

VOX FALL FASTING PLAN

A WEEK SET APART FOR GOD

In today's culture, fasting is often used to lose weight, lower the risk of various diseases, and improve one's overall health—all good things. However, as followers of Jesus, we choose to fast for spiritual purposes. There are numerous catalysts for prayer and fasting. Perhaps it is a desperate or grievous need we are facing or a sin pattern we long to be free from. Maybe we are just finding our souls hungry and thirsty for more of Jesus. Or we are crying out to God on behalf of those we love who are far from him. Whatever the reason, the focus is less about results and more about deeper communion with Jesus. Simply put, fasting and prayer is a Christian's whole body and natural response to the desire to genuinely follow Jesus.

This week, our community is intentionally setting aside time to grow in the spiritual practices of prayer and fasting. We are focusing on two main components during this week. First, we will cultivate a **deeper understanding of prayer and fasting together**. Second, both personally and in community, we will **apply that understanding through the spiritual practice of prayer and fasting**.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE WEEK

- ***Make room in your schedule.*** Everyone has responsibilities in life that cannot be neglected, such as our jobs or caring for family. If you choose to engage in one or both main components within this plan, it will mean changing how you spend your leisure time during the week. Here's a brief overview of the week to help you schedule your days:

First component: A Deeper Understanding of Prayer and Fasting

On these days, you are provided with a 60-minute podcast about fasting. The purpose is to fuel your desire and sharpen your understanding of why prayer and fasting are essential spiritual practices for every follower of Jesus.

Second component: Apply Understanding

On these days, you will apply what God has been speaking to you in the spiritual practice of prayer and fasting. A simple devotional format with scripture and reflection prompts is provided on each fasting day.

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- **Set your purpose and share your vision.** Fasting can be a struggle when our timing is random, impromptu, or aimless. Ask God to help you set your purpose for the week. Write it out.
 - **Pick your fast.** Each of these choices suggests fasting from food and drinking only liquids. However, if you have a persistent medical condition, please consult your physician first.
 - **Full fast.** Twenty-four hours, no food, only liquids to drink.
 - **Partial fast.** Skip one or two meals on the fasting day.
 - **Do this in community.** Invite a trusted friend to partner with you in this process. Share your purpose or vision for the week. Connect often. Pray for one another.
 - **Make a plan to pray with at least 2–3 other people this week.** After spending your week growing in both understanding and application of prayer and fasting, schedule time to pray with others. This could be in your Community Group, in someone's home, or 30 minutes before service on Sunday at your campus.
 - **Approach the whole thing with faith.** Whatever your experience is with fasting – we are all growing! The goal is not perfection – it's union with Jesus. Don't give up. God is with you.
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SUNDAY, 9/22

Pursue a Deeper Understanding of Prayer & Fasting

Step One: Set your schedule. Which leisure activity will you abstain from today? Is it TV, social media, video games, or something else?

Step Two: Take time to learn. Use that leisure time to listen to today's podcast.

Step Three: After the podcast, journal what stood out to you in the teaching. How will you apply this during Monday's prayer and fasting? Surrender to God. Receive his grace.



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MONDAY, 9/23

Apply Understanding through Prayer & Fasting

TODAY'S FOCUS: Offering your whole self to God.

Use this **morning's devotion** during the time you normally eat breakfast.

- Read Psalm 16, then pray through your response to the following prompts.
- What does the psalmist mean when he says in verse two, "...You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you"? How does this truth apply to your life right now?
- What passage from this psalm is especially standing out to you? Why is that?
- Use the words of this psalm and craft your own prayer of surrender to Jesus. Carry this prayer with you today and whisper it to God often.

Instead of eating lunch, take this **midday pause** with Jesus.

- Read Romans 12:1–2, then reflect using the prompts below.
- The word *mercy* in this text refers to God's heart of compassion toward us. He is described in scripture as the *Father of mercies* (2 Cor 1:3). He manifested this mercy when he sent his Son Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins and reconcile us to God. How deeply does this truth live within you? Spend a few moments in silence. Invite God's Spirit to grant you a new revelation of this mercy.
- Use this QR code to end this time with worship.



Engage in this **evening devotional** when you normally eat dinner or later in the evening.

- Read Luke 12:22–31, then pray through your responses to the following prompts.
- What worries or anxieties in your life hinder your complete surrender to Jesus?
- What current needs would you like to ask God to meet right now?
- Who in your life struggles with anxiety? Spend time praying for them right now.

As you prepare to sleep, pray through this **evening's examen**.

- Begin with one minute of silence.
- Consider these questions: Did I depend upon God's nearness as I went about my day today? Or did I work from my own strength?
- Closing Prayer: My heart and my flesh may fail, but God, you are the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

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TUESDAY, 9/24

Pursue a Deeper Understanding of Prayer & Fasting



Step One: Set your schedule. Which leisure activity will you abstain from today? Is it TV, social media, video games, or something else?

Step Two: Take time to learn. Use that leisure time to listen to today's podcast. Ask God to prepare your heart and mind for Wednesday's prayer and fasting.

Step Three: After the podcast, journal what stood out to you in the teaching. How will you apply this during Wednesday's prayer and fasting? Surrender to God. Receive his grace.

WEDNESDAY, 9/25

Apply Understanding through Prayer & Fasting

TODAY'S FOCUS: Growing in Holiness

Use this **morning's devotion** during the time you normally eat breakfast.

