



# 21 DAYS

## OF PRAYER AND FASTING

SUNDAY JANUARY 7TH - SATURDAY JANUARY 27TH



# Pray First

We are so excited to begin this journey of prayer together as a church family. Prayer is one of the vital components of our spiritual health — as individuals and as a body collectively. We look forward to this season of seeking God together at the beginning of a new year.

Understanding the necessity of prayer is not enough. In order for it to become a part of our life, it needs to become something we look forward to. I'm convinced most people don't enjoy prayer because they have never been taught how to pray. That's where this simple prayer journal can help. Using several prayer models from the Bible and having some guides to make prayer more personal, this booklet is designed to help bring joy into your time with God. When you discover the beauty of daily conversation with Him, you'll experience the presence of God that will change your life.

Pastor Rusty Hutson

# How to use this Guide

Each day you will find a short scripture and a one- to two-sentence prayer written by a group leader at Gulf Shores Methodist Church. Feel free to look up the scripture in your own Bible and spend time meditating on it, even allowing it to shape your own prayers as you listen for what God may be saying to you through it. The sentence prayers are meant to be a starting point - pray them and then keep going! Don't be in a hurry to finish each day. The Psalmist tells us to "be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him" (Ps. 37:7) and that when we do wait for Him, He will answer! (Ps. 40:1, 38:15)

May this 21-day guide be a catalyst for your daily practice of waiting for the Lord each day, and learning to love the ways you find Him to be faithful as you seek Him in this way.

# How to Pray

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

Pete Grieg offers three pieces of advice in his book *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* about how to pray: *keep it simple, keep it real, keep it up*. He writes: “You’ve got to keep it simple so that the most natural thing in the world doesn’t become complicated, weird, and intense.

You’ve got to keep it real because when life hurts, you’re going to be tempted to pretend you’re fine. And when you make a mess of things, you’re going to be tempted to hide from God (which never really works) and end up hiding from yourself (which works quite well). And you’ve got to keep it up because life is tough, the battle is fierce and God is not an algorithm.

The journey of faith demands a certain bloody-mindedness of us all, not least in the realm of prayer. God invites you to pray simple, directly, and truthfully in the full and wonderful weirdness of the way he’s made you.”\*

\*Grieg, Pete. *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*. ©2019

Another great piece of advice on creating a lifestyle of prayer is to find a time, a place, and a plan that you stick to each day for at least these 21 days.

## **How to Fast**

The goal of fasting is to draw nearer to God. Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose; it hits the reset button of our soul and renews us from the inside out. It also enables us to celebrate the goodness and mercy of God and prepares our hearts for all the good things God desires to bring into our lives.

Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and, most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

### **Types of Fasts**

#### **Complete Fast**

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

## **Selective Fast**

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

## **Partial Fast**

This fast is sometimes called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., or from sunup to sundown.

## **Soul Fast**

This is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

## **Timing of the Fast**

At Gulf Shores Methodist, we would like to encourage fasting for 21 days as part of this season of focused prayer as a church family at the start of a new year. You may also choose to fast at other times during the year for your own spiritual development.

“Fasting can bring breakthroughs in the spiritual realm that will never happen in any other way. It is a means of God’s grace and blessing that should not be neglected any longer.”  
- Richard Foster

\*Taken from Fasting Resources, 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, Church of the Highlands  
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# Daily Guide

Day 1 | January 7, 2024

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47

*Lord, help us to follow the example of the early disciples as we meet together for Sunday worship, but also in homes during the week throughout south Baldwin County. Give us the courage to break bread, fellowship, and multiply the number of groups meeting in homes so that more of our neighbors may be reached, saved, and brought into the life of your church, all for your glory and kingdom.*



## Day 2 | January 8, 2024

Please let us walk with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

Zechariah 8:23

*Precious Lord, may our church be full of people who seek You with our whole hearts. And may it be so that all who hear and know of us say that indeed, God walks with them and GSMC walks with God.*

## Day 3 | January 9, 2024

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

John 17:17

*Dear LORD, in a world where truth seems illusive, may we be made holy by knowing your Word and abiding in Your truth.*

## Day 4 | January 10, 2024

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31

*Heavenly Father, as we face challenges in both our church and personal lives in the coming year, help us hold firm to the promise that if we fully commit ourselves to you as you do to us, our difficulties will make us stronger and more fruitful, and we will overcome. We rely on your strength, guidance, and wisdom in acting on our behalf in any decision we face.*

## Day 5 | January 11, 2024

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18

*Holy God we offer our thanks for your Church, who calls us to worship and praise you. We come together to be refreshed in your Spirit which enhances our faith and love for you. We pray you would bless Gulf Shores Methodist, enabling us to be a shining light to all that pass by our buildings and who enter through our doors. In Jesus's precious name.*

