

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church

The Ministry that Changes Lives!

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD." (Joel 1:14)

**21-Day New Year and Preparation for
Spiritual Warfare Training Corporate Fast
February 3, 2018 - February 23, 2018**



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as adapted from

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2018 Fasting Guidelines

We are thankful for your willingness and commitment to participate with us in this 21 day season of prayer and fasting with the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church family! We will begin our fast on Saturday, February 3, 2018 and will end the fast on Friday, February 23, 2018 just prior to our Spiritual Warfare Training on Saturday, February 24th.

Prayer and fasting is scriptural. Refer to Isaiah 58:1-14; Daniel 1:8-16; 10:2-21; Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15. It is a spiritual exercise intended to draw the followers of Jesus Christ into a closer relationship with Him. Pulling away from earthly pleasures and spending time solely devoted to God promises to give the participant "greater vision, clarity, and focus " as well as allow for both individual and corporate oneness with the Master. God wants us to see farther than we have ever seen. He has given us every resource we need. The real challenge is to make time to listen to God speak into every aspect of our lives socially, financially, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

We are looking forward to this season that will lead us into growth and blessing for we know that when we draw close to God, He will draw close to us (James 4:8).

This is a time of prayer in which we will incorporate fasting. It is not a diet plan. Please take time to read the information in this packet and prepare yourself prior to February 3rd. We are looking forward to learning and growing together during this specially ordained time as we seek to give God glory in our individual lives and in the life of our church.

2018 New Year Corporate Prayer and Fasting Times:

We are asking those members who can to intentionally and specifically pray at the following specified times.

Pray in the morning from 6 AM – 6:30 AM

Pray in the evening from 9 PM – 9:30 PM

Then, join us on the following Wednesdays in the sanctuary
5:30 PM – 6:15 PM for corporate prayer.

Wednesday, 1/31/18

Wednesday, 2/7/18

Wednesday, 2/14/18

Wednesday, 2/21/18

Prayer and Fasting 101:

Fasting without prayer is a diet and does not manifest any supernatural benefits. We must not only fast but we must also pray!

Why Pray?

Prayer is two-way communication with God. Prayer is not just you talking to God but also you listening to God to hear what He has to say. During these next twenty-one days, we encourage you to really pour your heart out to the Lord and listen for what He has to say.

Our primary goal in prayer should be to know Jesus more and experience Him not just tell Him all about our troubles. When you pray, pour your heart before God, surrender totally to Him and tell Him your desire to glorify Him in and through your life. Focus on who He is and His character – love, goodness, greatness.

We must communicate with God DAILY. Set aside some time every day to spend with Him. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. Find some worship music to listen to as you set the atmosphere for entering into the presence of the Lord.

Jeremiah 33:3 NIV, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

Why Fast?

The purpose of fasting is to strengthen you spiritually, mentally and physically. The goal is to help cleanse your temple of destructive and negative forces that interfere with your relationship with God. By incorporating fasting as a part of your Christian walk and seeking God through prayer, you will grow closer to the Lord and mature in the faith like never before.

The goal of fasting is to increase your ability to deny the flesh when needed. During your time of fasting, be diligent in your study and meditation of God's Word. Our primary focus and objective is to focus our attention on seeking God's direction for our lives. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life.

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD." (Joel 1:14)

Preparing to Fast

Before you begin a fast, it is important that you prepare yourself to fast. Although fasting is primarily a spiritual discipline, it begins in the physical realm. You should not fast without specific physical preparation. Here are some steps that you should take to ensure your fast is effective.

(Isaiah 58:3-6 NIV) "Why have we fasted," they say, "and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?" "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"'

Step One: Why are you Fasting?

What is the purpose of your fast? What is it that you are expecting God to do during this fast? Is it for spiritual direction? Healing? Discipline? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you as you determine your personal reason for fasting.

We are all at different places in our walk with God so we must start where we are. We should not fast to impress others or to prove our spirituality. We fast to draw nearer to God.

(Matthew 6:16) "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward"

Step Two: Make Your Commitment

Make your commitment to the Lord after giving consideration, thought and planning to a few key areas such as:

- The Daniel Fast is a tried and popular method of fasting. However, if you

have any condition which would prohibit you from being a part of the Daniel Fast, there are other options. Choose something from your daily routine (i.e. specific foods or beverages, television, other technology, etc.) and fast in that manner for the next 21 days. Parents consider this option for your children to also participate. Remember, the details are not as important as the spirit in which you participate.

- What changes will you need to make to your daily schedule? i.e. modification of exercise routines, sporting events, etc. When fasting, your energy levels will be different so you may have to modify your schedule during the fast.
- How much time of each day will you devote to prayer and study of God's Word? Set a goal of beginning and ending the day reading/meditating/studying the Word. When you think of these things and make your commitments before you begin your fast, you will be able to sustain the fast when temptations and life's challenges tempt you to quit the fast.

Step Three: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

Spiritual preparation is essential for a successful fast. The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin can hinder your prayers. Begin to prepare yourself spiritually by meditating on the following in your heart:

- Remember that God is your Father and He loves you and is for you.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit brings to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you. (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; Luke 17:3,4).
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His Word in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14, 15.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to blend in with the world (Romans 12:1,2).
- Meditate on the Word of God particularly the character of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace and compassion (Psalm 48:9,10; Psalm 103:1-8; Psalm 103:11-13).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).
- Be prepared for spiritual opposition, the enemy will come to attack and test your commitment to seeking the Lord through prayer and fasting (Galatians 5:16, 17).

Step Four: Prepare Yourself Physically and Naturally

Before you begin fasting, if you take prescription medication or have a chronic condition please consult your physician first.

Prepare your body by eating smaller meals before starting the fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

Depending upon the type of fast that you choose, you may need to purchase foods specifically for the fast (raw fruit, vegetables, etc.) and even gather recipes for meal preparation.

