



Abide & Ask

A Guide to Prayer and Fasting

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit."

John 15:5, ESV

Forty days. One fast. Ask boldly, listen closely.

Union Chappel · 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

Why We Fast

To fast is to set food aside for a time so that hunger itself becomes a prayer. It's not a technique for getting God to move — it's a way of saying, with our bodies and not just our words, that we want Him more than our next meal.

Scripture never treats fasting as a debt we owe God. It treats it as a posture His people take when they want to see and hear Him clearly — and history shows it works. Esther called her people to fast before she risked her life to save them, and deliverance followed (Esther 4:16). Nehemiah fasted before he ever picked up a tool to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, and God gave him a plan (Nehemiah 1:4).

The Fast God Chooses

Isaiah confronted a people who fasted for show while working their laborers hard and ignoring the hungry at their door. The fast God actually delights in looks different: it loosens the chains of injustice and shares bread with the hungry (Isaiah 58:6–7). To that fast, God attaches a promise worth building a season on:

“The Lord will guide you always... you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

Isaiah 58:11

Guidance. Direction. Clarity for the road ahead — that's exactly what we're asking God for as a church in this season.

Take This With You: *Before you fast, ask God once, out loud, for the guidance Isaiah 58 promises.*

Abiding for the Harvest

Jesus gave us the picture this season is built on: He is the vine, we are the branches, and fruit only comes from staying connected to Him.

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you... By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.”

John 15:7–8, ESV

Notice the order — abiding comes first. A fast is simply abiding made physical: for 24 hours we set down the bread that sustains our bodies, to remember what actually sustains us.

What We're Asking For

- Reconnection with Him — abiding, not just believing
- Clear vision for Union Chappel in a rapidly growing city
- Wisdom to equip our church family for the work ahead
- Boldness to reach the harvest field around us and make disciples

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John 15:16). That's the harvest we're fasting and praying for.

Take This With You: *Write down one thing you're asking God to make clear this season.*

Ask Boldly: A Daily Pattern for Prayer

Jesus didn't leave us guessing how to pray. When His disciples asked Him to teach them, He gave them a pattern — not a script to recite by rote, but a set of categories to bring your own, actual situation into, every day of these forty days.

“This, then, is how you should pray...”

Matthew 6:9

- **“Hallowed be your name”** — Start in worship, not request. Before you ask for anything, remind yourself who it is we're asking. This is the God who spoke the stars into place and still knows you by name — worthy of reverence. And yet we're told to “approach God's throne of grace with confidence” (Hebrews 4:16) — not because we've earned entry, but because Christ has already opened the way. Come in awe. Come lifted by grace.
- **“Your kingdom come, your will be done”** — Submit before you ask. Are you willing to listen for what God actually says here — and let Him correct the plan you walked in with?
- **“Give us today our daily bread”** — Bring today's actual need. What do you believe your real need is, right now, in this specific day — not yesterday's, not next year's?
- **“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”** — Examine your heart. Can you name what — or who — you're still holding onto, and release it here, as many times as it takes?
- **“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”** — Ask for protection, not just provision.

This isn't a formula that earns an answer, and it isn't the only way to pray — it's simply one shape to lean on. If another method already helps you connect with God and listen, use that instead. Whatever you use, let your own specific situation fill in each category, every day of these forty days.

Take This With You: *Pray through each line once today, out loud, naming your own actual need, struggle, or surrender in each category.*

The Body Benefits Too

Your body isn't incidental to your faith. Paul calls it a temple of the Holy Spirit and tells us to bring it under discipline, not neglect (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 9:27).

Researchers studying intermittent fasting — including work out of Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging — have found that a day without food shifts the body into a different metabolic mode: cells step up repair and cellular “housekeeping,” and many people see improved insulin sensitivity and mental clarity.

None of this is the reason we fast, and the research is still developing — which is exactly why the medical questions on the next page come before anything else.

Take This With You: *If you have concerns, tell your doctor about your plan to fast before your fast day.*

Preparing for Your Fast

Step 1 — Ask the Medical Questions

A food fast affects your body. Please talk with your doctor first if any of these apply to you:

- You are pregnant or nursing
- You have diabetes or another blood-sugar condition
- You take medication that requires food
- You are under 18
- You have a history of disordered eating
- You have any other health concerns

If any of these fit you, choose the Non-Food Fast on the next page instead of fasting from food — it's a full and meaningful option, not a lesser one.

