

9 REASONS TO PRAY AND FAST

EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – JANUARY 9, 2022

SERMON RECAP

9 Reasons to pray and fast from the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

1. Pray and fast for God's protection (Ezra 8:21-23)
2. Pray and fast for God's provision (Ezra 8)
3. Pray and fast in confession of sin (Ezra 9:3-6, Ezra 10:1, Nehemiah 1:1-11)
4. Pray and fast for the spread of salvation (Nehemiah 1:9-11, 9:28)
5. Pray and fast for people in urgent need (Esther 4:15-16)
6. Pray and fast for success in mission (Nehemiah 2:1-5, 2:8)
7. Pray and fast for strength amidst opposition (Nehemiah 4:7-9)
8. Pray and fast for faithfulness no matter what comes your way (Nehemiah 5:19, 13:14, 13:22, 13:30-31)
9. Pray and fast to enjoy and exalt God (Nehemiah 9:6)

GROUP DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

1. During this week's sermon we were challenged to consider four questions. If group members haven't had an opportunity to consider these questions, take time for the group to do so now.
 - What will be your daily routine for concentrated prayer during these days?
 - What will be your plan for fasting?
 - Who can you share (and possibly do) the above with?
 - What are you going to pray and fast for?
2. As you consider the answers to those questions, discuss your plans and thoughts with your Church Group family.
 - What excites you about a new commitment to prayer and fasting?
 - What bold prayers would you love to see God answer in 2022?
 - Whose salvation will you pray for in 2022?
 - With what will you need help or accountability?
3. What plans should our Church Group make to build rhythms of corporate prayer and fasting?
 - Should we add times of prayer and fasting to our group meeting calendar?
 - How can our group use the 2022 Global Outreach Prayer guide to pray for those who have been sent out from MBC to share the gospel around the world? See: mcleanbible.org/goprayer or download [The Global Outreach Prayer Guide](#).
 - Are there other resources or rhythms that would help us to spend focused time in prayer?



GROUP PRAYER

Take some concentrated time, as a Church Group, to start your new habits tonight. Consider using the acronym P.R.A.Y. (See *Leader Notes*)

- Pray that the Lord will help us, through the power of His Spirit, to keep the commitments we have made.
- Pray for the unique needs of the Church Group members.
- Pray for our church.
- Pray by name for our church leaders. Pray for our Elders, Lead Pastors, and for your Location Pastor. Pray for their families. (Note: Names included in Leader Notes below)
- Pray for those who don't know Jesus in our families, workplaces, neighborhoods, and among the nations.

LEADER NOTES

At MBC we often use the Acronyms "P.R.A.Y." and "F.A.S.T." as we encourage each other to spend time in prayer and fasting.

P.R.A.Y.

- **Praise** | When we pray, we praise God for who He is and we thank God for what He has done.
- **Repent** | We pause and reflect on sin in our lives. We confess sin before God and receive forgiveness from God through Jesus.
- **Ask** | We ask for God for things in our lives and in others' lives. God has invited us to come to Him with things that are on our hearts for our lives and others' lives and to express those to Him, trusting that He hears us and will answer our prayers based on His wisdom and power and love.
- **Yield** | In prayer, we say to God, my life is Yours, have Your way with me. Lead me, guide me, direct me however You will. I trust You with my life, and with all these things I'm praying for.

F.A.S.T.

- **Focus on God** | The point of fasting is to seek God, to feast on God through focus on Him and His Word.
- **Abstain from food** | Fasting is putting aside food, if that's physically possible, to say "More than we need food for our bodies, God, we need Your Word and Your presence and Your help for our souls."
- **Substitute the time with prayer and the Word** | Fasting is setting aside food and substituting the time we would be eating with concentrated time in prayer and God's Word.
- **Taste and see that God is good** | Psalm 34:8 - Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Rejoice that our God is better than anything else in this world - even the basic daily necessity of food.

LEADER NOTES (CONTINUED)

As we lead our groups to pray for our MBC Leaders, please pray by name!

1. MBC Elders:

- Elder Larry Cooper
- Elder Wayne Fujito
- Elder Patrick Lee
- Elder Jim Burris
- Elder Ken Tucker
- Elder Chuck Hollingsworth

2. MBC Lead Pastors:

- Pastor David Platt
- Pastor Mike Kelsey
- Pastor Wade Burnett

3. MBC Location Pastors:

- MBC Montgomery County – Pastor Mike Kelsey
- MBC Loudoun – Pastor Britten Taylor
- MBC Tysons – Pastor Nate Reed
- MBC Prince William – Pastor Todd Peters
- MBC Arlington – Pastor Eric Saunders

Reminder, for those who still want to join our 21 Days of Prayer Effort online:

- Go to mcleanbible.org/prayer.
- On that site, sign up for the “21 Day Prayer Challenge”.
- Fill out the “21 Days of Prayer Checklist”.
- Share the “21 Days of Prayer” commitment with others and invite them to join in!