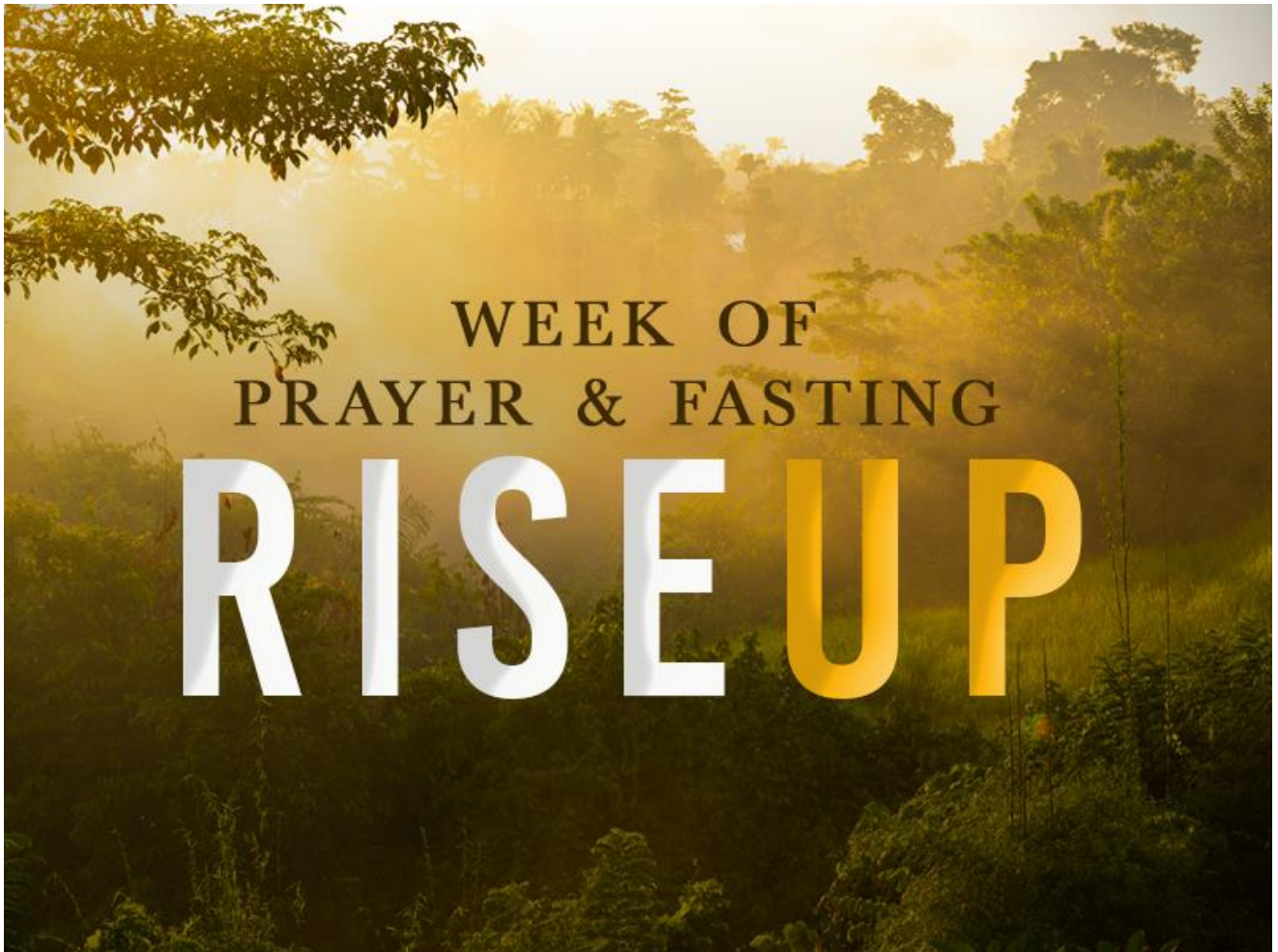


X R D S

Prayer & Fasting Week
Devotional Guide



"Call on me, and I will answer you..."
Jeremiah 33:3

XRDS International Church

Jan 20-24

XRDS

Introduction

We are excited to be going through a week of Prayer & Fasting with you again and warmly invite you to meet and encounter God together with us this week. We dedicate this week to the Lord, and it is meant as a time of empowerment and encouragement for us.

Prayer serves several purposes. For instance, it helps us express ourselves to God (Phil. 4:6), it can build us up spiritually (Col. 4:12) and enables God's will to be done in our lives (Luke 11:1-13; Acts 10:31). God also desires His house to be a house of prayer (Matt. 21:13). What's sometimes overlooked is that prayer also serves our own spiritual formation. That is, prayer transforms us to look more like Christ and how we pray, forms us as Christians. When the first Church was formed right after Pentecost, the apostles committed themselves continually to prayer (Acts 2:42).

Fasting & Prayer are closely related in the bible. For instance, David fasted because he was desperate for God to save his newborn son (2 Sam. 2:23); King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast to ask help from the Lord against Israel's enemies (2 Chron. 20:3); Esther asked the people in exile to fast to ask help from the Lord (Esther 4:16) and the people of Nineveh fasted to ask God to prevent the judgement the prophet Jonah had predicted would come upon them (Jon. 3:4). Fasting helped the Israelites express their dependency on God alone. Note in particular Ezra's explanation of why he and the people with him chose to fast:

"Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions." Ezra 8:21

In the new testament, Jesus also instructs His disciples about fasting. He says: *"When you fast..."* (Matt. 6:16). