

Why are we fasting? **“To Experience God” “To Enjoy His People” “To Engage the World”**

Because it’s Biblical and we need our Father’s help, both individually and corporately.

Individually for 2011:

- For freedom from habits, addictions and un-Godly lifestyles
- For clear direction from the Lord
- For renewing and strengthening of our relationship with our Father and others
- For renewal of covenant and unity in our homes
- For the will and purpose of God in or for each member of our family
- For a hungering and thirsting for the Word of God as necessary daily sustenance
- And many more...

Corporately for 2011:

- For us to become a family of passionate Prayer and Praise.
- For us to become a mature people of the Word.
- For us to fully surrender to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to purify us and become the leader of our lives.
- And more...

The scripture reference for our fasting focus is found in **Revelation 1-3** and is a familiar, repeated phrase to all seven churches **“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches”**

We want to hear and obey what the Spirit is saying to the expression of His Body we call Franklin Covenant Church.

All of this is possible by faith and by our faith we will witness and “enjoy” the Spiritual fruit forming in each others lives.

We have chosen the **21 day partial fast** as recorded in the book Daniel. The Daniel Fast is a partial fast where there is a restriction in your diet, but not total abstinence from food. Although it appears that the full fast seemed to be the custom for Daniel, in Daniel 10:3, for a three week period, Daniel went on a partial fast.

One of the most significant victories in the life of the prophet Daniel is recorded in Daniel 9. While studying the prophecy of Jeremiah, (Jer. 29:10-14) Daniel discovered that Jeremiah had proclaimed that the Babylonian captivity would last seventy years, then the Hebrew exiles would return to Israel. Daniel looked at the calendar and realized that the time was up – the seventy years had been fulfilled – but the Hebrew exiles were still in captivity.

Daniel was so perplexed about why God hadn’t come through on His promise, that he devoted himself to a period of prayer and fasting. He was desperate for God to fulfill His promise for the restoration of the Jews to their homeland.

Daniel began to confess the sins of his people. While he was praying, God dispatched the archangel Gabriel from heaven to tell Daniel what would happen. The angel told Daniel that his people would flourish once again! That God had a plan. The revelation he received placed a burden on his heart that weighed so heavily upon him that Daniel began to pray and fast until an answer came. This is where the 21 day fast originates, **“In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth till three full weeks were fulfilled. Dan 10:3** But after 21 days of prayer and fasting there was a mighty breakthrough! The angel of God appeared to Daniel and let him know that God had heard his prayer. Daniel restricted his diet. He eliminated meats, sweets and breads from his diet and ate fruit and vegetables and only drank water! **He also prayed 3 times a day!**

To become a people of prayer...

Here are some suggestions we know will help you in your relationship with Father, if exercised.

1. Spend 5-10 minutes worshipping the Lord through song or quoting scripture, worshipping to a CD, or playing guitar. The goal is to focus your heart on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your faith, and allow you to rejoice in God's goodness and His faithfulness to fulfill His promises.
2. Spend 10 minutes meditating on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There are several scriptures that are very helpful with this, such as Col 1:15-20, John 15, Exodus 34:6, and Isaiah 52:13-53:9.
3. Spend 5 minutes meditating on who you are in Christ.
4. Spend 5 minutes praying for those in authority over you - husband, father, small group leaders, church leaders, government leaders.
5. Spend 5 minutes praying for peers--people in your Small group, roommates, classmates, co-workers, siblings, etc. Pray for intimacy with Christ, power to walk with God and for any specific needs that you know of.
6. Spend 5 minutes praying for people you are investing in or discipling.
7. Spend 5 minutes praying for a friend, co-worker, schoolmate - someone who doesn't know Jesus personally. Pray for the veil of unbelief to be removed from their eyes, pulling down any strongholds that would be keeping them from knowing Christ.
8. Spend 10 minutes waiting on the Lord for specifics for decision-making today or asking God if there is anything you need to know to minister to people today or during the week (Jn. 10:3). Also, pray for divine appointments throughout the day, either to encourage the saints or to develop relationships with unbelievers. Ask if God wants to put anyone on your heart that you need to encourage, whether through a handwritten note or a word of encouragement, because we want to uplift those who are faint in heart.
9. Spend 15 minutes reading or listening to a portion of scripture asking God for revelation of His Word. You might choose to read through a specific book or pray and ask God if there is a scripture passage that you need to read specifically for that day, trusting that His word is going to be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. (Ps. 119:105)
10. Spend 5 minutes at the end to memorize a scripture verse or passage, especially one that applies to an area of weakness in your life. It will serve as an arsenal to resist temptation.
11. Put on the armor of God each day (Ephesians 6).

Some quotes for you:

"Prayer is the greatest of all forces, because it honors God and brings him into active aid." - E.M. Bounds

"Since the days of Pentecost, has the whole church ever put aside every other work and waited upon Him for ten days, that the Spirit's power might be manifested? We give too much attention to method and machinery and resources, and too little to the source of power." - Hudson Taylor

Quotes continued...

“There is a mighty lot of difference between saying prayers and praying.” - John G. Lake

“God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede.” - Oswald Chambers

“Can we pray in earnest if we do not in the act commit ourselves to do our best to bring about the answer? Can we escape some king of hypocrisy? This is especially so with intercession.” - P.T. Forsyth

“God wills that men should pray everywhere, but the place of His glory is in the solitudes, where He hides us in the cleft of the rock, and talks with man face to face as a man talks with his friend.” - Samuel Chadwick

“It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must pray patiently, believing, continue in prayer until we obtain an answer.” - George Mueller

“When you seek God's face you do not stop until you get into God's Presence - even if it takes all night. There is a lot of praying that is not seeking God's face - it stops short of contact with God.” - Derek Prince

To become a people of God's Word...

