



# Prayer + FASTING

*Nelson Diocese Holy Week  
Prayer & Fasting Calendar*

**Sunday 5th April to Saturday 11th April**

**Theme: Growth**

# **WELCOME & INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER AND FASTING DURING HOLY WEEK**

Fasting remains one of the most challenging but spiritually rewarding Christian disciplines. Over Holy Week let us join together in prayer and fast as a diocese every day from 6am to 6pm. Our prayers will focus on our personal lives, our diocese, parishes, communities and our country.

## **HOW TO FAST**

Fasting is a central part of Lent. Traditionally it includes reducing our food intake. We fast to allow our physical hunger to remind us of our spiritual hunger – our longing and desire for God. The purpose of this time is to turn our attention to both God and others in prayer.

- Decide therefore whether you would like to fast from food or something else that will help you connect with your hunger for God.
- Determine to set aside a time for prayer and read scripture. Your prayer time could be early in the morning, at lunchtime or in the evening.
- Alternatively, you may want to pray together with your church community or friend/s at a specific time and place or with your family and spend time in prayer before family mealtimes.
- If you are fasting a meal (or two meals) be aware of the weakness, tiredness or irritability that one may feel. Turn that to pray and keep hydrated. Lighten your workload if possible.

- Please consult your doctor to ensure it is safe to fast. Fast as you can, not as you can't.

Over these seven days of Holy Week, please also think through how you might be a blessing to others since acts of mercy and kindness towards the poor are an important part of fasting.

Some suggestions include:

- If you are abstaining from food, then give the food, or the cost of your meals to the needy.
- If you are fasting watching TV or Netflix, gift that time to a friend and pray with them.
- If fasting from chocolate, buy it as a gift for someone else 😊. Be as creative in how you bless others as God leads you.



Day	Prayer Item	Extra Reference Scriptures
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<p><b>Government and leaders</b>  1 Timothy 2:1-2 - I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Wisdom and wise counsel</li> <li>• For Good governance</li> <li>• For the national, city, towns, community and church leaders</li> <li>• For their wellbeing</li> <li>• For their families</li> </ul>	2 Chronicles 7:14 Proverbs 14:3-4 Jeremiah 29: 7-11 1 Timothy 2:1-4
<b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<p><b>Restoration, Renewal and Healing</b> of individuals, families and communities and the Nation  Isaiah 40:31 “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”</p>	Psalm 51:12 Isaiah 35 Isaiah 61: 1-7 Jeremiah 7:14 Hosea 6:1 Joel 2:25-32 Amos 9:14 Galatians 6:1
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<p><b>Openness to the good news of Jesus Christ.</b> Missional living and evangelistic efforts in our diocese, the nation and beyond</p>	Isaiah 55:11 Hebrews 4:12 James 1:22 Ecclesiastes 12:10 1 John 3:18 Psalm 12:6 John 15:7

Day	Prayer Item	Extra Reference Scriptures
<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<p><b>For the Word of God to dwell in our hearts richly.</b>            For God to transform us through His Word as it is preached, read, studied, shared, lived and prayed.</p> <p>That the Church will continue to uphold the Word through correct teaching and doctrine. Pray for authentic love and unity to be evident in the Body of Christ. Pray that the Church of Jesus Christ all over the world will be a strong witness because of the love we have for each other.</p>	Isaiah 55:11 Hebrews 4:12 James 1:22 Ecclesiastes 12:10 1 John 3:18 Psalm 12:6 John 15:7
<b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<p><b>Thriving communities of faith</b>            Psalms 127:1 “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”</p>	Proverbs 27:17 Matthew 18 John 17 Acts 2:42-47 I Corinthians 1:10: 12:25-27 James 5:16 Romans 12 Phil 2 Hebrews 10:24-25 I Peter 2:9-10; 4:8-11
<b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<p><b>Hospitality of God expressed</b> through the death of Christ for the sake of the world.</p>	Luke 15:20 Revelations 3:20 Matthew 11:28-30 John 19:25-27 Matthew 25:35-40 God takes sanctuary among us Exodus 25:8; Psalm 139: 8-10; John 1:14

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Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Our Diocese of Nelson</b> Bishop, Clergy, Staff, Parish</p> <p>Thanksgiving and praise for all that God had done and will do.</p> <p>2 Corinthians 12:9 "But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." This is the last day of prayer and fasting - Thank the Lord for his sufficient grace and for a renewed spiritual, mental, emotional and physical self as you have prayed and fasted. Also pray that you will continue with the spiritual discipline of prayer and fasting.</p>	
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CHRIST IS RISEN - HE IS RISEN INDEED!</b>	





# PRAYER AND FASTING

**from the Autumn Witness 2020**

Fasting... not generally a popular discipline, and one that we often tend to skip nimbly over; preferring to focus on more agreeable things like Bible reading, worshipping through song, giving to the needy or the many forms of prayer.

All of these are, of course, vital and are key to abiding in Jesus, but over the last 12 months or so, we have discovered that fasting brings both a new level of blessing and battle, as we partake in it intentionally, both individually and as a body.

Fasting is voluntarily abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. It is one way that God himself set up for his people to humble themselves before him. In the old testament it was common to call a fast, to set aside time to seek him in new and desperate ways – think the Ninevites, Esther, or Jehosaphat. It's also something that Jesus did, and his disciples continued, as they sought God for new power, and for wisdom.

Yet we often imagine its reserved for the super spiritual amongst us. At Cobden-Runanga we've discovered it is together ordinary and extraordinary, needs no special equipment, and (unless you're medically compromised) is do-able by everyday disciples.

Aware of some intensely challenging situations in the pastoral life of our parish, the Lord introduced us to corporate fasting as a body of believers. The message 'we need to fast' came concurrently to a number on the leadership team, while working through the story of Esther. And so it came to pass.

Now a recurrent happening three-monthly, we set aside a 24-hour period aligned to the Sabbath, to seek the Lord simultaneously about the issues he sets before us. A prayer guide is provided as a starter and partakers pause at the top of each waking hour from 6pm Friday to 6pm Saturday, when we gather for praise, sharing, and the best communal meal ever!

We've found it joyful, painful and sometimes just plain hard work. We have rejoiced together in answered prayer (in healing, provision and restoration of relationship) and agonised together as we wrestle for our prodigals. We've had new direction and insight yet have shared tears over the brokenness uncovered in our lives and in those we love.

Our top tips, included in our prayer guide, are these:

Remember what it's all about and keep the main thing the main thing.

- Have a light but protein and - fibre rich meal before you start.
- Drink lots of water – it helps keep headaches at bay, and your brain from shrinking!
- Set an alarm to remind you to pray – it'll help with distractions.
- Use your hunger pangs as a prompt to pray.
- Use the prayer guide, but don't be enslaved by it  
– go with Holy Spirit tangents.
- Expect physical and spiritual opposition  
– keep your desire for God the main focus.
- If you start to feel awful, try some sweetened herbal tea.  
If you feel horrendous, eat.
- Don't beat yourself up if you don't make the full time. Whatever you manage is awesome!

We are no experts; mere learners. While we have seen some breakthroughs, perhaps more importantly, the fasts have changed us. Made us more available, more willing, more aligned, and more aware of the incredible privilege of partnering with him in this way, and getting hungry for God.

Rachelle Hunt – Cobden-Runanga Parish