Remember when Jesus went on His forty-day fast, He went by Himself out into the wilderness. Depending upon the fast that you do, you may need to modify your daily habits or routines. Many people are able to fast and function fine without much fatigue; bless God if this is you. However, if this is not you, exercise wisdom during this twenty-one-day period and make adjustments as necessary if you are able. If your job or other obligations such as athletics will not allow you to modify your energy level, choose a fast that you can still perform but deny yourself something so you can draw closer to the Lord.

Throughout your fast, you may feel somewhat weaker than normal. During the first few days, you may feel tired and irritable. Lightening your workload and cutting down on strenuous exercise would be a very good idea to maintain your health and morale.

Types of Fasts:

There are several types of fasting. The one you choose is between you and God. He will honor your best sacrifice. You should feel free to choose your own fasting plan as this is a very personal decision. We are all at different places in our walk with God and our spirituality should never be a cause for comparison or competition. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but know your body, know your options and most importantly, seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. ***Do not focus on what you eat or do not let eating become the focus of your fast, God should be the focus of your fast.*** This is a time to disconnect enough with your regular patterns and habits in order to grow closer to God.

Here are a few options for your fast. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast especially if you are taking medication, have a chronic condition or if you are pregnant or nursing.

Option #1 ~ Fasting from a specific activity or food

This type of fast refers to omitting a specific item(s), activity or habit from your daily routine in order to spend time in prayer and seeking the Lord. For example, you may choose to eliminate red meat, fast food, sweets, caffeine. It could also involve fasting from an activity or habit such as watching secular television, social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

Option #2 ~ Daniel Fast

The Daniel Fast is a great model to follow that proves to be extremely effective for spiritual focus, discipline and purification in the body and soul. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God, Daniel 1:8 “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank...”

Daniel 10:2, 3 “In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” It is one of the most common types of fasts. In the book of Daniel, we find two different times Daniel fasted (Daniel 1 and Daniel 10). Daniel 1 states that he ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, it states that Daniel ate no rich (or choice) foods as well as no meat or wine. The Daniel Fast consists of no meats, dairy, sugar or yeast breads for 21 days. You are able to eat lots of fruits, veggies, grains, legumes and peanut butter.

The foundation for the Daniel Fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy foods and dairy can be included, that depends on the person and their convictions. You may want to avoid dairy products, leavened breads, processed foods, deep fried foods (e.g. potato chips), solid fats (e.g. margarine), and beverages (e.g. teas, energy drinks). Instead, consider eating fruits and pure fruit juices, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and pure water (spring or distilled).

Seek the Lord’s guidance and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit with the Daniel fast or any type of fast.

A resource for more information concerning the Daniel Fast - www.daniel-fast.com.

Option #3 ~ Juice/Water Fast

Juice or water fast is when no solid food is consumed and instead water (water fast) or vegetable/fruit juices and water (juice fast). Extreme precautions should be taken and under the direct supervision and monitoring of your physician for the water fast.

Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan when on a juice diet. You may even use one of your meals for this type of fast.

Option #4 ~ Total (Full) Fast

A total fast is where nothing – neither liquid, solid food or even water is consumed for a period of time. We do not recommend total fasting as this can be very dangerous to your health. Attempting to go without water especially for any period of time can be extremely harmful to the body. Please consult a physician and take extreme precautions.

Combination of Different Types of Fasts –

Feel free to mix up the types of fast during your 21-day journey. For example, do the Daniel fast for a week then modify your fasting plan to do a liquid fast on certain mornings with Daniel fast in the evenings. Be led by the Spirit as to what you feel the Lord is leading you to give up for intimate time with Him. Remember, the focus is not WHAT type of fast you do but that you do fast so that you can work on your relationship with the Lord.

Fasting While Nursing or Pregnant

Strict fasting while pregnant or nursing is not recommended. If you would like to participate in the twenty-one day fast, here are some options you may consider with the approval of your physician:

- A modified Daniel fast including whole grains, legumes, whey protein, calcium and other iron supplements
- Fasting sweets and desserts
- Fasting red meat
- Fasting certain pleasurable activities (television shows, movies, social media such as Facebook/Twitter, video games, etc.)

As a pregnant or nursing mother, your priority is the health and development of your baby. You can still participate and be a wise steward over your child.

Beginning Your Fast

Depending on the type of fast you choose, it is important to prepare your body before the beginning of the fast. Take some time before the fast begins to transition into your fast; otherwise, you could do harm to your physical body. For example, if you are doing the Daniel Fast, start eliminating meat, refined sugars, white grains from your diet the week before. Also start cutting back on your caffeine intake and dairy products.

To keep your energy up throughout the day, it is important to eat or drink every two and a half to three hours. If you go longer than that, you can experience an energy lull and be tempted to overeat at the next meal. Even if you're fasting on fruits and vegetables, overeating is never a good idea.

It is very important to drink lots of water while fasting. Drinking about 100 ounces of water per day will help to support your critical liver function. The liver is the filter for the body, so when you don't drink enough water, the liver doesn't function at its highest capacity.

Select your food items wisely. The key is to prepare a plan ahead of the fast, to not get legalistic about it but choose well. You should consider choosing healthy, organic options whenever possible.

Ending Your Fast

The way you end your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. A greasy cheeseburger would not be the best choice to end the Daniel Fast. Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do this.

Begin eating gradually. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Here are some tips to help end your fast properly:

- Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon
- While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:
 - First day: Add a raw salad
 - Second day: Add a baked or broiled potato, no butter or seasoning
 - Third day: Add a steamed vegetable
 - Thereafter: Begin to reintroduce your normal diet.
- Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruit such as watermelon and cantaloupe. Advance to a few tablespoons of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and baked potato.

An Important Ingredient ~ Studying God's Word:

It is important that we spend time studying God's Word. The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is one of the primary ways He communicates with us in addition to prayer. It is important to meditate on, to memorize and to apply the Word in your life. Why do we need to study God's Word?