Step 2 — Choose Your Fast

Our primary recommendation is the Modified Fast below. Two other options follow on the next page — there's no extra credit for the harder version.

Modified Fast — recommended for most

Eat dinner the night before your fast day. Your next meal is dinner the following night — the night of your fast day (skip breakfast and lunch on your fast day). Between those two dinners: no solid food. Water, black coffee or tea, and clear juice or broth are permitted. This is the gentlest entry point, and the one we're asking the whole church to consider first.

Two Other Options

Full Fast — optional, for those who want to go further

Water only for 24 hours — no juice, no caffeine. Only if you've fasted before, have no health concerns, and have your doctor's blessing if uncertain.

Non-Food Fast — an alternative, not a lesser option

Set aside your phone, social media, or television for 24 hours instead. Use the reclaimed time to pray and listen, the same as everyone else.

Step 3 — Schedule It

Pick a day on the 40 Days calendar. One 24-hour period is all we're asking, but fast more than once if you sense God leading you to.

Step 4 — Ease In

Eat a normal, sensible meal beforehand (i.e., the dinner the night before your fast day)— nothing heavy or rich.

Step 5 — Pray a Pre-Fast Prayer

(Example): God, get my heart, mind, and body ready for this fast. Give me the strength and self-control to see it through. Thank you for the clarity and insight that come when I slow down and go without. I'm setting this time apart for you — I'm asking you to give this church a clear vision, a real sense of direction, for what comes next. And show me how I can play a part in it.

Take This With You: *Decide which fast you'll participate in and consult your doctor if you have any questions. Before you close this booklet, put your fast day on your calendar.*

Listening for His Direction

The empty space a fast creates is the whole point — don't rush to fill it. Use the time you'd normally spend preparing meals and eating to actually listen.

- Sit in solitude and silence at each meal you skip
- Journal what you sense, even a phrase or a single image
- Write God a letter, as you would to someone you trust completely
- Read John 15:1–8 slowly, more than once

Questions Worth Bringing to Him

- What do You want to grow in me this season?
- What is Your vision for Union Chappel in this city — for the people, not the building?
- Who is the harvest field You're placing in front of me?
- What's one obedient step I can take toward what You show me?

Take This With You: Choose one question from this page to sit with during your fast.

Record What You Hear

Use the recording pages at the back of this booklet to write down what you sense. Please share it with our Prayer Team on the church website (details to be announced) — so we can gather what God is saying to His whole church, not just individuals.

When God Has Spoken During a Fast

- Daniel fasted and prayed for insight into God's plan, and received a detailed vision of what was to come (Daniel 9:3; 10:2–12).
- Ezra fasted with the exiles at the river Ahava before their journey, and God answered their prayer for protection (Ezra 8:21–23).
- The church at Antioch was worshiping and fasting when the Holy Spirit spoke plainly, setting apart Barnabas and Saul for the mission field (Acts 13:2–3).

Take This With You: *Decide now how you'll record what you hear — journal, note, or voice memo.*

Breaking Your Fast

Break your fast with a light, balanced meal rather than the biggest plate you can find. Your stomach has had a rest — a heavy or greasy meal right away is more likely to leave you uncomfortable than satisfied.

Headache, low energy, and hunger pangs are common and not a sign anything is wrong. Let every pang echo a bigger longing:

“My soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

Psalm 63:1, ESV

End With Thanksgiving

Before you eat, thank God for the day — for what He taught you, for what He may have shown you about His direction, and by faith, for the answers still on their way.

“Lord, thank You for today. Thank You for what You have revealed to me through this fast and for what You'll say later that I'm not ready to hear yet. Make us one church, abiding in You, asking together, and bearing fruit for Your harvest. Amen.”

Take This With You: Plan your breakfast meal and your prayer of thanks in advance and approach it as an act of gratitude and worship.

A Place to Record What You're Hearing

Be brief — a phrase, a verse, an impression is enough. If you choose to fast more than one day, use the Fast Entry 2 form on the next page.

Fast Entry 1

Date:

What I sensed God saying:

Scripture He brought to mind:

One step I'll take in response:

Share What You Hear

Please share what you recorded with the Union Chappel Prayer Team on our website (details to be announced).

Fast Entry 2

Date:

What I sensed God saying:

Scripture He brought to mind:

One step I'll take in response:

Share What You Hear

Please share what you recorded with the Union Chappel Prayer Team on our website (details to be announced).

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