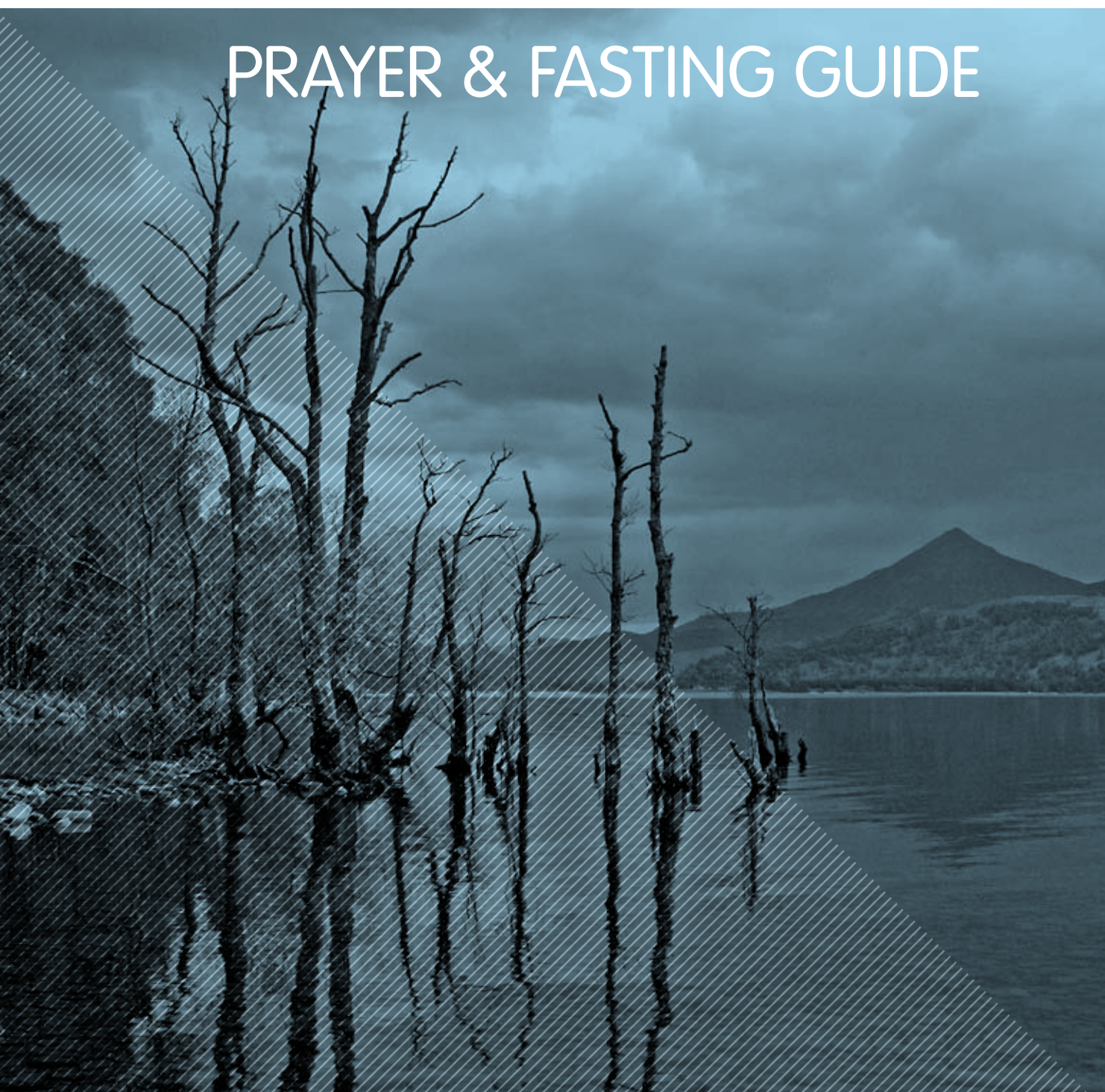


PRAYER, FASTING & SPIRITUAL FEASTING

PRAYER & FASTING GUIDE



PRAYER & FASTING

INTRODUCTION

At Mosaic, we are committed to seeing God transform our city and ultimately the nations of the world. This task will only be accomplished as we seek God together in prayer and fasting. In doing this we are not just acting obediently but also demonstrating our dependency on God to bring His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

Arthur Wallis said, "When a man (or woman) is willing to set aside the legitimate appetites of the body to concentrate on the work of praying, he is demonstrating that he means business, that he is seeking with all his heart, and will not let go of God until He answers."

Jesus desired for his disciples to pray. He taught them to pray and modelled a life of prayer. Before Pentecost the disciples waited and prayed and as they were baptised in the Holy Spirit, the early church gathered regularly to pray. Salvations were numerous, miracles were common and rooms were shaken with the presence of God. Prisoners were released from jail, everyone was filled with evangelistic boldness and the gospel spread like wildfire around the Roman Empire. And so it should be for the church today. We must pray and fast. Please use this guide to inspire faith to pray, fast and feast on God!

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Throughout history, God has called on His people to humble themselves and engage with the long forgotten discipline of fasting. Fasting is a spiritual weapon God uses to draw people closer to Him, advance His Kingdom, and spark revival in Leeds, the UK and the nations of the world.

