



**Your Guide to 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting**

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this year's **AMPLIFY**, our 21 Days of Prayer of Fasting! Through prayer and fasting, God's people have always reached out to him for a fresh encounter or divine intervention. Moses, in seeking a spiritual breakthrough, spent 40 days alone with God without eating or drinking until he received The Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:38). King David sought a personal breakthrough as he fasted to keep 1people to fast and pray for protection against their enemies (Ezra 8:21-23). Daniel fasted and prayed as he sought the restoration of those in exile because of rebellion against their God (Daniel 9:3-4). The apostle Paul fasted as he pondered his encounter with the Lord and what it meant for his life (Acts 9:9). The leaders of the church in Antioch worshiped, prayed and fasted together as they sought breakthrough for their thriving church (Acts 13:1-3). Our Saviour, setting the ultimate example, entered 40 days of fasting before being launched into public ministry (Matthew 4:1-2).

What breakthrough are you seeking? What is in front of you that you need God's intervention in? A loved one far from Christ? A critical decision in the life of your family? A relationship that is falling apart? What great matters are in front of our church or your ministry? Our evangelistic outreach? Our financial situation?

Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, wrote; "I believe the power of fasting as it relates to prayer is the spiritual atomic bomb that our Lord has given us to destroy the strongholds of evil and usher in a great revival and spiritual harvest around the world."

So before you begin, take some time and write down what areas you need a breakthrough in and then lift them up Lord in prayer over the next 21 days.

## **A GUIDE TO PRAYER & FASTING BEFORE FASTING...**

### **What is fasting?**

Fasting is deliberately abstaining from the normal routines of life. Its purpose is to spend focused time in prayer and the study of God's word, seeking to align our lives with God's will. Ultimately, fasting is more about *replacing* than *abstaining*. It is filling our lives with God's Word instead of with food, social media or entertainment. It is finding satisfaction and enjoyment in God and in God alone. Fasting helps us humble ourselves before the Lord and positions us to experience spiritual breakthroughs in our lives.

Mathew Henry writes, "Fasting is of use to put an edge upon prayer." Have your prayers lost their zeal? Has your devotional life become dull? Fasting has a way of sharpening our souls and making us more sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Fasting is not about changing your world, but about letting God realign your heart toward his purposes!

### **What types of fasts do we do at ALC?**

Although the Bible mentions a number of different types of fasts, at ALC we encourage you to do a liquids fast. For this type of fast we give up all types of solid food and drink only liquids such as juices and water. We also urge you to stop all those extra activities that are not essential to your daily responsibilities such as social media and other forms of entertainment that serve as distractions from life.

### **How do I get ready for my fast?**

- Decrease your food intake progressively get rid of non- essentials such as caffeine, sugars, snacks, etc.
- Free up your diary in order to make space for intentional times with God each day.
- Lastly, set some clear fasting goals for yourself. How many meals each day will you fast? Which foods? Where will you pray? When will you pray?

### **What if I have medical conditions that prevent me from fasting?**

If you have a medical condition that keeps you from fasting that's fine. Understand that fasting will force you to decide between normal things in your life, which are not essential, and the choice of seeking after God. Even with a medical condition anyone can fast from caffeine, social media, computer games and junk food!

## HOW TO GET STARTED...

### 1. Pick your fast

- Full Fast: Drink liquids only. Please consult your doctor first if in doubt.
- Daniel Fast: Eat only vegetables, fruit, water and juice (minimal amount of carbohydrates).
- Partial Fast: Not eating one or two meals a day or abstaining from certain kinds of food.
- All-day Fast: Abstaining from food one day or more days per week.

### 2. Set goals & write them down

Begin with clear personal goals as well as breakthrough goals for ALC. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of a relationship or resolution of family issues? Are you facing difficulties? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Write these requests in a journal or a notebook, or create a digital journal using your favourite notetaking program or app. Keeping a journal throughout your fast is a great way to track and remember all God does during your fast.

### 3. Set aside time to read the Bible

Fasting is ultimately an expression of humility and dependence on God. It is about replacing the daily intake of food, entertainment and human contact with focused times of prayer, spending large amounts of time feeding on the Word of God and spiritual listening.