## Day 6 | January 12, 2024

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 24:31-32

*Dearest Lord, my heartfelt prayer during this time is that we can all recognize your son, the living Christ through worshiping together, holy communion and serving each other. And that by doing so, your words will be revealed to us in the scriptures and that our eyes will be opened fully and our hearts burn with desire to know you even more.*

## Day 7 | January 13, 2024

So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

*Matthew 6:31-34*

*Heavenly Father, we know that you have your hand on the shoulder of Gulf Shores Methodist Church and that if we seek your will and follow your path, you will guide us and protect us and lead us in your way. We humbly ask that You guide, direct, and bless the leaders of our church as we go forth making disciples of all people in your name.*

## Day 8 | January 14, 2024

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your everlasting peace which can only be found in you. Help our church be a refuge of peace for our community, providing the rest they seek through your Word.*

## Day 9 | January 15, 2024

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Hebrews 13:17

*Lord, we pray for our church leaders as they battle spiritual warfare on our behalf and ask in all things they be prompted by your truth. We pray for our leaders to maintain a good conscience before God and to preach his truth without compromise.*

## Day 10 | January 16, 2024

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

John 17:20

*Sweet Jesus, you prayed for unity with God for people like us. You prayed for us to be conformed in your image as one, just as you and the Father are one. May we glorify You as we live in unity as a community. May our prayer be one of one heart, one mind and one love for those who will yet believe, for the wholeness of the world.*

## Day 11 | January 17, 2024

I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

Psalm 34:4-5

*Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that you help us to see your face and feel your presence in everything we do and say. I pray that others see Jesus in the way we talk, the way we act, and the way we treat others. We ask you to help our church to bring others in so everyone can experience the radiant joy of Jesus Christ. Lord, open our hearts and minds to you today and always.*



## Day 12 | January 18, 2024

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

*Heavenly Father, I pray we come together as the body of Christ and embrace our community: the children, the elderly, the sick, the lost, the angry, the sorrow-filled, the rich, the poor, the hungry, the fearful, sharing your love in ways that no one feels separate from it. Enable us to be like Jesus in our actions and our words, and in doing so light a path for all directly to You.*

## Day 13 | January 19, 2024

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Psalms 100:1-2

*Heavenly Father, We seek Your guidance in cultivating a worshipful community. May our gatherings reflect genuine love, humility, and a hunger for Your Word. Instill in us a passion for Your glory, fostering unity despite differences.*

## Day 14 | January 20, 2024

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100:3

*Lord, deepen our hunger for Your Word, and let our worship be rooted in truth. May our lives testify to Your transformative love. Enable us to be a community marked by grace, forgiveness, and encouragement.*

## Day 15 | January 21, 2024

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

Psalm 100:4

*Lord God, cultivate in us hearts of gratitude for your constant provision, presence, and guidance as individuals and as a Church together. I take time now to name five things for which I am thankful today!*

## ***Day 16 | January 22, 2024***

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

*Psalm 100:5*

*Empower our leaders and members with Your Spirit, equipping us to selflessly serve and radiate Your love throughout our community and beyond.*

## **Day 17 | January 23, 2023**

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 1:3-6*

*God, we thank you for our church family and the ways You are forming us through our meeting together, serving together, and worshiping together. Continue the good work Your Holy Spirit is doing within me and in our church!*

## Day 18 | January 24, 2023

This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love; that you will see the difference between good and bad and will choose the good; that you will be pure and without wrong for the coming of Christ; that you will be filled with the good things produced in your life by Christ to bring glory and praise to God.

Philippians 1:9-11

*Lord, we pray all of these things for our children, our teenagers, parents, single adults, and elderly people who call our church home and who claim the name of Christ.*

## Day 19 | January 25, 2024

Does your life in Christ give you strength? Does his love comfort you? Do we share together in the spirit? Do you have mercy and kindness? If so, make me very happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and having one mind and purpose. When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.

Philippians 2:1-4

*God, point out the ways selfishness and pride sneak into our thoughts and ways. Instead, let us be guided by the humility and unselfish love your Spirit produces in us when we live in step with Christ Jesus.*

## Day 20 | January 26, 2024

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

*In the coming year, Lord Jesus, make us mindful of what we watch, what we read, what we allow to shape our thoughts and our mindset. May we turn off the news and the social media feed so that we can fill our minds with your Word.*

## Day 21 | January 27, 2024

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.  
Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand  
watch in vain.

Psalm 127:1

*God, we give you our lives individually as followers of Jesus,  
and together as part of the Gulf Shores Methodist Church.  
Build our house Lord God. Build our lives as we seek You with  
all of our hearts. Build our church as we worship, serve,  
connect, and grow together in the name of Jesus, Amen.*