

Prayer Points for Fasting

These prayer points for fasting are for a church-wide fast, a small group setting aside a few days to seek God, or a believer fasting alone. They pray through the heart of biblical fasting: a right motive, humility and repentance, seeking God's face and His guidance, asking God to act for others who need His help, and praying for the church, the nation and people who do not yet know Jesus.

"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning." So rend your hearts and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion. And He relents from sending disaster.

Joel 2:12-13 (BSB)

Fasting earns nothing from God; it is a way of humbling ourselves and giving prayer our full attention. Use the time you would spend eating to pray a section, reading each verse aloud first. A church fasting together might pray one section each day. If you have a medical condition, are pregnant or nursing, or take medication, talk to your doctor before fasting from food.

A right heart for the fast

1 Fasting for the Father who sees

Father, as we fast, keep us from wanting to be noticed. Let our fasting be known to You alone, who sees what is done in secret. Turn every hunger pang into a reminder to pray.

When you fast, do not be somber like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting will not be obvious to men, 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 (BSB)

2 Was it really for You?

LORD, You once asked Your people whether their years of fasting had really been for You. Search our motives. If we are fasting to look spiritual, to prove something or to force an outcome, show us, and make this fast about You.

"Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for these seventy years, was it really for Me that you fasted?'"

Zechariah 7:5 (BSB)

3 Mercy, not merit

God, the Pharisee fasted twice a week and boasted of it, while the tax collector beat his breast and prayed, God, have mercy on me, a sinner. We take our place beside the tax collector. Our fasting earns nothing; we come for mercy in Jesus.

The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—swindlers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and pay tithes of all that I acquire.' But the tax collector stood at a distance, unwilling even to lift up his eyes to heaven. Instead, he beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man, rather than the Pharisee, went home justified. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:11-14 (BSB)

4 Longing for the Bridegroom

Lord Jesus, You said Your friends would fast when the bridegroom was taken from them. Let our hunger become longing for You: to know You better now, and to see You face to face one day.

Jesus replied, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while He is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

Matthew 9:15 (BSB)

Humility and repentance

5 A broken and contrite heart

God, the sacrifice You want is a broken spirit, and a broken and contrite heart You will not despise. We do not offer You our fast as a payment; we bring You hearts that are sorry for our sin.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Psalms 51:17 (BSB)

6 Confessing with Daniel

Lord God, great and awesome, Daniel turned to You with prayer, fasting and confession. We confess with him: we have sinned and done wrong and turned away from Your commands. Thank You that You keep Your covenant of loving devotion.

So I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed, "O, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of loving devotion to those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have acted wickedly and rebelled. We have turned away from Your commandments and ordinances."

Daniel 9:3-5 (BSB)

7 Examining our ways

LORD, as we fast, help us examine and test our ways and turn back to You. Show us the habits, attitudes and relationships that need to change, and help us lift up our hearts and hands to You in heaven.

Let us examine and test our ways, and turn back to the LORD. Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven:

Lamentations 3:40-41 (BSB)

8 Saying together, We have sinned

LORD, when Israel gathered at Mizpah, they fasted and confessed that they had sinned against You. Give our church the humility to say those words together, without excuses or blaming others, and to turn back to You.

When they had gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted, and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the Israelites at Mizpah.

1 Samuel 7:6 (BSB)

Seeking God's face and guidance

9 Fed by every word from God

Lord Jesus, after forty days without food You still chose Your Father's word over bread. As we go hungry, teach us that we live by every word that comes from the mouth of God, and fill our empty hours with Scripture.

But Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4 (BSB)

10 Seeking the LORD while He may be found

LORD, we seek You while You may be found and call on You while You are near. Show us the ways and thoughts we need to leave behind, and as we come back to You, thank You for the compassion that pardons freely.

Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked man forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.

Isaiah 55:6-7 (BSB)

11 Our eyes are on You

Our God, like Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah, we face things we are powerless against, and we do not know what to do. But our eyes are on You. Guide us through the decisions in front of us, and keep us looking to You.