### 4. Open your life before God

One of the great benefits of spiritual fasting is a heightened awareness of God's presence and power in our lives. It is not that God has moved but that we have. Fasting has a great way of moving us towards a deeper spiritual dependency and away from wilful self-dependency. The greatest breakthrough will take place when you make time to examine your life and discover what areas most need breakthrough. We ask that you fast for spiritual breakthroughs for ALC and our mission work as well as for yourself – see **Prayer List** on page 5.

### 5. Expect God to move

Enter your fast by faith. The Bible reminds us that, “without faith it is impossible to please God, for anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Spiritual fasting is a supernatural endeavour that has shaped and transformed God's people for centuries. If you have doubt, ask God to meet you in your doubts and lead you in overcoming them, just as the apostles prayed, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:5).

## **DURING FASTING...**

### **What battles can I expect during my fast?**

As you begin fasting, you may experience a variety of symptoms including intense headaches, fatigue and more. Keep in mind that during the first days of your fast your body will experience weird and out of the ordinary symptoms. If these symptoms persist and become an obstacle for your daily responsibilities first, contact your doctor and then seek guidance from a person with experience in fasting. The first three days are typically the time when your body is being flushed and drained from all the impurities and excesses of our regular "unhealthy" practices.

### **What if I fail?**

Temptations are always tough and during a fast the smallest thing might become a huge battle. Every person who has made a serious commitment to fast can tell stories about how a long-lost friend shows up to treat you to dinner at the exact moment when you have just begun fasting. Yes, fasting can be tough! But think of this: God is not a slave master; he is your loving heavenly father. Choose to seek him not out of duty but out of love. So, If you stumble in your fast... get up, dust off and press on. Share your daily struggles with God and allow him to help you in them.

## **AFTER FASTING...**

### **What can I do to ensure the effects of my fast become permanent?**

1. Respond in worship to all the blessings you receive and what God speaks to you and shows you in the Bible. You may want to voice the testimony of your fast in your Connect Group, at our Sunday celebration, or on Facebook.
2. Make a list of the blessings, insights and words God gave you here:

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**PRAYER LIST...**

True and lasting change can only be accomplished by the power of God – and prayer is our direct connection with God! Through prayer we access God’s infinite power and allow him to change us from the inside out. Only God can change a life, a church, a mission field or anything else we are praying for. So make a list of the things you want to see God breakthrough in the follow areas:

**MY LIFE**

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**MY CHURCH**

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**MY CITY**

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**MY WORLD**

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**DAY 1**

Fasting is not an optional extra for Christians. Jesus did not say, “If you fast,” but, “When you fast.”

**Read Matthew 6**

**Fasting thought**

“Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the spiritual discipline of fasting. The exercise of self-control is an essential feature of a Christian’s life. Such disciplines have only one purpose: to make us more ready and willing to accomplish those things which God would have done.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**DAY 2**

Fasting is a humbling experience that reveals who or what we really depend upon or are controlled by.

**Read Psalm 69**

**Fasting thought**

“More than any other single discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately — anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear. If they are within us, they will surface during fasting. At first we will rationalize that our anger is due to our hunger. Then we know that we are angry because the spirit of anger is within us. We can rejoice in this knowledge because we know that healing is available through the power of Christ.” Richard Foster

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**DAY 3**

Fasting is a legitimate pursuit of a Holy God. It can be of great way of undertaking a spiritual inventory of one’s soul and spiritual fruitfulness.

**Read Psalm 139**

**Fasting thought**

“Let us say something about fasting, because many, for want of knowing its usefulness, undervalue its necessity, and some reject it as almost superfluous; while, on the other hand where the use of it is not well understood, it easily degenerates into superstition. Holy and legitimate fasting is directed to three ends; for we practice it either as a restraint on the flesh, to preserve it from licentiousness, or as a preparation for prayers and pious meditations, or as a testimony of our humiliation in the presence of God when we are desirous of confessing our guilt before him.” John Calvin

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## DAY 4

Fasting is a struggle against the flesh and is emotionally and physically demanding; in this we discover what we really hunger for.

### Read Deuteronomy 8

#### Fasting thought

“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

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## Day 5

Remember to accompany your fast with confession of sin. Confess your sin, your lack of dependence on God; through this we can experience the cleansing forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

### Read I John 1-2

#### Fasting thought

“Confession recognizes the absence of God’s presence in our lives through our own wilfulness or indifference. Fasting is an act of craving more of God’s presence, power and purity in our lives and ministry. Confession is admitting there is something wrong between us and God. Fasting is longing for the fullness of God to

flood our souls. When we practice confession in our fasting, our fasting becomes more than a tool to bring God back to us; it becomes an instrument moving us back to God because God never moves.” Gary Rohrmayer

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 6**

Fasting is ultimately a yearning for something missing. Something was previously experienced but now is absent from our lives.

