

LENTEN FAST 2024

**Guide to Fasting
During the Lenten
Season**





Rev. Dr. Patrick L. Daymond
Senior Pastor

DEAR COVENANT PARTNER

As we continue in our *Discipleshift* Journey in 2024, we now shift to the **connect** phase. The season of Lent is foundational to the Christian faith because it tells a story we must all connect to if we are to have a rich and relevant relationship with God. The path goes through the cross and leads to resurrection. Jesus, in the giving of his life for us, demonstrates the generosity and kindness of God toward us. We do not deserve it. We have sinned against God and one another and yet God still strives to keep the relational connection alive with us in the giving of his only son Jesus Christ.

During this season, we want to more deeply connect with the one Isaiah called “the suffering servant.” He is one who helps us and helped our

ancestors through their suffering in slavery, which birth our Christian and cultural musical heritage known as the spirituals. This connection with the suffering of Christ will be made all the more poignant as we observe our 40-day fast. We will journey as a congregation through the book “Were You There? Lenten Reflections on the Spirituals” by Luke A. Powery. This devotion allows us to honor the season of Lent, while concurrently remembering the spirituals of our ancestors.

In conjunction with the devotional, we will post Four Minutes of Faith each Friday of Lent, four-minute sermonettes that will be delivered from scriptures and reflections out of the devotional. I pray this season blesses you in an incredible way and that when we reach Resurrection Sunday, you will find a deeper connection to Christ and the gospel story.


 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick L. Daymond".

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FASTING SCHEDULE

As a church, we will fast from Wednesday, February 14, – Sunday, March 31, 2024 (excluding Sundays) In your focused prayer times, be patient. Wait on God. Don't be in a hurry. Ask God to teach you how to be still and quiet before him. If you are fasting as a way to carry another person's burden or as a way to petition God for their salvation, be sure to take the time and moments that you would have been eating to pray specifically for that person. Pay close attention to the temptations and emotions you face during the fast, by asking questions like, "What is my strongest emotion today?" "Am I drawn to an unhealthy or sinful behavior as a means of coping?" Keep notes on what you are learning about yourself and God.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is denying yourself food or other comforts for a specific period of time. Fasting is something that the people of God practiced throughout the scriptures. Fasting was practiced for many different reasons. People fasted while waiting for insight from the Lord, as a prayer practice, to battle temptation, as an act of humility toward God, and as a way to intercede for others. The bottom line is that fasting is an act of spiritual devotion that is focused on having less of the physical things of the world in order to have more of the things of God. Great leaders in the Bible fasted routinely, including Moses, David, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. Jesus expects that we will fast regularly. In Matthew 6, Jesus addresses fasting specifically when he tells the disciples in Matthew 6:16, “When you fast. . .” Notice Jesus says “when” not “if.” Fasting is not an option. Jesus assumes that we will fast. Though fasting is assumed, it is not required. We don’t ‘have to’ fast. We ‘get to’ fast. Like all intentional spiritual practices, fasting should not be legalistic – we are not earning anything from God through fasting.





WHY SHOULD WE FAST?

When we give something up through a fast, it allows us to find more of God's presence and an increased reliance on God's grace. Our lives and souls are overloaded with things that we rely on to satisfy and distract us: entertainment, social media, food, drink, coffee, exercise, full schedules, you name it. Fasting is intentionally setting aside something that we routinely rely on for comfort or sustenance. In turn, we pursue God, asking God to fill that space instead. This process helps us to discern God's will and often brings a clearer look at our own spiritual health. Fasting is an act of sacrificial worship and prayer. We are making a sacrifice as an act of reverence and reliance on God. We are saying to God, "I trust you all the time even in times of going without." Fasting helps us to break the cycle of dependency on things of the world and grow more dependent upon God. Many fast on behalf of others as a way to carry their burden and as a petition (cry of prayer) toward God.

HOW SHOULD WE FAST?

Jesus also tells us how we should go about it, "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) Fasting is difficult. But it is doable! Jesus challenges us not to share our struggle with others but to turn your longings and struggles to the Lord, asking the Lord to fill the void and to draw us deeper into His presence.

WHAT IS THE DANIEL FAST?