- Because the Word when spoken has power to run the enemy away (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Because the Word when applied will keep us from sin (Psalm 119:11)
- Because the Word when submitted to will guide us and instruct us in the ways of God (Psalm 119:105)
- Because the Word when received in our hearts will help us develop knowledge and understanding of God's character and His heart so that we can apply that to our lives (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Because the Word when obeyed will disciple us so we look like Jesus (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Because the Word when meditated on and spoken will cause us to prosper and have good success (Joshua 1:8)

There are many ways to study God's Word. You do not have to be a Bible scholar or attend a seminary school to study the Word of God.

Many people ask the question: WHAT DO I STUDY?

There is really no wrong place to start. You can study anything that's going to help you. For example, if you are dealing with anger or fear, look in the back of your Bible at your concordance and look at all the scriptures that talk about that subject. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you, and He'll lead you and reveal things to you. You may want to also read the scriptures in more than one version of the Bible. For example, New King James Version is a modern translation that uses language that is more familiar to our way of speaking. There are also many online tools available for your use that can aid you in study. A few of them are:

www.biblegateway.com

www.biblehub.com

Another suggestion for study is to listen again to sermons that you have heard. Consider getting CD's or DVD's of Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church Sunday worship services or Word on Wednesday services. "**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the**

word of God." (Romans 10:17, NKJV) (present tense). The Word is alive and will always give birth; do not assume that because you have heard it one time, you received all there is to

know. Take an opportunity to solidify what you have heard by meditating over and over on your notes or listening again by audio.

In order to effectively study the Bible, here are a few tips for you:

1. Purposely set aside time when you have an appointment with God. Find a time that works best for you. If you are not a morning person then find a time that works best for you when you are alert, focused, and ready to spend time with the Father. Do not make your study time routine time. It should be something you look forward to, something you enjoy, something that energizes you.
2. Make preparation for your Bible study. Find a place you enjoy being such as room or location where you can be alone. Let it be a place where you are comfortable and enjoy being there. It should be a place where you are free from distractions so you can concentrate.
3. Have all your materials available (print or electronic). You will want to bring your Bible, a Bible dictionary, a concordance, a journal. During these 21 days, God will speak many things to you. Some things you will immediately understand, some things you may have to mediate on to get the full understanding. So that you don't miss anything or forget, record your time in a journal. Record the date, the scriptures you read, the things you learned or studied, the revelation you received, and even the questions you may still have. When you record, you can always have a recorded reminder of your time.
4. Prepare your heart. Be open to talk to God about things you may need to confess and receive His forgiveness before you begin studying. If you need to forgive someone, forgive them. Preparing your heart will allow you to study in peace without any hindrances blocking you from receiving revelation during your time with the Lord.

Fasting the Right Way (Read Matthew 6:16-18)

Fast without drawing attention to yourself. Keep your physical appearance up by looking like you always look. No one needs to know that you are fasting but you and God. However, because this is a corporate fast, others may know, but be sure not to allow pride and boasting about this time of sacrifice to steal away the personal benefits of this humble act of drawing closer to God.

Benefits of Fasting the Right Way

"...and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:18)

- Fasting the right way has its rewards. God rewards our "secret time" openly.
- His rewards are always greater than recognition of men.
- God honors proper and sincere motives.
- Fasting keeps us in the presence of the Lord.
- Fasting **humbles** us before the Lord.
- Fasting teaches us to be dependent on God for the answer.
- Fasting teaches us **discipline** and **control** over our bodies.
- Fasting keeps us from being a **slave** to any food or habit.
- Fasting has **health benefits**.

FASTING FAQ'S

CAN I HAVE SALT, PEPPER, SEASONINGS, MILK, WHOLE GRAINS, SOY PRODUCTS, EGGS, PROTEIN DRINKS, VITAMINS OR BUTTER?

The general guidelines for each fast can be found in the "Types of Fasts" section. However, fasting is a private discipline. It is not something that is meant to be unattainable. Decide what is feasible for you to do and make the effort. If you are on a full fast and just cannot consume broth without salt and pepper that's OK. Do what you can and put it in God's hands...just do

your best. Remember, if you have questions concerning medical restraints, please consult with your physician.

WHAT CAN CHILDREN FAST?

If your children want to participate in the fast, maybe consider giving up desserts as a family or soft drinks or one item of food that would be a sacrifice for each of you. In addition to giving up an item of food, you could also give up television as a family and spend that time reading and discussing Bible stories. Remember to lead your children not force them.

WHAT IF I HAVE A MEDICAL CONDITION?

Consult your doctor before starting any fast. Decide together what is possible. If your health condition prohibits you from fasting food, try fasting something else that would be a sacrifice or distraction for you and replace that time concentrating on prayer and Bible study.

WHAT IF I START AND CAN'T FINISH OUT MY FAST...DID I WASTE MY TIME?

Seeking God through prayer and fasting is never a waste of time. When you make the effort, God takes notice. Just determine within your heart that you will make an even better effort next time. Or maybe you need to try finishing up with a partial fast.

DO I HAVE TO FAST FOOD? WHAT ABOUT TV, SPORTS, ETC?

Fasting food is the traditional type of fast that is outlined in Scripture. However, if you are unable to fast food for health reasons, feel free to give up something else that might have control in your life or be preventing you from experiencing spiritual growth. Replace that time with prayer and study of God's Word.

DO I HAVE TO DO THE SAME FAST AS OTHERS?

Fasting is a private and personal discipline. Consider the types of fasts outlined in this packet and select one that works for you. You don't have to go on the same type of fast as someone else to see God's hand at work. Just do your best.

DO I CONTINUE TO EXERCISE WHILE FASTING?

Moderate exercise is good. But it is best to always consult a doctor about fasting and exercise. If you are on a complete fast, you may not have the energy needed to maintain a high level of exercise.