**Read Matthew 9**

**Fasting thought**

“Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger or a homesickness for God. It tells only half the story of Christian fasting. Half of Christian fasting is that our physical appetite is lost because our homesickness for God is so intense. The other half is that our homesickness for God is threatened because our physical appetites are so intense. In the first half, appetite is lost. In the second half, appetite is resisted. In the first, we yield to the higher hunger that is. In the second, we fight for the higher hunger that isn’t. Christian fasting is not only the spontaneous effect of a superior satisfaction in God; it is also a chosen weapon against every force in the world that would take that satisfaction away.” John Piper

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## Day 7

Fasting is a tool that aids in discerning the call of God in our lives. Fasting helps us slow down and hear God’s voice.

### Read Acts 9

#### Fasting thought

A discerning fast “involves focusing on our choices instead of on our foods and praying our decisions through to successful conclusions...this type of fast helps us receive God’s wisdom to make our decisions. This type of fast is not for every minor decision in life, such as where to go for lunch or what minor purchase to make. A discerning fast offers help in weighty decisions such as choosing a mate, resigning from a job and other life-changing choices. Fasting brings more light into the application of good decision-making skills.” Elmer Towns

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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## Day 8

Fasting is more about replacing than it is about abstaining — replacing normal daily activities with focused praying, confessing, feeding on the Word and worshipping the Lord.

### Read Nehemiah 9

#### Fasting thought

“We tend to think of fasting as going without food. But we can fast from anything. If we love music and decide to miss a concert in order to spend time with God, that is fasting. It is helpful to think of the parallel of human friendship. When friends need

to be together, they will cancel all other activities in order to make that possible. There's nothing magical about fasting. It's just one way of telling God that your priority at that moment is to be alone with him, sorting out whatever is necessary, and you have cancelled the meal, party, concert or whatever else you had planned to do in order to fulfil that priority." J. I. Packer

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 9**

Let your thirsts drive you to God that he may satisfy your desires and meet the needs of your soul.

**Read Psalm 63**

**Fasting thought**

"Prayer needs fasting for its full growth. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible. Fasting is the other hand, the one with which we let go of the visible....Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." Andrew Murray

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 10**

Fasting has a way of revealing what our hearts really crave. It can reveal what our soul needs and how we satisfy those deepest wants.

**Read Matthew 4**

**Fasting thought**

“Fasting can be an expression of finding your greatest pleasure and enjoyment in life from God. That’s the case when disciplining yourself to fast means you love God more than food, that seeking him is more important to you than eating. This honours God and is a means of worshiping him as God.” Donald Whitney

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 11**

In fasting it is good to hide our suffering and discomfort with cheerfulness.

**Read Matthew 6**

**Fasting thought**

“Let us learn from our Lord’s instruction about fasting, the great importance of cheerfulness in our religion. Those words ‘anoint my head and wash my face’ are full of deep meaning. They should teach us to aim at letting people see we find that Christianity makes us happy. Never let us forget that there is no witness in looking melancholy and gloomy. Are we dissatisfied with Christ’s wages and Christ’s service? Surely not! Then let us not look as if we were.” J. C. Ryle

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 12**

Fasting is rewarded because it is a cry from the heart of those who find their ultimate satisfaction in God and in God alone.

**Read Psalm 73**

**Fasting thought**

“When God sees the confession of need and this expression of trust, he acts, because the glory of his all-sufficient grace is at stake. The final answer is that God rewards fasting because fasting expresses the cry of the heart that nothing on earth can satisfy our souls besides God. God must reward this cry because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.” John Piper

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 13**

Are you getting tired of fasting? Let me encourage you. Fasting is a sacrificial act that realigns our affections, moving them from the temporal to the eternal. It turns each moment of craving into a prayer of intense dependence!

**Read Psalm 109**

**Fasting thought**

“If religion requires us to sometimes fast and deny our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature; it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the soul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that although these abstinences give some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily appetites and passions, and so increase our taste of spiritual joys, that even these severities of religion, when practiced with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.” William Law

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**Day 14**

Fasting must be accompanied with goodwill and good works for it to be effective and pleasing to God.

