

A large, stylized graphic in the center of the page. It consists of two overlapping circles: a smaller light gray circle on the left and a larger, irregularly shaped light gray circle on the right that overlaps the first. Overlaid on this graphic is the text 'PRAYER' on the top line and 'FASTING' on the bottom line, both in a large, bold, dark green sans-serif font.

# PRAYER FASTING

**21 Days**

Sunday 25 January - Saturday 14 February 2026

For much of church history, fasting has been one of the ordinary and essential practices of those who follow Jesus. Early Christians fasted weekly, regularly setting aside their hunger for food in order to awaken a deeper hunger for God. Yet in our modern world with full fridges, constant noise, busy schedules, and a culture that prizes comfort, fasting has quietly slipped to the edges of Christian life. Many believers have never fasted at all, or have only encountered fasting through health trends or other traditions.

And yet Jesus said, “When you fast...” (Matt. 6:16). Not if. His assumption was that His disciples would follow Him not only with their beliefs but with their bodies, integrating mind, soul, and physical hunger into a whole-of-life discipleship. Scripture shows us that fasting is far more than self-denial; it is a way of offering our whole selves to God. When we fast, we tune our hearts to the deep longing beneath every other longing: our desire for God Himself. We learn to say with Jesus, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” (John 4:32)

Fasting shapes us in at least four profound ways:

- to offer ourselves to Jesus, aligning our bodies with our worship;
- to grow in holiness, loosening the grip of our sinful appetites;
- to amplify our prayers, sharpening our discernment and deepening our dependence;
- and to stand with the poor, joining God’s heart for justice with tangible acts of generosity and compassion.

This booklet has been created specifically to accompany our HBC 21-Day Fast, beginning Sunday 25 January and concluding Saturday 14 February. As a church, we are setting aside these days to seek God together, to listen, to repent, to intercede, to be formed, and to open our whole lives before Him. This guide will give you tools, prompts, scriptures, and practical support to help you engage meaningfully throughout the 21 days. But our hope is bigger than a single season.

We long to see fasting restored as a normal and life-giving rhythm in the discipleship of every believer at HBC, not as a burden, not as a performance, but as a quiet, steady way of creating space for God to meet us and transform us. Whether you continue fasting weekly, monthly, or in specific seasons, our prayer is that this practice becomes a gentle, sustainable part of your walk with Jesus.

As you read and participate, may you hear Jesus’ invitation for these 21 days and beyond:

**Come away. Come empty. Come hungry. Come find your life in me.**

# Why Fast? To Offer Ourselves to Jesus

## Key Scripture

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:16-18

## Reflection

For millennia, God's people have been regularly abstaining from food as a spiritual discipline. The definition of fasting is not eating food. While abstinence from other habits (social media, alcohol, etc) can be helpful, it's different from the practice of fasting. Fasting allows us to yearn for God with our whole selves, getting our discipleship into our hungry bodies. Jesus doesn't give specific requirements for fasting. But historically (and across the globe), the church has fasted for two days out of every week, as well as calling for targeted fasts in times of crisis.

## Prayer

Father, you have made our bodies holy; they are who we are, and they are good. Help us to draw them into prayer, into your presence, into holy becoming, that we may know and love you more.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

*Romans 12:1-2*

# Why Fast? To Grow in Holiness

## Key Scripture

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:15-24

## Reflection

The spiritual discipline of fasting is not only good for physical health; it's an avenue to grow in holiness. Fasting helps us dedicate our whole selves, soul and body, to God. As Paul tells us, our sinful appetites trap us in cycles of frustration and despair. We can't conquer these appetites with willpower, but through the Holy Spirit, fasting can transform our desires. And as we put our flesh to death, God raises us up to the beautiful union with Him that we were made for.

## Prayer

Teach us, Lord, to give up every lesser-than pleasure in the pursuit of giving ourselves wholly to you. That in giving up what we think we want, we may receive that which we truly do, You.

“Even now,” declares the Lord,  
“return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”  
Rend your heart  
and not your garments.  
Return to the Lord your God,  
for he is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and abounding in love,  
and he relents from sending calamity.

