



Ministry Year Prayer and Fasting

Redeemer Presbyterian Church, East Side

September 24, 2021

ADORATION – PSALMS: 30, 66, 111, 113, 138

Praise God for:

- His character
- How he will accomplish all of his holy will in NYC and the world
- Salvation through the gospel
- Justice through the gospel
- Cross-cultural community through the gospel
- His mission to bring renewal to the world

CONFESSION – PSALMS: 32, 51, 130

Confess and ask forgiveness for:

- Failure to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and find our identity in him
- Neglect in building a community of Cross-cultural love
- Prioritizing our own plans and power over God's mission
- A lack of concern for the lost
- Remaining silent and passive where justice is needed
- Not caring for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the prisoner
- Idols of the heart, subtle yet deadly
- Lack of faith, prayerlessness

THANKSGIVING – PSALMS 34, 40, 103, 116

Give thanks for:

- Jesus' life, death and resurrection on our behalf
- The indescribable gift of God the Father, Son & Spirit
- Suffering that builds perseverance, character, and hope
- People: members, lay leaders, pastors and staff
- 9th Street ministry center to bless our church and city
- Financial provision
- The opportunity to live and minister in this great city
- The planting of two new churches through Redeemer East Side (RES): The Well and Redeemer East Harlem
- Ministries: Community Groups/Collectives (CG), Children's Ministry (CM), Classes, Diaconate, Sunday Worship, Hope For New York (HFNY), Center for Faith and Work (CFW), City To City (CTC), Redeemer Counseling Services (RCS)
- Provision of a great partnership with Temple Israel (TI)

SUPPLICATION & INTERCESSION – PSALM 20, 25, 125

Ask God for:

- His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven
- Holy Spirit generated progress in the fulfillment of our mission of "building a movement of everyday New Yorkers who are transformed by the gospel, rooted in cross-cultural gospel community, and mobilized for Christ's mission where they live, work, and love."
- All RESers would Grow in gospel identity and worship fueled by the Practices of PEACE
- All RESers would practice PEACE in their place or sentness (where they live, work or love)
- Growth in cross-cultural love
- Neighborhood calling: God to activate every RESer to love neighbor and share the gospel; Growth in leadership, volunteerism, and giving to HFNY
- Work calling: God to activate every ESer to be his channel of grace and renewal at work
- Relationship calling: God to activate every ESer to be his channel of grace and renewal with those they love
- Spiritual and relational flourishing of RES staff team
- New elders, deacons, and deaconesses and wisdom and stamina for those currently leading
- Redeemer Counseling Services and Diaconate to give Godly, wise, and caring counsel
- Provision of generous giving, activation of our full congregation to give
- Thriving of our CGs for missional disciple-making
- Marriages and families to be strengthened, and children to be protected and prosper
- Prospering of City to City's church-planting efforts in NYC and globally
- An ever-increasing joyful experience of the reality of the gospel that leads to repentance and renewal
- Aaron and Justin as they navigate planting churches
- Wisdom as children's ministry and Community Groups re-start
- Wisdom as we finalize the design and construction process for our new ministry center
- Continued growth of the expanding RUF campus ministry in NYC, especially CUNY campuses with Jeff Jou and Iain Coston

Some Thoughts on Christian Fasting

Christian practices make space in our lives for the grace of God to grow. Fasting a Christian practice that the Bible depicts as the self-denial of some or all food or drink as the faithful express their concerns to God in special times of prayer and worship. Jesus commanded his disciples to follow his example and fast when he was no longer with them on earth (Matthew 6:16-18, Luke 4:2-4). Jesus' followers today also fast or abstain from certain things in order to seek God's will and hunger for God and his ways.

Why Fast?

These are tumultuous times that call for prayer and fasting. No matter what trials we face, all of Christ's followers "are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). Still many of us and our communities struggle as never before with hopelessness, loneliness, financial hardship, fear of violence, illness and death. Scriptures teach that when followers of Christ face difficulties like these, they are to seek God's help through prayer and fasting. Without fasting, we deny ourselves the opportunity to express our personal and world's desperate need for Christ. Jesus himself explained that once he left his disciples and ascended into heaven, "then they will fast" (Matthew 9:15).

Fasting fosters an experience of dependence.

Although modern humans thrive on the idea of being independent, fasting helps us put things in proper perspective. We are in reality totally dependent on God (Psalm 73:25- 26). It's easy to believe in our independence with a full stomach or other comforts, but when we start to feel discomfort, we awaken to our true dependence.

Fasting fosters concentration on God and his will.

Oswald Chambers said that fasting means "concentration," because fasting, we have a heightened sense of attentiveness. Food or any physical sensation can satisfy us, fill us and dull our spiritual senses. In contrast, an empty stomach, or empty time makes us more aware and alert to who God is, what he is doing and how he is speaking to us. Christian fasting, therefore, is accompanied by a special focus on prayer, often substituting the time spent eating (or an activity) with prayer. Ultimately, fasting is not about sacrificing, but about

humbling ourselves and acknowledging that without God, we can do nothing.

Fasting practices self-control. It awakens us to our need for spiritual "muscles" to live in the way of Christ. This discipline trains us to grow strong in grace, so we can live for Christ and his mission. Expect opposition—you probably will experience some spiritual resistance, but don't be surprised when you see and hear God more clearly also.

How to fast. In the Bible, fasting was practiced both privately and corporately and for short and long periods of time. Though not everyone may be able to fast from food (ex. pregnant women and diabetics), everyone can give up something to focus on God (ex. social media activity, Netflix, or skipping comforts such as elevators or Ubers). You can fast for a meal, a day, a week, etc.

Preparing to Fast:

- Plan when you will rest in God's presence, replacing some activity with prayer and worship during the time of fasting.
- Choose readings from Scripture, songs and prayers for adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. (See reverse side guide)
- Choose personal needs to pray for.

In the time of fasting (can be several times throughout the day):

- Offer yourself and your time to God. You might say something like, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." "Lord make speed to save us, make haste to help us."
- Read aloud from Scripture, sing/say songs and prayers.
- Express the adoration, confession thanksgivings you have chosen.
- Ask for the needs you have chosen.
- Be still and listen.
- Share your experience with your Community Group and others you love.

Going further on this topic. *Celebration of Discipline*, Ch 4, by Richard Foster. *A Hunger for God*, by John Piper. *Soul Feast*, Ch 5, by Marjorie Thompson. *Handbook of Spiritual Disciplines*, by Adele Calhoun.