WHAT IF I HAVE A MANUAL LABOR JOB?

If you have a job that requires you to expend a lot of physical energy, you may want to consider a partial fast that allows you to receive enough nutrition to perform your job.

CAN MY HUSBAND AND I BE INTIMATE DURING OUR FAST?

There is scriptural reference for abstaining from sex during times of fasting in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 and especially verse 5. Based on scripture, the answer to this question is yes abstaining is allowed for the purpose of fasting and prayer, BUT this is only to be done by mutual consent. Both have to be on board to fast from sexual relations...for fasting is to be honorable before the Lord.

Final Thoughts...

1. As you select your type of fast, plan ahead and determine what each day and week will look like. Luke 14:28 NIV, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?"
2. Keep your household stocked with items you will need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give into temptation. Make wise choices, read the labels, choose natural and raw foods as much as you can avoiding artificial ingredients.
3. Make it a priority to attend church during your fast. Being around other believers will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.
4. If you mess up, don't get discouraged or condemned. Get back on track and keep going. Everyday His mercies are new (Lamentations 3:22-23). He will give you the grace and strength to finish, don't quit (Galatians 6:9).
5. Understand that when you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars.
6. Naturally, you will have hunger pains.
7. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest.
8. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast.
9. Spend time listening to praise and worship music.
10. Pray as often as you can throughout the day.
11. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.
12. Receiving God's best blessing from a fast requires solid commitment. Arranging special time each day with God is absolutely critical in attaining intimate communion with the Father.
13. You must devote yourself to seeking God's face, even and especially when you may feel weak or irritable. Read the Word and pray during what would have been mealtimes. Meditate on Him when you wake up and before you go to bed. Pray without ceasing.
14. As you enter this time, be aware that Satan will do everything he can to pull you away from your prayer and Bible reading time. Do not be discouraged rather immediately go to God in prayer and ask Him to strengthen your resolve in the face of temptation.

MY 21 DAY FASTING COMMITMENT

I commit to participate in our Church Corporate wide fast from Saturday, February 3, 2018 to Friday, February 23, 2018.

My purpose for fasting is:

Specific things I am praying and believing God for during this fast:

The type of fast I will do: _____.

Also, remember to journal each day the scriptures you read and any revelation the Lord spoke to your heart during your study and meditation time.

MY SUCCESS PLAN:

1. I will find an accountability partner, someone who will encourage me when the

temptation to quit arises. *Note: This person should be in agreement with your desire to complete the fast and a spiritually mature person who can encourage you with the Word. Ecclesiastes 4:12, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken". My accountability partner for this fast is _____.*

2. I will set aside time every **morning** from _____ am to _____ am to praise God, read my Word and spend time in prayer.

3. I will set aside time every **evening** from _____ pm to _____ pm to praise God, read my Word and spend time in prayer.

4. I will **NOT** allow the enemy to accuse me or shame me should I fall short. I am determined to use this time to draw closer to the Lord. Remember, choose a fast that stretches you but also is one you can complete. No comparison, no competition, do what you can do for the Glory of God.

So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayers. Ezra 8:23

I believe that God is the only one to answer my prayer and that fasting will draw me closer to Him. Therefore, God being my strength and grace being freely given to me daily, I commit myself to the above fast.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Day 1: Saturday, February 3, 2018

Follow Jesus

(Luke 9:23) "And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

When we examine the text, Jesus declares that if we will come after Him, it will require self-denial. The Greek Word for come in this verse is **erchomai**. It is a verb and means to appear from one place to another publicly. This definition also denotes moving from one place to another. No one follows and remains in the same place. Followers of Jesus must grow. We can never truly follow Jesus without going higher. When Jesus finished His earthly ministry, He went higher and is now seated at the right hand of God. If you are not going higher, who are you following? In order to follow Jesus, we must be willing to lay aside our agenda and do exactly what He wants us to do. Our eyes must stay focused on Him.

Let's examine the word follow, it derives from the Greek word **akoloutheo** which means to follow one who precedes, to join him as his attendant, to accompany him. We must be careful to follow Him and not go before Him. When we go ahead of Him, we make critical mistakes. We must not go first then ask God to come along and bless what we are doing. This is out of order and will never work in the Kingdom of God. We must follow Him at all times.

Once you begin to truly follow Jesus, prepare yourself mentally for the journey. We must be prepared to go through whatever is necessary to follow Jesus. There may be pain, heartache, discomfort, persecution, tests, trials and/or tribulation; however, we must continue to follow.

Set your mind during these next 21 days to follow Jesus and be prepared for an exciting ride.

Ephesians 3:20 Message Version, "God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us"

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Members to develop in the love of God (*Matthew 22:37-40; Philippians 1:9-11*)
- b. Members to bear fruit (*Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:9-11*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 2: Sunday, February 4, 2018

Return to Jesus

(Joel 2:12, NIV) “Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

God is calling us to return to Him with all of our heart. There are times in our walk with the Lord that we will allow distractions to draw us away from Jesus but thank God for grace, that we have another opportunity to return to Him. We must make a decision to lay aside every weight and focus our hearts first and foremost on the Lord. Matthew 6:33 tells us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto us. Seek Him first – before we seek anything else, we must seek the Lord.

Thank God for the covenant of Grace that we live under. Under the Old Covenant, man had to rely on his works and his sacrifices to be right with God. Under the New Covenant, we have every wrong that we have done or will do forgiven at the Cross because of Jesus.