Here are some links for you to choose a 2011 Bible reading plan that best fits your reading or listening style:

In print, email, text or read on the screen, etc... and they're free!

www.oneyearbibleonline.com

www.ewordtoday.com

www.biblegateway.com

www.bibleplan.org

www.blueletterbible.org

www.youversion.com

www.biblestudytools.com

www.heartlight.org

Audio online or downloadable to your computer, iPod, phone, etc... and they're free!

www.gncpb.org

www.answersingenesis.org daily average listening time 12.5 minutes

www.dailyaudiobible.com daily average listening time 30 minutes (includes prayer and comments)

We have printed versions available for you on the small group resource table.

Some “dos” before fasting:

1. Pray about fasting, what type of fast and how long to fast? We believe this is a sacred call to fast and pray as a group. Please pray for a heart of obedience, great faith and mighty strength to fully participate in this time of prayer and fasting.
2. Develop a list of things you'd like to personally see come about in and around your life. Prayerfully assemble the list so that you can faithfully pray through it during the fast. Some ideas include:
 - Share the Good News of Jesus with others
 - Salvations and the making of disciples
 - Shelter, food and clothing for others
 - Healing – family, health, finances, marriage, etc.
 - Provision, direction, wisdom from God
 - Holy Spirit led life
 - Intimacy with God **“Experience God”**
 - Ministry
 - What's my spiritual gift?
 - How can I use it?
 - How do I get involved in a small group of my brothers and sisters? **“Enjoy His People”**
 - How does Jesus want me to fulfill His great commission? **“Engage the World”**
3. Find an accountability partner so you can support one another in times of need.
4. Wean yourself from caffeine. This will make the first few days of your actual fast much more enjoyable. Depending on the amount of caffeine you intake, it may be advisable to begin this process an entire week before you begin the fast.
5. Reduce the amount you eat. This will allow your stomach time to become accustomed to the reduced intake, and get you into the habit of only eating to stop hunger.
6. Develop a menu plan. This is especially important if you have children who are not able to prepare their own food. The reduction in food intake will equate to reduced energy. Knowing what you will cook will reduce stress and help you plan your day.
7. Journal. Keep a record of your prayers, worship times, your emotions – and most importantly God's answers! Fast with faith and expectation!
8. Make a plan
 - When and where will I go to pray alone?
 - Who will I partner with for encouragement and prayer?
 - When I eat – what will it be? Citrus with dark greens (for you stomach)
 - Bible Reading – how do I plan to tackle the whole Bible in one year?
 - Bible Teaching – who do I like to listen to?
9. Dive into worship! Get your favorite worship music and keep it with you wherever you go. Fasting is a time of turning away from things that give us physical comfort to focus on things that give us spiritual rejuvenation. Worship and fasting go together like peas and carrots!

Some “don’ts” before fasting:

1. Worry about failing – if done for the right reasons, you cannot fail. Fasting is not about “checking the box” it’s about allowing the Holy Spirit to search your heart and drawing nearer to God.
2. Do it for the wrong reasons – don’t do it for the elders or to get your husband or wife off your back! Do it because you love God and you are willing to push anything – ANYTHING away that comes between the two of you.
3. Broadcast it – fasting is a private act done between you and God. In the corporate sense, we can encourage one another if we are going through a fast together; but for those that aren’t aware, they shouldn’t be made aware unless it’s absolutely necessary.
4. Wallow in misery – remember, the “you” that goes through the fast is the “you” that isn’t surrounded with the pleasures of life; allow “you” to be refocused off of your physical discomfort and onto your spiritual food, which is intimate communion with the Spirit of God.

Some more quotes for you...

“Do you have a hunger for God? If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because we have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great. If we are full of what the world offers, then perhaps a fast might express, or even increase, our soul's appetite for God. Between the dangers of self-denial and self-indulgence is the path of pleasant pain called fasting.” - John Piper

“Bear up the hands that hang down, by faith and prayer; support the tottering knees. Have you any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.” - John Wesley

“Fasting is a tremendous lesson in establishing who is the master and who is the servant. Remember, your body is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master.” - Derek Prince

“Fasting increases our spiritual reception by quieting our mind and emotions.” “It is not that God begins to speak louder when we fast, but we begin to hear Him better.” - Dr. Julio C. Ruibal

“When a man 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 God go unless He answers.” - Arthur Wallis

“My agitation was the proof of the grip it had on me.” - Reese Howells, Intercessor

Foods We May Eat While On The Daniel Fast

Whole Grains:

Brown Rice, Raw Oats, Barley, Whole Wheat, Grits, etc...

Legumes:

Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas, etc...

Fruits:

Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Oats, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon, etc...

Vegetables:

Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gingerroot, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini, Greens, etc...

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Sunflower, Sesame, Cashews, Peanuts, Almonds, Natural Peanut Butter, etc...

Liquids:

Spring Water, Distilled Water, 100% All-Natural Fruit Juices and Vegetable Juices

Seasonings:

Garlic, Onions, Green Peppers, Red Peppers, Parsley, Basil, Oregano, Curry Powder, Chile Powder, Thyme, Rosemary, Salt, Pepper, Liquid Smoke, Olive Oil, Herbal Tea, Honey, etc...

Foods to Avoid (When in doubt, it's always a good idea to check the label)

- Meat and Meat Flavorings
- Wine, Beer
- White Rice
- Fried Foods
- Caffeinated Soda, Tea, Coffee
- Carbonated Foods
- Refined Sugar
- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Sugar Substitutes, Cane Sugar, Diet Drinks
- Margarine, Shortening, Butter
- Milk, Cream, Cheese, Eggs
- Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives
- White Flour and all Products Using It
- Artificial Flavorings

Much more information on the Daniel fast is available @ www.daniel-fast.com