Our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this vast army that comes against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

2 Chronicles 20:12 (BSB)

12 Show me Your ways

LORD, show me Your ways and teach me Your paths. I lay before You the choice I am facing about work, family or ministry. Guide me in Your truth, for You are the God of my salvation, and I wait for You.

Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; all day long I wait for You.

Psalms 25:4-5 (BSB)

Asking God to act for others

13 The fast You have chosen

LORD, the fast You choose is to break the chains of wickedness, set the oppressed free, share our bread with the hungry and bring the homeless in. Set free those bound by addiction and abuse, and turn the meals we skip into meals we share.

Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and tear off every yoke? Isn't it to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your home, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah 58:6-7 (BSB)

14 For those whose lives are in danger

God, Esther and her people fasted for three days when their lives were threatened. We fast and pray for those in danger today: persecuted believers, abused women and children, and people trapped by violence. Protect them and raise up help.

“Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day, and I and my maidens will fast as you do. After that, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish!”

Esther 4:16 (BSB)

15 Weeping over broken walls

God of heaven, Nehemiah wept, mourned and fasted when he heard that Jerusalem lay broken. Give us that grief for the broken places around us: marriages, neighborhoods, a friend's faltering faith. Teach us to pray for them, and show us what to do.

When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:4 (BSB)

16 Loved ones who do not yet know You

God our Savior, You want everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We name before You the people we love who do not yet know Jesus. Open their eyes, soften their hearts and draw them to Christ.

This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (BSB)

The church, the nation and the lost

17 A church that worships, fasts and listens

Holy Spirit, while the church in Antioch was worshiping and fasting, You called Barnabas and Saul to the work You had for them. As our church fasts, make us ready to listen and willing to send whoever You call.

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." And after they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 13:2-3 (BSB)

18 Who knows? God may relent

God, the people of Nineveh turned from their evil ways and called out to You, not knowing whether You would relent. We ask that mercy for our nation. Turn us from violence and sin, and in Your compassion do not give us what we deserve.

Furthermore, let both man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and have everyone call out earnestly to God. Let each one turn from his evil ways and from the violence in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent; He may turn from His fierce anger, so that we will not perish." When God saw their actions—that they had turned from their evil ways—He relented from the disaster He had threatened to bring upon them.

Jonah 3:8-10 (BSB)

19 Because of Your great compassion

O Lord, listen; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hear and act. We do not bring our requests because of our righteous acts, but because of Your great compassion. For Your name's sake, have mercy on Your people and on our land.

Incline Your ear, O my God, and hear; open Your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears Your name. For we are not presenting our petitions before You because of our righteous acts, but because of Your great compassion. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For Your sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people bear Your name."

Daniel 9:18-19 (BSB)

20 Faithful intercessors like Anna

Lord, Anna worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Thank You for the faithful, often unseen intercessors in our church, many of them older saints. Bless them, and raise up a new generation who will pray like them.

and then was a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

Luke 2:37 (BSB)

Strength through the fast

21 Jesus, the bread of life

Lord Jesus, You are the bread of life; whoever comes to You will never hunger. When my stomach growls and my patience wears thin, let my hunger point me to You, the only One who truly satisfies.

Jesus answered, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst.

John 6:35 (BSB) ·

22 Strength for the faint

LORD, You give power to the faint and increase the strength of the weak. Sustain those who are fasting, give us wisdom to care for our bodies, and the humility to stop or change the fast if our health requires it.

He gives power to the faint and increases the strength of the weak.

Isaiah 40:29 (BSB)

23 Ending the fast with thanksgiving

LORD, You satisfy the thirsty and fill the hungry with good things. When this fast ends, help us eat with thankful hearts, keep the habits of prayer we have begun, and remember that every meal is Your gift.

For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Psalms 107:9 (BSB)

A closing prayer

Father, we humble ourselves before You. We have not earned Your favor by going hungry; we come because of Your great compassion in Jesus. Forgive our sins, purify our motives and teach us to seek Your face. Guide our decisions, protect those in danger, draw our loved ones to Christ, and have mercy on our church and our nation. Let our hunger become longing for You, the Bread of Life. In Jesus' name, Amen.