As you spend time in prayer and fasting today, you can establish a strong passionate connection with the Lord as He becomes the object of your affection. Do not allow your love or passion for God to become lukewarm and certainly not cold. To keep your relationship with the Father passionate, spend time studying God’s Word and in prayer and worship before the Father focusing on who He is. Do not worry about what problems you have, what prayer requests you want to talk to the Father about. Just focus on honoring Him and celebrating Him for His goodness, His mercy, His unconditional love, His sovereignty. Focus on who God is; seek Him first; return to Him; and receive all that He has for you. Make today a day where your passion will be reignited and grow from day to day during the next 21 days of fasting and prayer.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

a. Deliverance from strongholds (*Mark 9:14-29; Psalm 34:19*)

b. Members to mature in the Word (*Hebrews 5:12-14*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 3: Monday, February 5, 2018

Answer the Call

(John 10:27) “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

There is nothing more frustrating for a parent to call their child’s name and the child does not answer. The parent continues to call until the child finally responds and acknowledges the call of their parent.

God, our Father, is calling us and His desire is that we hear His call and answer by obeying His Word (following Him). Fasting enables us to block out the distractions of the world and tune in to the voice of the Father. As we fast, we deny our flesh and when we deny our flesh we become more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and can hear His voice more clearly. If you open your heart and your spiritual ears, you will hear what the Holy Spirit is saying so that you can follow His leading and obtain His best for your life.

If you desire to know Him, seek Him first and deny yourself so that you can follow Him. Have ears that are open and willing to receive and a heart to obey His instructions. The more we discipline our flesh and feed our spirit, the stronger our spiritual discernment will become so that we will hear the voice of our Father, know Him and ultimately follow Him (Proverbs 3:5-7).

Are you an obedient child? Do you hear the voice of your Father? Do you acknowledge His call? Why not answer? Prepare yourself to hear by denying your flesh, fasting from the distractions of the world so you can answer His call.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Disciples will be made of all men (Matthew 28:19-20; Matthew 10:7-8)
- b. Health, prosperity and peace for all of members (Philippians 1:2-7)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 4: Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Fasting Increases Belief

(Matthew 17:18-21) “And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, that if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there’, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Prayer and fasting changes us and our hearts as well as our ability to believe God and rest in what He has said. When we come into agreement with the Word of God and deny our flesh and strengthen our spirit man, boldness, confidence and faith increases. Our doubts and fears are replaced with the assurance that the Word of God is true and nothing will be impossible to them that believe.

During this time of fasting and prayer, ask God to strengthen your heart to fully believe Him and believe His Word. Place your doubts before the cross and renew your mind – replace the doubts with the Word. As your heart becomes full of God’s Word, your trust in God will develop and you will grow in your faith and be able to stand in the evil day.

It is amazing how our spirit man will grow when we drown out all the outside interference and concentrate primarily on growing in our relationship with Him which increases our faith and our dependency upon Him.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Unity in the Body (*Ephesians 4:13-16; Psalm 133:1-3*)
- b. Genuine, sincere love one for another (*1 Corinthians 13*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 5: Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Avoiding Distractions

(Luke 10:38-42) “Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Did you know it is possible to be in the presence of the Lord and still be distracted? Mary and Martha were both in the presence of the Lord yet Martha was distracted with much serving. A distraction is a well-conceived, well thought out plan designed to draw you off your present course. In analyzing the word distraction, we must look at the root word tract. God sends us into the world with purpose and a course we must follow (tract). However, the enemy’s goal is to distract us from our purpose; take us off track. Any train that is not on the track causes a great deal of chaos, disorder.

God does not send distractions, Satan does. God would never distract us or take us off the course that He preordained for us before the foundation of the world. During this time of fasting, separate from all of the convenient tools that so easily distract us from quality time with the Lord. It is okay to not surf the internet or utilize social media for a time of consecration before the Lord. It is okay to not spend hours chatting online or talking on the telephone about things that do not propel you forward rather become obstacles in your journey.

Martha believed that her serving was necessary; she was tending to details to host the Master. However, the most important thing was to spend time sitting at the feet of Jesus receiving strength and edification from being in His presence. Do not allow distractions today to take you off course, stay tracked up!

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Each One, Reach One. Pray for:

- a. Each member to share Jesus with unsaved loved ones and friends
(Matthew 18:11; Acts 16:31)
- b. The harvest of souls God has assigned for us to reach as a body
(Isaiah 43:4-9)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 6: Thursday, February 8, 2018

Winning the War Within

(Romans 7:18-20 NLT) "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is a sin living in me that does it."

Did you know there is an internal war going on inside of each and every one of us? Paul describes this so well in this passage – we desire to do the right thing, but in our own efforts, we don't have the power to and we mess up.

Thank God that we do not have to rely on our own strengths to help us make right decisions and do the right thing. We don't have to be controlled by our sinful nature and end up doing the things that we don't want to do. But the only way we can be successful and win the war within is to yield to the Holy Spirit and rely on the strength of the greater One within.

When we are facing trials and temptations, we must rely on God's power working within to guide us to do the right things. When we are Born Again, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts and gives us a desire to do what is pleasing to the Lord. The Holy Spirit always wants to do what is right and pleasing to the Lord. He always wants to be in fellowship with the Father. Instead of leaning to your own understanding, trust the Holy Spirit and allow Him to direct your path so that you will win the war within.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Divine Protection. Pray for:

- ... God to place a hedge of protection around the church and members
(Psalm 91; Psalm 3; Isaiah 54:17; Isaiah 58:8)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 7: Friday, February 9, 2018

Listen to Jesus

(Matthew 17:5b, 8 NLT) ' "This is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy, Listen to Him" ...And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.'

Jesus took Peter James and John up to the mountain where He was transfigured into His glorified state. These three disciples were privy to what was to come because of Jesus. Prior to this moment, God's people related to God through the law (Moses) or through the prophets (Elijah). After this, Peter wanted to build three tabernacles – one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Jesus. This was not the plan God had. When they looked up they only saw Jesus.