Corporately, as a church, we will be participating in the Daniel Fast. The Daniel Fast is a great model to follow that proves to be extremely effective for spiritual focus, discipline and purification in the body and soul. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God, *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank...”* (Daniel 1:8)

“In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” (Daniel 10:2, 3). It is one of the most common types of fasts. In the book of Daniel, we find two different times Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, it states that Daniel ate no rich (or choice) foods as well as no meat or wine. The Daniel Fast consists of no meats, dairy, sugar or yeast breads for 40 days. You can eat lots of fruits, veggies, grains, legumes and peanut butter. **Sundays are days of celebrating the risen Christ and therefore not fasting days.**

For more information concerning the Daniel Fast, visit www.daniel-fast.com.



PREPARATION

For several days before the fast, pray and seek God on how God wants you to draw close to God in this season and the things that might interfere with that. The days leading up to the fast, continually ask God to guide and lead you through the fast, giving you a pure heart and a steadfast spirit and the strength to stay focused on Him and His will. (Psalm 51:10 provides a great meditation focus for this.) Fasting is always done with prayer. Fasting without prayer is just a diet! We want more than a diet; we want to tap into the supernatural power of God. Therefore, I am asking all our members to pray every day from 6:00 – 6:20am and 9:00 to 9:20pm or intentional times that work for your schedule. The key is to have a plan for your focused prayer time and strive to stick to it. **I'm especially asking all members to join me for prayer every Wednesday at 7:14am CT via our prayer line at (760)-548-9759.**





PARTNER FAITH WITH REASON

When fasting from food or observing the Daniel Fast, be sure to do this wisely. **Consult your physician if you have any health concerns.** If this is your first time, don't swing for the fences. Start small and work your way up over time. Fast from certain meals, or perhaps only during the daytime (from sunup to sundown) and drink fruit juice or light smoothies throughout the day. During a fast from food, you may feel weaker than usual, irritable and find difficulty concentrating. You may also get a headache. This is normal, but because of this, you also want to abstain from exercise and other strenuous physical activities during your fast. **Again, consult your physician!**

FOODS TO EAT ON THE DANIEL FAST

Whole grains

Amaranth, barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, freekeh, millet, oats, purple rice, quinoa, rye, sorghum, spelt, teff, whole grain pasta, whole wheat, and wild rice.

Beans and legumes

Black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, peanuts, pinto beans, and split peas.

Nuts and seeds

Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, nut butters, peanuts (actually legumes but people think of them as nuts), pecans, pepitas (pumpkin seeds), pine nuts, pistachios, poppy seeds, walnuts, sesame seeds, soy nuts, sunflower seeds.

Vegetables

All vegetables are allowed (fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, and canned).

Fruit

All fruit is allowed (fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, and canned). However, any dried fruit shouldn't contain added sugar (check ingredients to be sure).

Oils

Oils (such as coconut, olive, and sesame, for example) are allowed but should be used minimally. For example, you can sauté foods in olive oil but avoid deep-frying them.

Other

Unleavened bread (whole grain bread made without yeast, sugars, or preservatives, all herbs, spices, and seasonings are allowed, including salt and pepper. Soy products (such as edamame and soy nuts) and tofu are acceptable.

Beverages

Water should be the main beverage on your Daniel Fast. Distilled, filtered, sparkling, spring, and mineral water are allowed as well. However, you may have 100% fruit juice on occasion (just don't overdo it). You can also use 100% fruit juice in recipes. Also, unsweetened non-dairy milk is acceptable (such as almond milk, coconut milk, soy milk).

FOODS NOT TO EAT ON THE DANIEL FAST

Animal products

Meat (bacon, beef, bison, chicken, lamb, pork, and turkey)

Dairy (butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt)

Fish

Eggs

Added sugar

Agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, brown sugar, cane juice, corn syrup, honey, malt syrup, molasses, and raw sugar.

Yeast

Yeast and, therefore, leavened bread isn't part of the Daniel Fast. (For an explanation on why it's excluded, see #1 under "Food" on my FAQs page.)

Refined grains

White flour and white rice. Only whole grains are allowed on the Daniel Fast. A whole grain product contains the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm.

Processed food

Foods that contain artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, and preservatives.

Deep-fried food

Examples are corn chips, French fries, and potato chips. (Baked chips are acceptable if they don't contain restricted ingredients. Check the label for "baked" to be sure.)

Solid fats

Butter, lard, margarine, and shortening.

Chocolate

Milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, dark chocolate, chocolate syrup, and cacao.

Caffeinated and alcoholic beverages

Alcohol, coffee, caffeinated tea, and energy drinks.



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