

# 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

January 10–31

## Why

While seeking the Lord is never a bad idea, we believe this year is of particular significance. We may see one of the most important semesters of ministry we've had here at Purdue, and there is no better way to prepare for God's outpouring than to be near Him. We are facing resistance from the enemy. There are many hard things in our personal lives, families, and our broader community. The best thing we can do when facing both great opportunity and great challenge is to humble ourselves and seek God first.

## What

As a community we are inviting you to join in 21 days of concentrated prayer and fasting, taking time each day to *restrain* our appetites (physical and/or mental), refocus on God, repent before him, and receive His life. Fasting isn't a way of strong-arming God to get our desires, but a way of weakening ourselves to connect with Him more clearly and to rely on Him more fully. Fasting is also a way to be reminded that much of the world struggles with food insecurity. Feel free to participate for all 21 days or for a shorter period of time to intentionally seek Jesus through prayer and fasting.

## How

### RESTRAIN

We want to intentionally restrain ourselves in this time by withdrawing something that brings us comfort, specifically what feeds our bodies and/or feeds our minds (food and/or media).

### Food

*“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).*

Please don't do a food fast if you struggle with an eating disorder. Otherwise, a food fast is something that restricts your diet by cutting out one or more meals per day or abstaining from things like sweets, meat, alcohol, caffeine, or other substances you take comfort in. The idea is to remove something you partake in regularly to create space for God. Choose something safe, but that feels sacrificial. The point isn't a diet but the restraint of our appetites to foster our dependence on God.

### Media

*“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:23–24).*

What we look at matters. What we consume with our eyes forms our souls. Many of us consume lots of media, social media, news, or YouTube videos mindlessly to seek comfort, entertainment, and distraction. Fasting from certain media can be an incredibly helpful way to step into discomfort and create space to connect with God. Choosing to do a media fast may actually be harder for some of you than a food fast. If that's the case, you should do it! Use the time to fill your physical and spiritual eyes with Light.

### REFOCUS

*“Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (John 6:68).*

We look to many things for life, but Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. A wise teacher said that fasting is feasting on the presence of God. We encourage you to look at this time not only as simple restraint and asceticism, but as an intentional time to refocus your attention on the One who deserves it, the only One who meets all of our needs. Use the time and discomfort to enjoy the presence of God, His voice, His scriptures, and His beauty. Allow God to fill the void that is created.

## REPENT

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23–34).*

As you are spending time with God, make sure to spend time allowing God to invite you into repentance. To repent means to turn away from sin (falling short of His best) and toward God. Allow the Spirit to convict you of sin in your present or past that you haven't received forgiveness for. Then, repent from the sin, turn to God, and receive His forgiveness.

## RECEIVE

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).*

*“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4–5).*

Jesus came that we may have abundant life in Him—living water saturating and flowing from our lives. When we take time to seek Him, to abide in Him, He helps us receive more of His life. Abide in the vine, receive the everlasting life that flows from Him. Gaze on His beauty and be transformed. We encourage you to keep a journal during your prayer and fasting to record what God shows you, highlights in scripture, and walks through with you.

*“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty’” (John 6:35).*

*“For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:55–56).*

We also invite you to take communion daily. Partaking in the Lord's supper helps us tangibly abide in Him, as He abides in us. We would encourage you to take communion with others as well during the journey, as many of us will be doing this together.

### **Practical Guidelines:**

- 1) Keep your focus on the Lord, trusting Him in your situation and need (Hebrews 11:6).
- 2) Stay in an attitude of prayer throughout the day. Set aside segments of time for specific prayer. Pray often.
- 3) Read Scripture frequently during your time of prayer and fasting. Praying is as much listening as talking.
- 4) Concerning meals missed, skipping one, two, or three consecutive meals is a normal fast. Some may choose one, two or three days. Others may fast several days. Drink plenty of juices and/or water as you fast. (For those who go on a more extended fast, we recommend seeking out additional guidance on extended fasts.)
- 6) For those on medication or who have been ill, be cautious and get an OK from your doctor.
- 7) Some are not able to fast because of a physical condition. They must have regular meals. The Lord may lead you to fast from certain foods, media, etc.
- 8) Sometimes there may be a little dizziness, headache, or nausea from not eating. Don't be alarmed. Remember to drink extra liquids.
- 9) At the end of your fast, it is helpful to eat fruit or soup, etc. Don't eat a big meal.
- 10) Fasting can be a place of spiritual pride and comparison. Be careful to draw attention to God, not you (Matt. 6:16–18).

**If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dave Shockey at [dave@campushouse.church](mailto:dave@campushouse.church) or 517.449.2629.**