



PARKLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH

Arise and Shine
Isaiah 60:1



21

DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING



@Parklands Baptist Church

FEASTS AND FASTS IN CHRISTIANITY

When the Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples did not fast, He responded, saying the wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them (Matt 9:14-15). Jesus contrasts the disciples' eventual mourning and lament over His absence with the joy of His presence. The same cycle of longing for God and rejoicing in His imminent presence is at the heart of the cycle of feasts and fasts. Feasts and fasts have been interconnected since God chose Israel to be His holy nation; however, because fasting has often been misunderstood, the connection was lost. Webber reveals that “the purpose of fasting is to establish, maintain, repair, and transform our relationship with God.”¹ Fasting expresses our desire and longing for God's presence. Our longing is made complete when He comes to us in the feast we participate in; thus, our joy is made complete.

The feast and fast are inseparable. Schmemmann affirms that “the feast is impossible without the fast, and the fast is precisely repentance and return, the saving experience of sadness and exile... It is repentance that takes us again and again into the joy of the banquet, but it is that joy that reveals to us our sinfulness and puts us under judgment.”² Revival Week just like feasts in the Bible is a feast prepared by God. In the words of Booker, the Revival Week is ideally “a holy assembly when the people [PBC in this case] comes together to meet with God in a special way.”³ To prepare ourselves for the meeting, we fast and pray; we give off something that has taken our time from God and prayerfully draw nearer to God in repentance.

The goal is not only to give off something but also to posture ourselves through prayer and repentance so that we can connect with God and spend time with Him. Typically, in the Church, prayer and fasting are accompanied by almsgiving. Almsgiving is the sharing of our resources with those in need, especially the resources we have saved from the things we have given off. Therefore, in the next 21 days, draw nearer to God in repentance, give off something to spend time in His presence, and, where possible, give to the needy. May this be a season that helps us anticipate the feast that is to come when the groom (Christ) will be in our presence.

¹ Webber, Robert, Ancient Future Time, Fasting, Prayer & Almsgiving

² Schmemmann, Alexander, For the Life of the World

³ Booker, Richard, Celebrating Jesus in the Biblical Feasts



PRAYER AND FASTING

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only your Father, who is unseen, and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:17-18

TYPES OF FASTS

In the Bible, we find three kinds of fasts, these are:

a) Absolute Fast

- This is commonly referred to as a ‘dry fast’ because neither food nor water is taken. Medically, the body can take up to three (3) days of absolute or dry fast. However, it is very important to physically prepare your body in advance for this kind of fast, Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9 and Jonah 1:17-2:10

b) Partial Fast

- This is whereby one restricts their diet like Daniel. One could choose to fast from meat and other pleasant food, or just live on ‘soft’ foods or little portions of food, or drinks such as fruit juices or porridge – Daniel 10:2-3.

c) Normal Fast

- This is normally referred to as ‘Jesus Fast’ where one abstains from food but takes water. After the wilderness experience, it is written that Jesus hungered, but not thirsted (Matt 4:2). The assumption is that He had been taking water during the fast. A healthy person can comfortably do up to forty (40) days of a normal fast.

SPECIAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

- Children – Encourage children to engage the discipline of prayer without necessarily fasting. Should they with good guidance and understanding choose to fast, encourage them to skip a meal in a day and/or to forego their favourite TV schedules, toys for moments of prayer and reading God’s Word.
- Expectant & Nursing mothers, Elderly & Aged, those engaged in menial work – Consider engaging in praying without necessarily fasting. For those on medication, please seek the advice your doctor before engaging fasting.



INTRODUCTION

THE FOCUS

For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1;6-7

It took the Church a few centuries to agree on the doctrine of the Trinity, despite numerous biblical allusions to a triune God. Ironically, Second Temple literature (literature after Israel's exile) has multiple references to the Spirit of God and Yahweh. Israelites had accepted the idea that God existed in two. It was Christ's identity, as a third member of the Godhead, that was contentious to Jews. The words trinity, trinitarian, and triune are not in the Bible, but it is easy to spot the work of each member of the Trinity as the gospel story unfolds. The Father who creates, the Son who redeems, and the Spirit who guides. Today, certain denominations are still not in agreement with the composition of the Godhead; however, we (PBC) are.