*Joel 2:12-13*

# Why Fast? To Amplify Our Prayers

## Key Scripture

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 13:1-3

## Reflection

Over time, fasting becomes a calming and clarifying process, creating ideal conditions for hearing God's voice. Fasting is a key aid in helping us discern God's will for our lives, particularly when we're facing major decisions. Fasting powerfully amplifies our prayers, bringing our bodies into conversation with God. While God's ways are mysterious, Scripture is clear that God responds to prayer and fasting. Fasting isn't about getting what we want from God, but bringing us into loving communion with Him.

## Prayer

Empower us, Holy Spirit, and all our prayers, as we offer our bodies in harmony with our deepest yearnings. We need your in-breaking power, your grace, your listening, that your Kingdom and will may be done amidst us now and forever.

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

*Esther 4:15-16*

# Why Fast? To Stand with the Poor

## Key Scripture

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? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah 58:5-7

## Reflection

Isaiah makes it clear that God's goal for fasting includes care for those in need. It's a way to love God and love our neighbour at the same time. When we fast, we:

- Stand in solidarity with the hungry.
- Share what we have.
- Stand against evil and injustice.

Fasting defies the principalities and powers that create injustice in our world. In fasting, the church is transformed into the family that it's meant to be. Rhythms of fasting and feasting point us to the coming feast in the eternal Kingdom of God.

## Prayer

Help us take the overflow of all we have, Lord, and offer it to the lack in our world, that in our giving up, and our giving away, we may show the world what we've come to know - Your extravagant, self-offering, and sacrificial love.

May God himself, the God of peace,  
sanctify you through and through.  
May your whole spirit, soul and body  
be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*1 Thessalonians 5:23*

# Options for How You May Choose to Fast

## Weekly Rhythmic Fast

- Fast one or two days per week (e.g., Wednesdays and/or Fridays), from waking until sundown.
- Break the fast each evening with a simple meal of gratitude.

## Daily Partial Fast

- Choose one meal each day to fast from (breakfast, lunch, or dinner).
- Use that time for prayer, Scripture, or silence.

## Daniel Fast

- Abstain from meat, sweets, processed foods, and rich foods. Eat simple, whole foods (fruit, vegetables, beans, whole grains).

## Sunrise-to-Sunset Fast Each Day

- Eat breakfast in the early morning before sunrise and fast throughout the day until sunset.

## Technology or Comfort Fast

For some, food fasting needs to be modified for medical reasons. Others may choose to add a non-food fast to deepen focus:

- Social media
- TV or gaming
- Shopping
- Caffeine or sugar
- Alcohol

## Multi-Day Fast

- Fast for 2–3 consecutive days, or longer if appropriate.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Only attempt this if your body and season of life allow.

## Sequential Fast

- Choose one type of fast for Week 1, another for Week 2, and so on.
  - Week 1: Skip one meal
  - Week 2: Fast until 3pm daily
  - Week 3: Fast one full day

## Justice-Oriented Fast

- Choose one day each week to fast from food. Take the money you would have spent on meals and give it to people in need or to a ministry serving the poor.
- Also consider using some of your time to serve or visit someone in need.

## Family or Household Fast

- Choose a nightly rhythm such as:
  - A simple family meal
  - No dessert / no snacking
  - No devices after 6pm
- Use the time to talk, pray, and connect.

Whatever you choose, remember: the goal is not perfection, and the aim is not intensity - it's intimacy. Start where you are, not where you think you 'should' be. Offer your hunger, your desire, and your attention to God, and trust Him to meet you.

# A Few Basic Tips

Drink tons of water to stay hydrated (unless you choose to do a total fast, no food or water).

If you normally drink coffee to wake up, you may want to still have coffee, but just have it black to avoid a caffeine headache. Coffee is 99.9% water and will not keep your body from entering the fasting state.

The more time you can give to prayer and reflection, and the less busy you are as you fast, the better. Make it your goal to slow down and be present to your body, and God, as much as you possibly can. You may want to find a park on your lunch break or take a few short walks throughout your days. Give as much attention to God as is doable.

Resist the urge to judge your experience. Release thoughts like, “I liked it; I disliked it.” “I felt close to God; I didn’t feel close to God.” Just let the experience of fasting be what it is, and offer it to God in love.

In the time you’d normally be grocery shopping, cooking, eating, or cleaning, give yourself to prayer. Let your desire for food point you to Jesus as you open yourself to Him.

In your dedicated times of prayer, or each time a hunger pang comes, you may want to pray Romans 12:1-2, or simply, “God, I offer my body to you in worship. Please transform me.”

If you’ve never fasted before, you may feel “hangry” or tired. Keep in mind that these symptoms will go away in time if you stick with the practice. You’ll start to feel better, not worse.

Find an accountability buddy and spur one another on as you fast. Fasting in community has power to bring us into greater unity with our brothers and sisters.

Come along to HBC prayer and worship gatherings across the 21 day period. See the full calendar of events on the next page for details.

# Diary Dates

Find more details at [hillsbaptist.com/whats-on](http://hillsbaptist.com/whats-on)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25/1	26/1	27/1	28/1	29/1	30/1	31/1
Pre Service Prayer Meetings 8:15am Verdun 8:45am Aldgate AM 8:45am Lobethal 3:30pm Mt Barker 4:30pm Aldgate PM	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7pm Aldgate Intercessory Prayer Meeting	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7:30am Mens Prayer, Devotion & Coffee 8:30am Womens Prayer	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7:30am Mens Prayer, Devotion & Coffee 8:30am Womens Prayer			
1/2	2/2	3/2	4/2	5/2	6/2	7/2
Pre Service Prayer Meetings 8:15am Verdun 8:45am Aldgate AM 8:45am Lobethal 3:30pm Mt Barker 4:30pm Aldgate PM	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7pm Aldgate Intercessory Prayer Meeting	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7:30am Mens Prayer, Devotion & Coffee 8:30am Womens Prayer	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7pm Aldgate Intercessory Prayer Meeting			
8/2	9/2	10/2	11/2	12/2	13/2	14/2
Pre Service Prayer Meetings 8:15am Verdun 8:45am Aldgate AM 8:45am Lobethal 3:30pm Mt Barker 4:30pm Aldgate PM	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7pm Aldgate Intercessory Prayer Meeting	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7:30am Mens Prayer, Devotion & Coffee 8:30am Womens Prayer	7am Dwelling Place Prayer & Worship 7pm Aldgate Intercessory Prayer Meeting			



# *Daily* PRAAYER POINTS

**21 Days**

Sunday 25 January - Saturday 14 February 2026

1

### **Sunday January 25 | Seeking God**

Pray that, above all else, we would hunger for God Himself. Ask the Holy Spirit to meet us, shape us, and draw us deeper into the life of Jesus during these 21 days.

2

### **Monday January 26 | Our Nation and Indigenous Peoples**

As we mark Australia Day, pray for our nation and for Indigenous peoples, for healing, reconciliation, justice, and hope. Ask God to lead us into truth, restored relationships, and a future shaped by grace.

3

### **Tuesday January 27 | Formation and Holiness**

Pray that God would form us into a people who reflect the character of Christ, growing in humility, repentance, integrity, and joyful obedience.

4

### **Wednesday January 28 | Children**

Pray for the children of HBC, that they would come to know Jesus early, love Scripture, experience safety and joy in our church, and grow in faith for a lifetime.

5

### **Thursday January 29 | Youth**

Pray for teenagers to encounter God deeply, stand firm in their faith, and be surrounded by godly leaders, friendships, and courage to follow Jesus in their world.

6

### **Friday January 30 | Young Adults**

Pray for our young adults, including the upcoming YA Camp, that they would discover their calling, walk in spiritual maturity, and build lives centred on Jesus.

7

### **Saturday January 31 | Families**

Pray for families in all forms: marriages, parents, children, and extended family. Ask God to bring unity, healing, wisdom, and resilience, especially where there is strain, separation, or upheaval.

8

### Sunday February 1 | Seniors

Pray for seniors in our community, for strength, encouragement, belonging, and spiritual fruitfulness in every season of life.

9

### Monday February 2 | The Lost in Our Local Communities

Pray for those who do not yet know Jesus in Mount Barker, Verdun, Aldgate, and Lobethal, that hearts would be softened and lives drawn toward Christ.

10

### Tuesday February 3 | Alpha

Pray for Alpha at Aldgate in Term 1 (starting tonight!), and upcoming courses at Lobethal and Mount Barker. Pray for open hearts, honest conversations, and encounters with Jesus.

11

### Wednesday February 4 | Kingdom Life Course

Pray for everyone participating in the upcoming Kingdom Life Course, that it would lead to deep discipleship, lasting transformation, and lives ordered around the way of Jesus.

12

### Thursday February 5 | Local Outreach

Pray for HBC's outreach into our neighbourhoods. Ask that we would be present, compassionate, courageous, and attentive to the needs God places before us.

13

### Friday February 6 | Our Missionaries

Pray for the missionaries we support, for protection, provision, boldness, spiritual endurance, and fruitfulness as they proclaim the gospel and represent Jesus to the nations.

14

### Saturday February 7 | Walk For Life

Pray for the unborn, for pregnant mothers, and for families in difficult circumstances. Ask that life would be protected, supported, and valued, and that compassion would surround those in need.

15

### Sunday February 8 | Myanmar

Pray for our Myanmar brothers and sisters who face persecution. Ask God for protection, peace, justice, and perseverance, and that the gospel would continue to advance amid suffering.

16

### Monday February 9 | Justice and Compassion

Pray that HBC would reflect God's heart for justice by caring for the vulnerable, standing against oppression, and responding with generosity, humility, and love.

17

### Tuesday February 10 | Education and Schools

Pray for teachers and staff at our local schools and universities, for wisdom, patience, energy, faith, and opportunities to reflect Christ in their work.

18

### Wednesday February 11 | Building Project

Pray for wisdom, provision, and unity as we partner with King's Baptist Grammar School in our shared master plan. Ask God to guide every decision, strengthen relationships, and use this space for His glory and the blessing of future generations.

19

### Thursday February 12 | HBC Pastoral Transitions

Pray for wisdom, unity, and discernment during pastoral transitions across our locations. Ask God to direct, comfort, and sustain both our leaders and congregations.

20

### Friday February 13 | Unity and Love

Pray for unity across HBC; across campuses, generations, cultures, and ministries. Ask that love would bind us together in Christ and witness to the world that we belong to Jesus.

21

### Saturday February 14 | Mission and Sending

Pray that we would be a church sent into the world, carrying the good news of Jesus into our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities, empowered by the Spirit.

# Breaking Your Fast

Breaking a fast is not about rushing back to normal, but about receiving food with gratitude and awareness. After a season of abstaining, we re-enter ordinary life slowly, attentively, and prayerfully.

## Break Your Fast Gently

Start with small, simple portions, especially if you have fasted for more than one meal or for a full day.

- Soups, broths, fruit, yoghurt, eggs, or lightly cooked vegetables are good first foods.
- Avoid heavy, greasy, or overly rich meals at first.

Listen to your body. Hunger does not need to be satisfied all at once.

## Reflect Before You Return to Normal

Ask yourself:

- What did God surface in me during this fast?
- What appetites or habits became clearer?
- Is there anything God is inviting me to carry forward?

Consider writing a brief prayer or reflection before returning to your usual routines.

## Choose What to Take Back Up

Not everything needs to return immediately.

You may sense God inviting you to:

- keep one small rhythm of fasting,
- eat more simply,
- limit a particular comfort or distraction,
- create more space for prayer.

Fasting forms us when it changes how we live after the fast ends.

## Prayer

God of provision, thank you for sustaining me. As I receive this food, help me receive Your grace with the same gratitude. Form my desires, shape my habits, and teach me to live dependent on You.

## More Resources

"I read God's Chosen Fast when I was eighteen, and forty years later I'm still practicing what Arthur Wallis taught me."  
—Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*