**Read Isaiah 58**

**Fasting thought**

“Why is this fasting unacceptable to God? What’s wrong with it? What’s wrong with it is that it left the sin in their lives untouched. The only authentic fasting is fasting that includes a spiritual attack against our own sin. Whatever else we fast for, we must fast for our own holiness. We cannot fast for anything with authenticity while living in known sin.” John Piper

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 15**

Fasting is a means of seeing spiritual breakthrough for a physical or emotional problem as well as finding freedom from the besetting sins that affect our relationship with God. Today focus your prayers on those hurts, habits and hangups you need spiritual healing to overcome.

**Read Isaiah 58** (again!)

**Fasting thought**

“The Elijah Fast is not a common corrective device to be used for freeing yourself from minor habits. It is called for in severely negative cases of mental and emotional response. It often works because it is a discipline that builds self-discipline and self-esteem. But more important than psychological esteem, the Elijah Fast invites God into the problem. Then, in the strength of God, victory is possible.” Elmer Towns

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 16**

Our fasting may be rewarded in the experience not only of spiritual renewal but also of physical refreshment.

**Read Isaiah 58** (yes...again!)

**Fasting thought**

“Of fasting I say this: It is right to fast frequently in order to subdue and control the body. For when the stomach is full, the body does not serve for preaching, for praying, for studying or for doing anything else that is good. Under such circumstances God’s Word cannot remain. But one should not fast with a view to meriting something by it as by a good work.” Martin Luther

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 17**

Approached properly, fasting can bring light into our darkness and clarity to our confusion.

**Read Psalm 112**

**Fasting thought**

“By aligning our hearts with God through fasting, we find ourselves consumed by his resplendent nature. This is like the sun breaking forth through the early morning darkness. This breakthrough comes as he turns the gloom and confusion of our darkness into his light of love, joy and peace.” Gary Rohrmayer

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 18**

Fasting is a weapon used to respond to the present and future attacks of our enemy the devil.

**Read Ester 4**

**Fasting thought**

“When the devil, the foe and the tyrant, sees a man bearing this weapon [fasting], he is straightway frightened and he recollects and considers that defeat which he suffered in the wilderness at the hands of the Saviour; at once his strength is shattered and the very sight of this weapon, given us by our Commander-in-Chief, burns him.” Isaac of Syria

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 19**

Almost there! Don't give up, as you will have already experienced God loves to surprise his children by satisfying them with his presence.

**Read Psalm 1**

**Fasting thought**

“The rewards of fasting are not often instantaneous but are experienced over time. They come as surprises, like in the midst of a worship service when my soul is stirred and strangely satisfied. Or when I am reading the Word and my inner being is lifted

beyond this world with a fresh perspective. Or when I am in prayer and the groaning of my heart experiences a peace that is unexplainable. I have found the rewards ultimately lead to a more intimate and satisfying experience with the God who made me, saves me and fills me.” Gary Rohrmayer

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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**Day 20**

Fasting has its spiritual rewards. One of the rewards of fasting is experiencing the guiding hand of God in our lives.

**Read Psalm 23**

**Fasting thought**

“Every time I have fasted, I have found my worship experience sweeter. I found the illumination of God’s Spirit brighter and my hunger for God’s word stronger. Through my fasting God has guided me, comforted me, challenged me and corrected me. It is not that I have bent God toward me through fasting, but that I, through fasting, have bent my heart toward him.” Gary Rohrmayer

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## Day 21

As you come to the end, my prayer is that you will make the discipline of fasting a regular holy habit!

### Read Matthew 9

#### Fasting thought

“For the serious-minded follower of Jesus, fasting is a consistent habit. In a world filled with indulgences, we need, on a routine basis, to consciously lay aside our freedoms in Christ for the purpose of seeking the face of God, intimacy with the Son of God and fullness of the Holy Spirit.” Gary Rohrmayer

**Take a few moments to journal what God had taught you today.**

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Congratulations on completing 21 days! Now is a great time to step back and recognise that you’ve done *more* than just 21 days of prayer and fasting. What you have done is build a new habit! Whether you gave up one meal a day, did a liquid fast or something in between, what you did was develop the discipline of pressing into God to hear him and his plans for you. I encourage you, don’t stop! Maintain the discipline of prayer, and fasting, so that you can continue to deepen your faith and be more available to the Lord.