It is clear that God has a new plan, no longer would His children have to go through anyone other than Jesus. He is the One that we are to hear, He is the One that we are to listen to. God's grace is freely given to those who have received new life in Christ. There is nothing we can do to earn God's grace; it is a free gift that we must simply receive. Seek God today and ask Him to give you a greater revelation of Jesus and the grace of God so that your heart will be fixed on who you are – a child of the Most High God.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Favor of God. Pray for:

... The favor of God to be released upon the church and its members
(Psalm 102:13; Psalm 5:12; Psalm 30:5; Psalm 41:11)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 8: Saturday, February 10, 2018

God Loves You

(1 John 4:19) "We love him, because he first loved us."

Yes, God loves YOU just the way you are. Every person has a desire to be loved and the enemy does not want you to know that God loves you. The devil has deceived so many people into

thinking that God could not possibly love them. The truth is you are loved and special to your Heavenly Father.

During this time of fasting and consecration, ask the Lord to fill your heart with His love. As you ask Him, make a decision to open your heart and receive His love. He loved us first, when we were yet in sin. He loved us first when we were still disobedient and stubborn. Because He loved us when we were “unlovely”, it should be easy for us to love Him.

Certainly, a Perfect Father will take care of His children. Seeing that we have a Father in the heavens that has His eye on the sparrow, we should walk in confidence knowing that no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper. When this kind of truth is known and accepted it makes our Christian journey much more tolerable.

We should sing with joy and with a loud voice:

"Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me for the Bible tells me so!"

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Wisdom of God. Pray for:

- a. Members to seek and follow the Wisdom of God in their daily lives
(James 1:5; Proverbs 4:5; Proverbs 5:1-2; Proverbs 7:4)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 9: Sunday, February 11, 2018

Deep Cleaning

(Romans 8:5-6) “For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

When spring time comes, the best housekeepers do not just vacuum but they clean the base boards, they clean the blinds, they clean the window sills. They are not just looking for a surface cleaning but a deep cleaning to remove all the grit, grime that has come in throughout the cold winter. The same must happen in our spiritual lives, we need to get rid of the things that are beneath the surface.

Fasting is a time of spiritual cleaning, cleansing of the deep crevices of our hearts and minds. We pick up things throughout each day as we live our lives, things we may not even realize have come in to dirty our hearts and minds. When we cleanse ourselves and set ourselves apart from the influences of the world, we will begin a deep cleaning to purge ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh *(2 Corinthians 7:1)*.

Set yourself apart, ask God to show you any areas that are covered in grim so that you can be refreshed and cleansed. As we fast and pray, our hearts will be rejuvenated with a love and passion for God and the things of God.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Manifested Glory. Pray for God to manifest Himself in our:

- a. Marriages (*Ephesians 5:22-33*)
- b. Families (*Acts 16:31; Genesis 18:18-19*)
- c. Finances (*2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:19; Deuteronomy 8:18*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 10: Monday, February 12, 2018

Firm Faith

(James 1:6) “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering...”

When you pray, do you expect God to answer? When we pray according to the Word of God, we should have an earnest expectation that God will do what He said He would do (*1 John 5:14-15*).

The enemy will come to persuade you that what you are praying for is impossible or will not happen for you. We must determine to pray in confidence and trust that the promises of God will come to pass in our lives. James reminds us that when we waver, we do not have faith. When we are not stable in our faith then we will receive nothing from God. God never wavers in His commitment nor His love for us, He is sure and firm. We can trust Him completely and always. Whatever has caused you to doubt, cast down those thoughts and make a decision that you will be firm in your faith. You will not doubt but trust that Your Father can and will come through.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Leadership (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Pray for:

- a. Our President and his family; Vice President; Congress; Governor of South Carolina and S. C. Government Officials; City of Spartanburg, Mayor and Government Officials
- b. Our Senior Pastor and his family
- c. Church leadership (Ministers, Deacons, Trustees, Ministry leaders)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 11: Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Endure the Process

(John 15:1-2) "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Branches that are not fruitful are removed because God is not wasteful. There is nothing that He created that does not give. The sun, the moon, the water, fire, grass, birds, bees, etc. they all give. When we as people stop giving, we cease to function in our created role and stand in jeopardy of being removed by God.

During this time of fasting, you are being prepared to be more fruitful for the Lord. Don't succumb to temptation and quit. This process is one that may be challenging but will prove to be of great benefit if you would endure the process and overcome the challenge. It is human nature to take the path of least resistance. We have a natural inclination to always look for the easy way out. There is nothing easy about denying your flesh, your flesh will cry out for what it wants. Even though it is not easy, it can be done with a made up mind. After you make up your mind, you must then control your flesh.

Endure the process, you will be better later!

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Members to develop in the love of God (*Matthew 22:37-40; Philippians 1:9-11*)
- b. Members to bear fruit (*Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:9-11*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 12: Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Benefits to Enduring the Pruning Process

(John 15:1-2) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Jesus states that when we bear fruit for God that we are pruned so that we can bear even more fruit. This is the pruning process that every believer must endure. As humans, we prefer to take the path of least resistance; we look for the easy way out. Pruning is very painful. The Greek word purgeth used in the text is *kathairo* which means to cleanse from filth and impurities which is often done by fire and by cutting.

The Word of God cuts both ways and sometimes we are being cut in order to bear more fruit and it may not feel good but it will work for our good. This is why it is important to attend a good local church where the Word of God is preached without compromise.

Here are four reasons for pruning:

1. **Pruning trains the believer.** Discipline is accomplished through pruning. You cannot be a disciple without discipline.
2. **Pruning maintains the health of the believer.** Things that are not kept clean become dirty and contaminated and eventually become sick so they wither away and die.
3. **Pruning improves the productivity of the believer.** The healthier you are, the more productive you will be.
4. **Pruning restricts the wrong growth.** Cancer grows but it's not good growth. Your head should never outgrow your heart. When this happens, it is the wrong kind of growth. Pruning will keep your head small and your heart large.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Deliverance from strongholds (*Mark 9:14-29; Psalm 34:19*)
- b. Members to mature in the Word (*Hebrews 5:12-14*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 13: Thursday, February 15, 2018

Keeping a Clean Heart

(Psalm 51:10) “Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.”