This prayer booklet is not a trinitarian apology. It is a journey into the mystery of the third person of the Trinity. Unlike the mysteries found in the modern day, Christian mysteries are best unraveled through participation; therefore, participate and experience the wonder of He who Christ sent to serve as our bridge to the communion happening between the Father and the Son. To partake in the Uncommon Spirit-led impartation, we must understand and acknowledge the work of the Spirit, the agent of impartation. The same Spirit who, through Paul, imparted an uncommon purpose to Timothy's life and empowered Timothy to do great exploits is at work in you. Allow Him to accomplish that which God has sent Him to do through the grace of His Son, Jesus Christ.

HOW TO:

The daily devotions have a scriptural passage, a brief exposition, opportunities to explore the breadth of the power of the Holy Spirit, and commit yourself to the discipline of prayer. Patiently go through each day's guide and allow God to work in and through you to the glory of His name.



DAY 1: CREATING AGENT

“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Gen 1:2

REFLECTION

The root of the Hebrew word used to denote hovering in this passage presents the image of a bird hovering over/brooding over/incubating its eggs. If a bird does not incubate its eggs, the eggs will not develop properly. The Spirit incubated the chaos (darkness and void), nurturing it for the transformative power of creation that was about to begin. Out of formlessness, emptiness, and darkness, the world was created. Not only through the power of the Father and the Word, but also through the creating agency of the Spirit. If chaos can be transformed into all the beauty that surrounds us, how much more can the Spirit transform your life?

PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God for sending His Spirit
- Pray that God will help you bring transformation to your surroundings by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Commit the areas you need transformation in to the Lord in prayer
- Pray for the chaos in our country to be transformed into new life through the intervention of the Spirit
- Pray for the chaos around the world, calling on God to transform the world into His kingdom here on earth

PRAYER

All-powerful God, you who transformed chaos and created all things, look upon me with kindness and transform me like you did the earth. Change my situation, my country, and the world to reflect the goodness of your creation. Help me walk this journey of being reformed into your likeness and give me the strength to participate in the work that you are doing in me, and in the world you created. May I delight in the anticipation of the finished product of your work. May I, through the power of your Spirit, be transformed into a vessel worthy of your calling, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**



DAY 2: LIFE GIVER

“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

Gen 2:7

REFLECTION

Whereas all other created things were transformed from chaos, humankind received “special treatment.” God chose to make humankind in His image. All humankind, whether Christian or not, bear the image of God. Further, he breathed into us the breath of life to animate us. The breath of life, from the Spirit of God, was not just air to sustain humankind’s life but also consciousness, spirit, and intellect. Through the Spirit, God made man unique and a partaker of the very breath of God. The creature formed from dust came to life and became God’s image bearer and custodian of the work He had created. Even when we fell, God did not stop the task of recreating us so that we may fully bear His image. This is the work the Holy Spirit continues to do in our lives. Will you let Him turn you into God’s masterpiece?

PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God for His breath of life that you received through the power of the Holy Spirit
- Thank God for creating you in His Image
- Submit yourself to the recreative nature of the Spirit so that He may transform you into a new creation
- Call upon God to work in you through His Spirit that you may bear His image and do His bidding
- Pray for your family, friends, and people around you, that they, too, may be reformed into the full image of God and do His will
- Commit all humanity in prayer, that the Holy Spirit may work in us and we may serve the purposes of God

PRAYER

Most merciful God, we confess that we have taken for granted the life you gave us. We have not lived according to your will for us but have often pursued things that do not bring you honor. In your mercy, forgive what we have been, amend who we are, and restore us to the image you created us. So that we may live according to your purpose and bring honor to your name. Through your Son Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**