Definition:

Fasting is feasting on God. Fasting is going without food in order to increase our appetite for God. Food is a wonderful gift from God but sometimes we need more of the Giver than the gift.

There are several different types of fasts in scripture:

1. Absolute fast - (Exo 34:28) no food or water Not recommended unless God really speaks to do this and with high accountability.
2. Complete fast - (Mat 4:2) no food, but take liquids
 - a. Water only
 - b. Juice and water
 - c. Broth, juice, and water
3. Partial fast (Dan 1:8)
 - a. Abstain from certain specific items (e.g. "I won't eat sweets for 2 weeks."); or
 - b. Eat only specified items (e.g. "I'll only eat bread and fruit for 2 weeks").

Daniel 1:8 'But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 12 "Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink."

PRAYER & FASTING

WHY FAST?

I. Jesus expects us to Fast

Jesus says, “When you fast” not “if you fast”. This means that fasting is just as much a part of being a Christian as praying and giving!

Mat 6:16-18

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

II. The Early Church Fasted

The Church fasted for Paul and Barnabus before they started their first missionary trip. Later, they would fast and pray before appointing Elders in the new churches they started.

Acts 13:3

‘So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.’

III. Fasting demonstrates Humility before God

Humility allows us to experience the grace of God, who delights in answering the prayers of His children. When we humble ourselves in prayer and turn from our sin, God promises to hear and answer us and bring healing to our nation.

2 Ch 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 heal their land.’

John Wesley said:

“Let our fasting be done unto the Lord with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven.”

Fasting also shows us what we are really like. When we take away food it tends to reveal our sinful nature.

Richard Foster says:

“More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other things.”

IV. Fasting makes us sensitive to the leading and power of the Holy Spirit

Fasting helps us rely on God for our day to day needs. It makes us more aware of our need for God to break in to our lives and work miracles!

Luke 4:1-2

‘Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.’

John Piper says:

“My spiritual drought ended, but this taste for the majesty of God only made me thirst for more of HIM.”

PRAYER & FASTING

HOW DO I FAST?

PRACTICALITIES

1. Start where you are and grow

Why are you fasting? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your fast. Once you know the reason for fasting, make a commitment for how long the fast should be and how much time you will devote to prayer.

2. If you have physical infirmity, ask your doctor about doing a fast

For some people it is wise to seek professional advice before fasting. Persons who are prone to bulimia, anorexia and other eating disorders should also speak to people you are accountable to. Women who are pregnant or nursing shouldn't fast. If possible talk to a doctor who is a Christian, and who believes in the wisdom of fasting.

3. Drink a lot of water

4. Set beginning and end times and stick to them

The Devil will try to defeat you in the middle of the fast by tempting you to move in pride: "I am getting holier by the day; I think I'll just go longer."

5. Have prayer targets

Try making a list, laminate it, and keep it with you. (e.g. Families' salvation, God's provision, Mosaic, revival in UK, etc.)

6. Keep a journal

Write down your prayers, things that God says and how He is working in your life.

7. Be accountable

Be accountable with someone who is spiritually mature enough to ask the right questions appropriate to your particular case.

8. Replace meal and social times with prayer and the word

Have a plan for prayer. (e.g. "I will pray for 15 minutes during meal times.")
Have a plan for the Bible. (e.g. "I will read Philippians once a day during this fast.")

9. Walk by faith, not feelings

Firstly, there will be times where you will feel like this is worthless and nothing is happening. Focus on the fact that you are obeying God and have a heart to know Him.

Secondly, there will be times when you will feel bad physically. (Headaches, nausea, etc.) Determine ahead of time that you will let these times lead you to desperation for God.

10. Worship, sing and pray throughout the day

Revel in God. Abide in Him!

11. Use wisdom when breaking the fast Soup, juice and crackers, light bread, baked potato, fruit.

WHAT SHOULD I PRAY FOR?

Personal Spiritual Breakthrough

Confess sin and ask for God's forgiveness and grace

Ask God to give you more passion to follow Jesus
Ask the Holy Spirit how he wants to make you more Christ like

Pray for friends, neighbours and family members who do not know Jesus

For Leeds

Pray for the impact God could have in the city centre and Holbeck
Pray for people to be saved and added into our church family
Ask God to bless our mission groups and all their mission endeavours
Pray passionately for our communities to be changed
Pray for families and young people to be reconciled and restored
Pray for internationals and refugees to find a home and new family with us
Ask God to let the under-privileged experience the healing power of Jesus
Pray for all the Churches in Leeds

For the UK & the Nations

Pray for revival in our country and for the Gospel to reach every nation, tribe and tongue
Pray for a specific country that God gives you a burden for
There are still over 5,000 people groups that have never heard about Jesus - Pray for workers to be sent to these people
God spoke to our New-frontiers family of churches to ask God for a 1,000 churches in the UK - Pray for church planting leaders and teams to be raised up and sent out
Pray for all our MTS students and ask God to ready them for Church planting in the UK and abroad

Recommended Reading

Celebration of Discipline,
Richard Foster

God's Chosen Fast,
Arthur Wallis

A Hunger for God,
John Piper