

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Preparation Guide by Pastor Shawn

As we look ahead and think about the 21 days of prayer and fasting we are about to go through, it reminded me of a road trip that Marlena and I recently took to Baton Rouge. Before we ever got on the road, there was a lot of preparation. There were things like packing, laundry, checking the car, clearing space, and thinking ahead. None of that was the trip itself, but it made the journey smoother and helped us stay focused once we were on the road.

Getting ready for a fast works the same way. These 21 days are not something we rush into. There is value in slowing down first and getting a few things in order. We need to look at our hearts, our schedules, and some practical details, so when we step into the fast, we are ready to focus on what God wants to do in us. This guide is here to help prepare us before we hit the road toward our 21 days of fasting and prayer.

GETTING YOUR HEART READY

Before choosing what kind of fast to do, it helps to pause and check the heart. Fasting is not about intensity or comparison. It's about responding to what God is inviting you into during these days.

ACTION STEPS:

- Set aside a few minutes to pray and ask God what He wants to do in you during this fast.
- Ask what He may be inviting you to lay down or step away from for this season.
- Write down a word, phrase, or Scripture that helps anchor your focus.
- Keep that focus in front of you as you move through the next steps of preparation.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIND OF FAST

There isn't one single way to fast. Throughout Scripture, people fasted in different ways depending on their season, health, and what God was inviting them into. The goal is not to choose the hardest fast, but to choose one that creates space to seek God with intention and consistency.

FOOD-BASED FASTS:

- Total Fast (No food, only water)
- Liquid Fast (No food; juice, smoothie, protein shake only)
- Eat one meal a day or skip one meal per day
- A Daniel-style fast with simple foods like fruits, vegetables, and grains
- Removing specific items such as meat, sweets, caffeine, or snacks

MEDIA AND DISTRACTION FASTS

- Social media
- Streaming platforms or entertainment
- News or unnecessary screen time

LIFESTYLE FASTS

- Shopping or online browsing
- Gaming
- Other habits that tend to fill time or distract focus

Some people choose one area to fast. Others may combine a food fast with a media fast. What matters most is that the fast is prayerfully chosen and sustainable for the full 21 days.

ACTION STEPS

- Pray and ask God which type of fast will help you stay attentive to Him.
- Consider your health, schedule, and responsibilities.
- Choose a fast you can remain faithful to, not one that creates unnecessary strain.
- Decide ahead of time what you will do instead when hunger or temptation shows up.

LETTING OTHERS KNOW

Fasting is personal, but it doesn't have to be hidden or isolating. Letting a few people know ahead of time can create understanding, support, and healthy accountability.

Action Steps

- Decide who needs to know, such as family members, close friends, or coworkers.
- Share simply and honestly without drawing attention to yourself.
- Invite prayer and encouragement rather than approval.
- Ask one trusted person to check in with you during the 21 days.

PREPARING YOUR SCHEDULE

One of the biggest challenges during a fast is not hunger, it's distraction. If time and space are not planned for, prayer often becomes the first thing pushed aside.

Action Steps

- Decide when you will set aside time for prayer each day.
- Choose a realistic and consistent rhythm you can maintain for the full 21 days.
- Look ahead at your calendar and reduce nonessential commitments where possible.
- Communicate with your family or those you live with about your plans.
- Plan for shorter moments of prayer throughout the day.
- Decide when you will do housework/projects, and when you will not.
- Prepare for full Sabbath (no work) days, every week.

PREPARING YOUR HOME

Your environment can either support your focus or constantly pull at it. A little preparation at home can remove unnecessary distractions once the fast begins.

Action Steps

- Identify a space where you plan to pray and spend time with God.
- Gather what you need ahead of time, such as your devotional guide, Bible, and a journal.
- Reduce clutter or distractions, if possible.
- Pause, or do not start any new projects. (Devote energy & creative toward God & family)

PREPARING YOUR FOOD

If your fast includes food, planning ahead will save you from frustration and impulse decisions later.

Action Steps

- Decide what meals or foods you will eat during the fast.
- Plan simple meals that are easy to prepare and repeat.
- Grocery shop ahead of time with intention.
- Remove or limit access to foods you are fasting from if that's helpful.
- Stay hydrated and listen to your body throughout the fast.
- Plan your water intake (disposable water bottles, alkaline water, favorite or new thermos)

PREPARING YOUR DIGITAL LIFE

Digital noise can quickly crowd out spiritual focus. Setting boundaries now helps protect the space you are creating.

Action Steps

- Decide which apps, platforms, or media you will limit or step away from.
- Turn off unnecessary notifications.
- Set clear boundaries for screen time, especially during prayer moments.
- If you remain on social media, use it intentionally rather than passively.

PLANNING THE END OF THE FAST

How you finish a fast matters just as much as how you start it. Without a plan, it's easy to rush back into old rhythms.

Action Steps

- Decide ahead of time how you will transition back to normal eating or routines.
- Reintroduce foods slowly and with awareness.
- Reflect on what God has shown you during the fast.
- Write down insights, Scriptures, or next steps you want to carry forward.
- Ask God what rhythms or changes should remain beyond the 21 days.

CLOSING ENCOURAGEMENT

As you walk through these steps, remember that preparation is not about getting everything perfect. It's about being intentional. Taking time to check your heart, choose a fast, talk with the people around you, and set up your schedule and environment simply helps clear the way for God to work.

Just like a road trip, a little preparation ahead of time allows you to stay present once the journey begins. Instead of reacting to distractions along the way, you're free to focus on where you're going and who you're traveling with.

Our prayer is that these 21 days would be marked by clarity, renewal, and a deeper awareness of God's presence. Trust that as you step into this season with intention, God will meet you faithfully and lead you well through every mile of the journey.