DAY 3: SPOKE THROUGH PROPHETS

“For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Peter 1:21

REFLECTION

No matter how self-conscious and aware humankind becomes, there are always stories surrounding mythological and supernatural beings. People have recounted narratives of hearing from the dead, spirits, and divine beings. Yet, more Christians have become less and less attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Israelites did not refer to Him as the Holy Spirit to them, the divine manifestations of Yahweh were His Spirit. They heard from the Spirit as He spoke through the prophets. Inversely, we are aware of the Holy Spirit, yet not many of us hear from Him. He still speaks! Listen. As you seek to listen, practice obedience through following what He has already said, ensuring what you hear is not contrary to the scriptures..

PRAYER POINTS

Activity: Find a quiet spot and close your eyes in prayer. Pray that God will rid you of any distraction and hindrance to hearing his voice. Take some time, be still, and ask God to speak to you through His Spirit. Repeat this process every day and expect to hear from God.

- Pray that you may be more attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit
- Ask God to help you heed to what He speaks to you through His Spirit.
- Pray that the Lord will continue to speak to you through His word and Spirit.
- Pray that, like the prophets, you will be a hearer and proclaimer of God’s word to the world.
- Pray for your leaders that they may be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and heed to His leading

PRAYER

Dear God. I yearn to hear from you. You say in your word that if we seek you with all our heart we will find you. I pray that I may find you and hear from you. May I be found diligent in heeding what you say to me and following your precepts. May I be found where you want me to be. **Amen.**



DAY 4: SPIRIT OF WISDOM

“Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses.”

Deuteronomy 34:9

REFLECTION

The Ancient Near East was a world similar to ours. Magicians, diviners, astrologers, and all sorts of offices of the gods existed. The Old Testament records numerous instances where gods stood before the wisdom of God in a face-off. Moses before the Egyptian court, the plagues in Egypt being active warfare against different Egyptian gods, Joshua before Canaanite gods, Solomon against the wisdom of foreign gods, and Daniel in front of Babylonian court officials. In all these instances, the wisdom of God through His Spirit dwelt in His people and they prevailed against foreign gods. Strangely, we have chosen to wage against foreign powers through our strength and knowledge. How different would our lives be if we submitted to the wisdom of God and allowed Him to show Himself strong on our behalf?



PRAYER POINTS

- Repent for the days you have relied on yourself and not the wisdom of God
- Repent for the days you have believed God cannot help you; therefore, you turned to your ways
- Ask God to bestow the Spirit of wisdom in you, and that He may govern your footsteps
- Pray for God's wisdom to manifest and triumph in all your situations.
- Pray for the Spirit of wisdom to descend upon the universal church and offer guidance to the church in this age
- Pray for the Spirit of wisdom to guide our country as we navigate the current times
- Ask God to bestow His Spirit of wisdom on world leaders, and that they may govern in a way that honors Him

PRAYER

All-knowing God, in the fullness of time, you spoke and created all things. You formed the world with wisdom as its foundation. You sent your Spirit upon your people to grant them access to wisdom so that they may withstand the trials that come their way and show that you are the one true God. In your mercy, bestow upon us the same Spirit so that, as the church, we will stand the test of time and lead the world in your ways. Help us delight in wisdom and pursue it in everything we do. May we, through the wisdom granted to us, stand before kings and rulers all for your name's sake. **Amen.**

DAY 5: SEARCHES ALL THINGS

“The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:10-11

REFLECTION

The secret things belong to God (Deut 29:29). In His divine mercy, He has chosen to reveal Himself. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He uses ordinary things within the created order to reveal Himself. Bread and Wine as an invitation to participate in His Son’s death, Water as an entry into our inheritance and new identity in Christ, ordinary words transformed into the Holy Scriptures, et al. The ordinary, through the power of the Spirit, becomes extraordinary so that we who are ordinary can participate and partake in the extraordinary divine things of God. All we need to do is seek God with all our heart and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will find Him.

PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God that He can be found when He is sought
- Pray to God that through the power of His Spirit you may diligently search for Him
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal those things that are not of God
- Repent of those things the Spirit reveals to you
- Pray that the things hidden in darkness will be brought to light so that humankind will be drawn into repentance
- Pray to God that world leaders will not lean on their knowledge and understanding and will cling to the Holy Spirit to search the things of God and lead according to them

PRAYER

All-powerful God, in our sin, we lost communion with you and your ways became hidden to us. In your mercy, forgive us and renew a right spirit in us. May your Spirit, search the things that are hidden and in the fullness of time make them known to us. May we embrace patience and know that the hidden things of God are revealed to those who search them. When we search for you with all our hearts, may we find you. **Amen.**



DAY 6: REVEALER

However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

REFLECTION

If the Spirit searches all things, then it is He who will reveal them to us. When He reveals, we see a broken body and out-poured blood of Christ, the baptismal font becomes our tomb and womb into Christianity, God’s word comes alive and teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains in righteousness. That which was hidden in darkness comes to light by the power of the Spirit. We begin to taste and see the goodness of the Lord. Unlike the Pharisees, we are not blinded to the Way, Truth, and the Life. The way to the Father is revealed to us. Still, many live in darkness, and our work is to pray to God that through His Spirit, He will show them the light and they, too, may partake in the divine revelation we behold.



PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God for the revelation He grants those who seek Him by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Pray that through the Spirit you will be able to discern all the things He reveals about God
- Pray that through your fasting and prayer, you will draw near to God and He will reveal great and mighty things through the Spirit
- Pray for areas in your life or the lives of those around you that are mired with confusion that the Spirit will give direction and show the way.
- Pray for your heart to be receptive of the things revealed by the Spirit
- Pray that with the rising waves of life you will remain steadfast to what God has revealed to you about your life
- Pray that more people will receive revelations from God and that the world over will be drawn to repentance and salvation

PRAYER

In the beginning, when the world was hidden in darkness, you spoke and brought light that revealed the wonder of creation. We sinned and fell short of your glory and became mired in darkness. In the fullness of time, you sent your Son who shone light into the darkness. Your Son, in turn, left us a helper who reveals all the things that are hidden. Teach us to submit to the revelation and respond as you would have us. May we grow to know you and love you more all the days of our lives. Amen that the hidden things of God are revealed to those who search them. When we search for you with all our hearts, may we find you. Amen.

DAY 7: SPIRIT OF TRUTH

This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

1 John 5:6

REFLECTION

The advent of the Enlightenment age ushered in a world where humankind believed we could get to the bottom of everything and unveil the truth hidden in the fabric of the universe. The result has been a constant chase of the essence of truth. Currently, there exist many who claim to be truth seekers. We have all heard (or believed) different levels of conspiracies. Christians know God to be the source of all truth, not the effort of man or any other thing within the created order. The Spirit reveals the things of God, and God is not a man that He should lie; therefore, the Spirit speaks the truth. Because the Spirit comes from God and is God, He reveals truth. This truth can be identified with its faithfulness to what God has spoken before.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God will quench your thirst for knowledge and truth
- Pray that God will help you submit to Him and not lean on your understanding
- Pray that the Spirit of Truth will dwell in you and all those concerning you
- Pray for the world leaders, that God's Spirit of truth will also dwell in them, and God's truth will reign worldwide
- Pray that the world will not be deceived into believing the truth of the enemy, and God's truth will prevail
- Pray that you will be a beacon of truth amidst a world that has made truth subjective

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge you are the source of all truth and through your Son by the power of the Spirit, you have granted us access to the truth. May your Spirit of truth dwell in us and rid us of all the schemes and lies of the evil one. In all our dealings, may we live out your truth, and may the world be drawn to your truth through our lives.
Amen.