- Read Galatians 5:16–26, then pray through your response to the following prompts.
- Verses 19–21 list specific behaviors or choices that are contrary to a life lived following Jesus. As you reread those verses, what is God prompting you to repent or turn away from? Pray that prayer now. Receive his forgiveness and cleansing.
- Verses 22–23 list the fruit of God's indwelling Spirit found in the life of a believer. Choose one or two you would like to see increase in your life. Spend time now in prayer around that desire.

Instead of eating lunch, take this **midday pause** with Jesus.

- Read Romans 7:25–8:2.
- Because of Jesus Christ, we can live free from sin and condemnation. Spend time talking to God about what this truth means to you. How can you live more fully in this truth?
- Use this QR code to end this time with worship.



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Engage in this **evening devotional** when you normally eat dinner or later in the evening.

- Read Philippians 2:1–11, then pray through your responses to the following prompts.
- What would it look like to “*do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves*” (vs. 3) in your current relationships? Think about your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers – even your enemies. Bring all this God in prayer.
- In response to the prayer you prayed around verse 3, what is one practical step you need to take tomorrow?
- What close friend or family member needs a physical healing, a financial need met, or a relationship reconciled? Spend time praying specifically for them now. Don’t rush. Intercede.

As you prepare to sleep, pray through this **evening’s examen**.

- Begin with one minute of silence.
- Consider these questions: When did I love well today? When did I not love well today?
- Reflect, repent, and respond as prompted by the Holy Spirit.
- Closing Prayer: Father, I receive your love for me. Holy Spirit, fill my heart with love for others.

THURSDAY, 9/26

Pursue a Deeper Understanding of Prayer & Fasting



Step One: Set your schedule.

Which leisure activity will you abstain from today? Is it TV, social media, video games, or something else?

Step Two: Take time to learn.

Use that leisure time to listen to today’s podcast. Ask God to prepare your heart and mind for Friday’s prayer and fasting.

Step Three: After the podcast, journal what stood out to you in the teaching. How will you apply this during Friday’s prayer and fasting? Surrender to God. Receive his grace.

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FRIDAY, 9/27

Apply Understanding through Prayer & Fasting

TODAY'S FOCUS: Praying with Expectancy

Use this **morning's devotion** during the time you normally eat breakfast.

- Read Matthew 6:5–15, then pray through your response to the following prompts.
- Where in your life would you like to see more of “God’s kingdom come and his will done” (vs. 10)? Ask God to specifically move in those areas. How can you cooperate with his kingdom and will in your life today?
- Lift up your daily needs to God in prayer. Thank him for his faithful provision in your life.
- Who do you need to forgive today? This is not always easy and is surely a work of the Spirit in our lives. If possible, kneel before God as you ask for the grace to forgive. Then, release that person from the debt you feel they owe you.
- Ask God for the power to resist temptation. Name specific areas where you can easily fall into sin. Receive his grace and strength to be free today.

Instead of eating lunch, take this **midday pause** with Jesus.

- Read 1 John 3:21–22.
- How would your life change if you believed and lived these two verses? Talk to God about that now.
- Use this QR code to end this time with worship.



Engage in this **evening devotional** when you normally eat dinner or later in the evening.

- Read Psalm 143, then pray through your responses to the following prompts.
- Reread verses 5–6. The busyness of life often robs us of the ability to reflect. However, this psalm declares the great value of reflection not once but three times! The psalmist tells us that:
 - He remembers or recalls to mind *the days of old*.
 - He meditates, imagines, or mutters *on all that God has done*.
 - And he ponders, muses, and considers *the work of God’s hands*.
 - Use your journal to create a list of how God has shown up in your life. (Use the three underlined categories to help you remember)
 - Then, from your list pray prayers of thanksgiving to God.
- End your time in prayer for your Vox campus. Pray verse 10 for your Campus Pastor, the Vox staff, and others that you know who attend your campus.

As you prepare to sleep, pray through this **evening's examen**.

- Begin with one minute of silence.
- Consider this question: Did I live with a thankful heart today, or did I neglect thankfulness?
- Reflect, repent, and respond as prompted by the Holy Spirit.
- Closing Prayer: Pray a simple prayer of thanksgiving to God.

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SATURDAY, 9/28

Reflection and What's Next?

TODAY'S FOCUS: God's work in my life and cultivating a rhythm of prayer and fasting.

Today's devotional:

- Read Matthew 6:16-21.
- In the text, Jesus says, "*When you fast.*" Considering his words, reflect and respond to the following prompts:
 - What are your heart's desires when it comes to prayer and fasting?
 - Where can you make room for consistent prayer and fasting in your life?
 - What will this rhythm of prayer and fasting look like?
 - Who will you partner with in this practice?
 - What part can you play in gathering others for consistent times of prayer?

- Tips for your next steps:
 - After reflecting and journaling, bring all this to God in prayer.
 - Commit your heart's desire to him.
 - Ask Him for the grace and strength to make prayer and fasting a consistent part of your life as a disciple of Jesus.
 - Create a Prayer and Fasting plan using S.M.A.R.T. action steps.
 - **Specific:** What is your fasting plan? When will you make time to pray on those days?
 - **Measurable:** Look ahead and schedule your prayer and fasting times.
 - **Attainable:** Start small, especially if this habit is new to you. Set yourself up for success.
 - **Realistic:** Consider your home and work responsibilities as you plan.
 - **Time-framed:** When will this begin? How often will you schedule this?

Optional: Pursue a Deeper Understanding of Prayer and Fasting



If possible, make space in the next day or so to listen to the last podcast in this 4-part series on Fasting.

After the podcast, journal what stood out to you in the teaching. How does this apply to your new desire and plan to include prayer and fasting in your spiritual journey?