David, the writer of this psalm, is crying out to God for a clean heart. Something has happened to the heart he had when God called him a man after His own heart. David found himself guilty of adultery and murder thus having a contaminated heart.

Just as the heart is critical to our natural body's survival and health, so it is even more critical for our spiritual life. Success with God lies in the condition of the heart. Healthy hearts function and produce a life of peace, productivity and prosperity.

David is asking God to create in him a clean heart. He wants a changed heart, the one that he has now is not right. The Hebrew word clean is *tahowr* it means to be without contaminates, to be pure both morally and ethically. David knows that the only way he could carry out such things against God is that he has allowed his heart to be contaminated by lust. He is asking God to do open heart surgery and take out all contaminates.

During this time of prayer and fasting, give your heart to the Master Surgeon for examination and whatever surgery is needed so that you can keep your heart clean.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Disciples will be made of all men (*Matthew 28:19-20; Matthew 10:7-8*)
- b. Health, prosperity and peace for all of members (*Philippians 1:2-7*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 14: Friday, February 16, 2018

Heart Maintenance

(Psalm 51:10) "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me."

There things that we must do to keep our hearts clean and free from contaminants.

7 Ways to Maintain a Clean Heart:

1. Abide in Truth (stay in the presence of the Lord). It is difficult to leave God's presence with an unclean heart.
2. Take a bath every day. We must bathe in the Word of God. How would we smell in the natural if we went a week without bathing in natural water? It would be difficult for people to stay around us. When our hearts are not clean, we smell bad and no one can stay around us for long.
3. Count the costs before you make the choice. What is this decision going to do to my heart and my relationship with God? Will it strengthen or weaken?
4. Resist temptation. Submit to God, resist the devil and he WILL flee from you. David got into trouble because he did not first submit then resist.
5. Stay focused on your assignment. Distractions are not from God. Distractions are well

thought out, well-conceived plans designed to draw you out and steal your heart from God.

6. Guard your heart as if your life depended on it because it does. The issues of life flow out of your heart.
7. Give. Giving is a test of your heart. The rich young ruler's heart was tested in *Mark 10:17-22*; he could not follow Jesus because his heart had been corrupted by what he possessed. He chose his possessions over Jesus. Our hearts will always follow our treasure. Giving keeps a clean heart rejoicing.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Unity in the Body (*Ephesians 4:13-16; Psalm 133:1-3*)
- b. Genuine, sincere love one for another (*1 Corinthians 13*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 15: Saturday, February 17, 2018

Friendships and Influence

(Proverbs 22:24-25, NLT) "Keep away from angry, short-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul."

What kind of people do you spend the majority of your time with? Do they exhibit the fruit of the spirit as outlined in Galatians 5:22-23? As believers, we must be careful of our friendships and fellowships. It is not wise to follow people who are angry, bitter, wounded or vindictive. The scripture informs us that what is in them will eventually transfer into us.

Fellowships influence us and impact our lives negatively or positively. We have all known good, well behaved children who were brought up in a good home and were taught right from wrong. They began to spend time with the wrong crowd and began to eventually look like, speak like and behave like the people they were spending time with.

During this time of fasting and prayer, ask God to reveal to you friendships and fellowships that are not healthy for you so that you can disconnect yourself. We must invest our time with people who have our solution and not waste our time with those who have our problem.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Each One, Reach One. Pray for:

- a. Each member to share Jesus with unsaved loved ones and friends (*Matthew 18:11; Acts 16:31*)
- b. The harvest of souls God has assigned for us to reach as a body (*Isaiah 43:4-9*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 16: Sunday, February 18, 2018

Leave the Past in the Past

(2 Corinthians 5:17) "Therefore if any man be in Christ He is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

Did you know that when God redeemed you, called you and placed you into His service that your past no longer mattered? Our past does not shock God nor discourage Him from using us.

The enemy wants to keep us bound by mistakes, bound by things we said or things we did. He will constantly berate us with what we have done, he is only doing his job – he is the accuser of the brethren.

The Bible declares that when we are IN Christ, we are a new creature. We have a new identity, a new heritage that is bestowed upon us because of who we are now in relationship with. We now live and move and have our being in Him.

During this fast, ask God to open your eyes to who you are in Him and develop short term memory of who you were. Receive and accept your identify from the Lord; you are who He says that you are.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Divine Protection. Pray for:

- a. The church and its members to walk in Divine Protection (*Psalm 91; Psalm 3; Isaiah 54:17; Isaiah 58:8*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 17: Monday, February 19, 2018

Follow the Leader

(John 12:26) “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also be my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”

Our destiny, our honor, and our blessings are found in this scripture. Jesus is our example, He is our leader and in order to be successful we must follow Him.

If you have ever played the game, Follow the Leader, you will remember that you had to do everything the same as the leader in order to not be disqualified. If you were not paying close attention to the leaders’ every move, then you could get disqualified by making something up. You could not do your own thing; you had to do what the leader did. As simple as this sounds, this is what we should do as followers of Christ.

How do we follow Jesus (the leader)? Simply put, we must deny self. What does it mean to deny self? It means:

1. We must conform – this means to be identical, in harmony with and in total agreement with the One we are following, Jesus (the leader).
2. We must comply – this means to adapt one’s actions to another’s wishes. We submit our will to His will.
3. We must trust – this means we must be fully persuaded that God knows what is best for me, we have peace about it and we are able to rest in it.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Favor of God. Pray for:

- a. Favor of God to be released upon the church and its members *(Psalm 102:13; Psalm 5:12; Psalm 30:5; Psalm 41:11)*

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 18: Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Spiritual Strength

(Mark 1:12-13) “Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.”

Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days to fast and pray. Jesus pulled away from everything and everyone to spend time focused on His Father.

During this time of fasting and prayer, our aim is to draw closer to the Lord so that we will gain spiritual strength. The world we live in is full of great technology, tools that will aid us in being more productive; however, these tools can keep us so distracted that we become

spiritually weak. We need to pull away from things of the world such as television, movies, Facebook, Twitter, cell phones, Internet and the like so that we tune in to God and what He has to say.

Fasting is a pulling away, a disconnecting from the distractions of daily life to deliberately cultivate a stronger more intimate relationship with the Lord. Don't allow the discomfort of the physical hunger pains or other temptations to communicate online or chat with your friends cause you to stop short of completing this 21 day of fasting and prayer.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Wisdom of God. Pray for:

... Members to seek and follow the Wisdom of God in their daily lives (*James 1:5; Proverbs 4:5; Proverbs 5:1-2; Proverbs 7:4*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 19: Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Lining Up with Heaven

(Matthew 6:10) "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray and He instructed them to pray that the Will of the Father be done on earth as it is in heaven. Heaven is already finished, perfected, as the Father would have it to be. Our job is to pray that earth will line up in heaven. The first area that should be in alignment is how we, the children of God, act.

During this time of fasting and prayer, we are setting aside specific time to line our behavior up with the Word of God, the Will of the Father. Our lives should be a reflection of the Glory of God on earth. People should come in contact with the Father by coming in contact with us. We must pattern our lives after His; the character of God should be evident in our lives. When we deny ourselves through fasting and give ourselves over to prayer, the Holy Spirit will begin to teach us all things and our spirit man will be strengthened and our minds renewed so that we have the discipline and self-control to force our flesh to line up with the Word.

You are almost there, keep pressing for the next few days so you can finish strong and your life on earth will line up with heaven.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Manifested Glory. Pray for God to manifest Himself in our:

- a. Marriages (*Ephesians 5:22-33*)
- b. Families (*Acts 16:31; Genesis 18:18-19*)
- c. Finances (*2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:19; Deuteronomy 8:18*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 20: Thursday, February 22, 2018

Preparing for New

(Luke 5:37-38 NLT) “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine must be stored in new wineskins.”

And old wineskin cannot contain new wine. Old wineskins do not stretch; they will not grow to handle the capacity of the new wine. The old wineskin cannot contain the new wine.

These past few weeks, God has been pouring new wine into you by His spirit. As a result of fasting and prayer, your spirit man has been renewed, refreshed and rejuvenated. In order to contain the newness, you must not shrink back to the old. The old way of thinking, the old way of behaving, the old way of responding. Tap into the new wine and be that new wineskin. The new wine that God pours into us will expand our faith, renew or give new vision and stir our passion for our purpose.

Make a decision that you will not revert back but you will go higher, farther and deeper. Ask God to fully prepare your heart for what is to come. Don't allow any hindrances or distractions come to cause you to revert back.

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Leadership (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Pray for:

a. Our President and his family; Vice President; Congress; South Carolina Governor and S. C. Government Officials; City of Spartanburg Mayor and Government Officials

b. Our Senior Pastor and his family

c. Church leadership (Ministers, Deacons, Trustees, Ministry leaders)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

Day 21: Friday, February 23, 2018

Gifted to Serve

(Matthew 20:25-28) “But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Everything that God created was created to give. We have been gifted by God to serve. The above scripture was spoken by Jesus because two of his disciples wanted to occupy a high position in His Kingdom. His response to them speaks volumes to us today concerning God’s attitude and position related to serving others. The greatest of us in God’s eyes are those who are the greatest servers. You do not have to have the gift of service in order to serve great. We have all been gifted to serve.

How do we serve God with our gift?

1. You must find your purpose. You should ask God during this time of prayer and fasting, why am I here? Your purpose is the reason you were born – your purpose lines up with your passion. Discover your passion, you are on your way to discovering your purpose.
2. Become a servant to your gift. Master your gift and be the best you can be at it.
3. Invest in yourself – read books, attend seminars, workshops to enhance and multiply your gift.
4. Connect with people who can help you. Seek out a mentor/coach, someone who can impart wisdom into your life. Our service is not limited to the four walls of the local church, find your purpose and make a decision to serve God with your gift and make an impact for the Glory of God!

Corporate Area of Prayer/Meditation: Spiritual Growth of the Members. Pray for:

- a. Members to develop in the love of God (*Matthew 22:37-40; Philippians 1:9-11*)
- b. Members to bear fruit (*Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:9-11*)

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:

What’s Next?

(Luke 4:1-2, 14-15, NIV) “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.... Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about

him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him."

Fasting and prayer are essential to receiving a clear vision for God's calling and assignment for our lives. Usually at the end of a time of fasting and prayer, a person becomes aware of instructions from the Lord and confident in what He has spoken. You have spent 21 days seeking the Lord through fasting and prayer, we believe God has revealed to you the answer to the question – What's Next. Follow in obedience to what He said, do not worry about the details. The Holy Spirit will reveal to you on a need to know basis all that is required for you to accomplish your assignment. Follow Him with your whole heart and decide that you will not turn around but will continue to follow the Lord every day of your life. The Holy Spirit will empower you and give you the ability to accomplish His plans and His purposes for your life. Do not get ahead of Him, follow Him wherever He leads. When we are full of the Holy Spirit, we are led by the Spirit. We must always remember; it is He that does the work within us. Without Him, we can do nothing.

Congratulations – you completed the 21-day time of prayer and fasting. Are there still areas of your life in which you need more clarity? Are you walking in the power of the Holy Spirit and living in God's purpose for your life? Write down those things about which God is speaking to you. Pray that God will continue to reveal His purpose to you and equip you with wisdom, understanding, and strength so that you may carry them out. **TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**

Scriptures I studied and meditated on today:

Things God spoke to my heart:
