

## OUR FAST TOGETHER

### Our Fasting.

From January 1–12, 2020, CPBC will be calling a congregational fast. The fasting instructions are as follows:

- ◆ All Cold-water fish (salmon, sardines, cod, haddock, tuna, Atlantic mackerel, whitefish, flounder) is allowed. No more than three times per week (some of these fish can contain high mercury levels). Fish must be fresh or frozen, not canned. Must be baked, broiled or grilled, **NOT FRIED**. All other meat and shellfish **are prohibited**; e.g. poultry (including eggs), pork, beef, shrimp, crab, etc.
- ◆ Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables are allowed. We highly encourage you to avoid canned vegetables due to the high salt content. Cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, collards, watercress, radish, turnip and turnip greens are encouraged as they are nutrient rich.
- ◆ All dairy products **are prohibited**. This includes milk and cream-based soups, cheese, butter and margarine. Unsweetened milk substitutes such as rice, almond and coconut are allowed.
- ◆ All breads, cereals, baked goods, pasta, potatoes, rice and processed foods **are prohibited**.
- ◆ Alcohol, soda and caffeinated beverages (coffee and tea) **are prohibited**. Non-caffeinated herbal teas and vegetable juice are permitted.
- ◆ Soups made from permitted ingredients are allowed.

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Summary: No meat, except cold water fish (three times a week max). No dairy products. No bread. As much vegetables as you'd like.

**We will break the fast together at a light reception at the conclusion of Sunday worship, January 12.**

  
LEADING THE WAY, TEACHING THE TRUTH,  
EXPERIENCING THE LIFE

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JANUARY 1–12, 2020

PRAYER & FASTING 2020

AND YOU WILL SEEK ME AND FIND  
ME, WHEN YOU SEARCH FOR ME  
WITH ALL YOUR HEART (JER 29:13)

# GUIDE TO BIBLICAL FASTING

## What is Biblical Fasting?

The Greek word for fasting is *nesteia*, which literally means "not to eat." It is important to understand though that fasting as we see it in Scripture is never simply abstaining from food. Instead, biblical fasting always occurs together with prayer...always. You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast, in a biblical sense, without praying.

Biblical fasting is deliberately abstaining from food for a very important spiritual reason: communication and relationship with the Father. Jesus, himself, promises us that the Father will reward those who fast in earnest (Matt. 6:17-18). Jesus was so personally committed to the principle of fasting that He did it Himself (Matt 4:2). And because Jesus practiced fasting, the Bible assumes that we are going to follow His example. When Jesus spoke about fasting, he didn't say *if you fast*, but *when you fast* (Matt. 6:16). Based upon this instruction, we see fasting as a part of the ministry of the early church (Acts 13:2-3).

## What Does Fasting Accomplish?

Fasting, coupled with prayer, is a powerful practice in the life of the believer. Indeed, Scripture explains that prayer and fasting can be the solution to some of life's most difficult problems. To be sure, spending time in prayer and fasting is not automatically effective in accomplishing the desires of those who fast. Fasting or no fasting, God only promises to answer our prayer when we ask according to His will. John tells us, *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us* (5 John 5:14). During Isaiah's ministry, the people complained that they had fasted, yet God had not answered in the way they wanted (Isa 58:3-4), but Isaiah responded by proclaiming that the external show of praying and fasting alone, without the proper heart attitude, was futile (Isa. 58:5-9). Fasting is more about the heart than it is about the stomach!

## Congregational Fasting

In Scripture, we see the people of God coming together for a period of prayer and fasting to ask God for, among other things, direction, protection, deliverance and spiritual endurance. While each of us individually has a personal relationship with the Lord, our spiritual lives are significantly enhanced by our joining together on one accord in service to Him (Acts 2:1, 26). In the same way, we can have a greater expectation of the Lord when we unite together for a period of fasting on behalf of our congregation. In a very real sense, the combined nature of a congregational fast can be a powerful witness to God of a congregation's sincere devotion to Him and to the issues they are raising up to Him.



*But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

*Matthew 6:17-18*