### GOD'S CHOSEN FAST



A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting

**ARTHUR WALLIS**

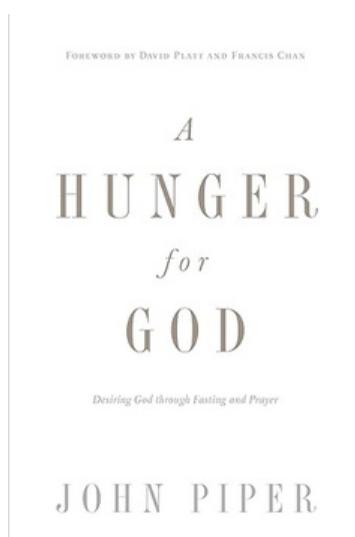
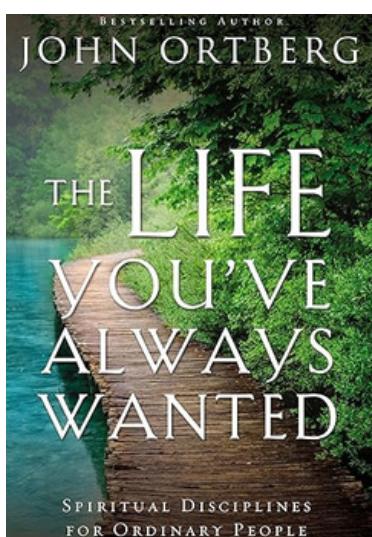
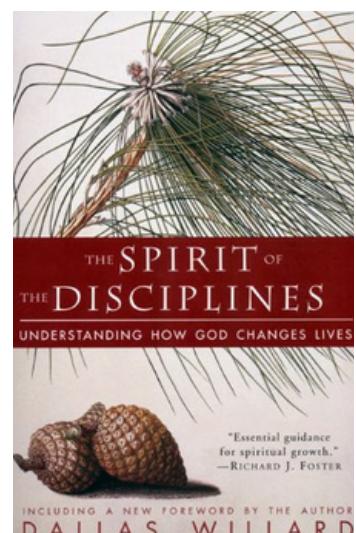
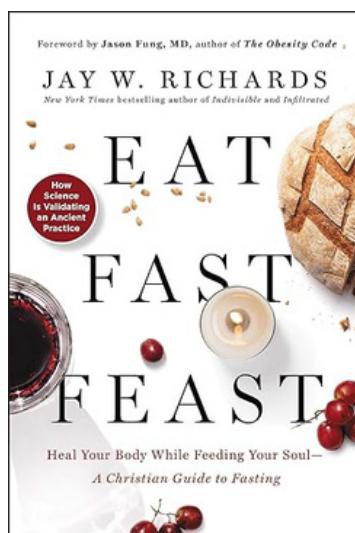
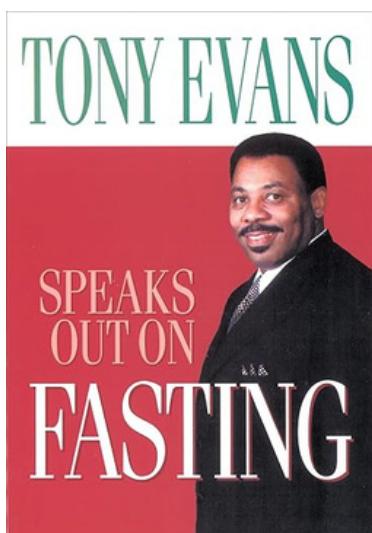
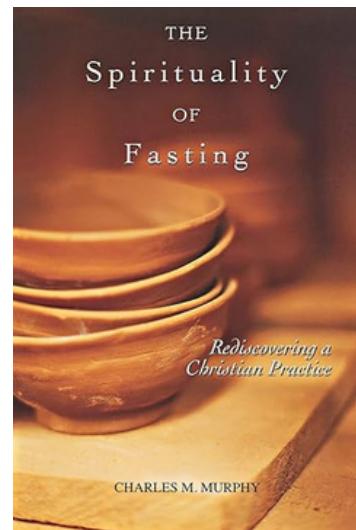
Foreword by Susan Gregory, author of *The Daniel Fast*



### THE Spirituality OF Fasting

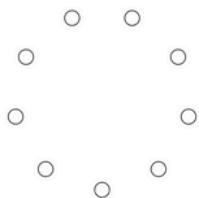
*Rediscovering a Christian Practice*

CHARLES M. MURPHY



When  
You  
Fast

Sermon by  
John Wesley



## The Fasting Practice

Much of the content and framework of this booklet has been shaped by the **Practicing the Way** resources on fasting. We are deeply grateful for their faithful work in helping churches recover fasting as a life-giving practice of following Jesus.