to fasting, you can even drink a more 'solid' drink like milk or tomato juice.

If you choose to fast food, below are a couple of different approaches to food fasting to help you choose how to safely use this discipline:

- Fast for one 24-hour day each week. (This is a very traditional fast, but may be a lot to ask if you've never fasted before)
- Daily meal fast. Fast one meal every day for 30 days. (This may be an easier fast for some because the fasting period is relatively small, but more regular.)
- Wesley fast. John Wesley fasted once or twice a week, but his fasts were not exactly 24 hours. He would eat supper one night and eat nothing else until supper the next night. (This is a great way to fast if you'll be adding this to your regular disciplines beyond the 30 days.)
- Weekly meal fast. Fast one meal every week for the entire 30 days. (This would be a very good introduction if you've never fasted as a discipline before. I would recommend it be a meal you will really miss, though so you don't miss the benefit.)

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## Scriptural guidance for fasting:

- <sup>18</sup> Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, <sup>19</sup> “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth *months* will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.’ **Zechariah 8:18-19** \_\_*Fasting was a regular part of the special worship festivals set up by Yahweh.*
- <sup>14</sup> Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?” <sup>15</sup> And Jesus said to them, “**The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.** **Matthew 9:14-15** \_\_*If we are His disciples this includes us, all believers.*
- <sup>15</sup> Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, <sup>16</sup> Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber. <sup>17</sup> Let the priests, the Lord’s ministers, Weep between the porch and the altar, And let them say, “Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not make Your inheritance a reproach, A byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, ‘Where is their God?’ **Joel 2:15-17** \_\_*When there was a crisis or great uncertainty a fast would be called by the prophets or leaders to seek God’s intervention.*
- <sup>16</sup> “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face <sup>18</sup> so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. **Matthew 6:16-18** \_\_*It is not about others knowing you are fasting. It is your personal sacrifice, a discipline to help you focus on and enter into a deeper time with God.*

## Musical Suggestions:

**Singing can improve your prayer time (even if you're an awful singer).**

“He who sings prays twice.” – St. Augustine Ask God to draw near in song – you can do this alone if your voice is not so great, you're singing for Him not people, anyway.

**Worship Song Links: (can be used to begin or end set aside times of prayer)**

- **Hymn (instrumental with words): Search Me Oh God and Know My Heart Today** [▶ SEARCH ME OH GOD AND KNOW MY HEART TODAY - HYMN](#)
- **Hymn (piano and voice with words): Open My Eyes, That I May See** [▶ Open My Eyes, That I May See \(Weekly Hymn Project\)](#)
- **Hymn (modern version): Lord, I Need You** [▶ Matt Maher - Lord, I Need You \(Official Lyric Video\)](#)
- **Kid's Praise Song: I'm Trusting You** [▶ I'm Trusting You | Roar VBS | Group Publishing](#)
- **Contemporary Song: Word of God Speak (Mercy Me lyric video)** [▶ Word Of God Speak - MercyMe Lyric Video](#)
- **Worship Song (modern): Build Your Kingdom Here** [▶ Build Your Kingdom Here - Rend Collective | LYRIC VIDEO](#)

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## Prayer Guide

**God will turn His ear toward you...**

**Read:** Psalm 40 ([click here to read Psalm 40 online](#))

### Prayer Model (ACTS model):

**Adoration:** Praise God that He alone is able to hear all our cries spoken and unspoken. (Praise is about God's character, not what he does. For what he does, see Thanksgiving below.)

**Confession:** Proclaim that He alone sees all your faults and poor choices and confess those sins, that are brought to your mind right now.

**Thanksgiving:** Thank God that He takes your sins and moves them far from you, as far as the East is from the West. Thank Him for other blessings that come to mind right now.

**Supplication:** Supplication is a big word for "asking." Lift these and other requests to God (the Scripture references are all links to read the passage online, or you could read them in your printed Bible):

- Your Word says that the beginning of wisdom is fear of You. Oh God, may I be in awe of you and realize how great and unfathomable you are. There is no one like You. ([Proverbs 9:10](#), [Jeremiah 10:6](#), [1Chronicles 17:20](#)) Help your church at Methodist Temple to fear you and grow in the Wisdom that only you can give.
- Lead me, Lord. Lead our church leaders and our entire church. Show us Your will and your way forward. ([Psalm 5:8](#), [Psalm 27:11](#), [Psalm 31:3](#)) Make your will perfectly clear and give us many confirmations in our own hearts individually and as a congregation.
- Unite our hearts in seeking you and not our own way. ([Proverbs 3:5-7](#))
- Bring healing to those in our congregation who are ill, struggling, lonely or lost. Help us to serve them in true Christian fellowship and strengthen your Church as we are available and obedient to You. ([James 5:14-16](#), [Ephesians 4:11-16](#))

**Thank you for committing to unite in prayer and fasting with UM Temple. God bless you and reveal His will to you. Amen.**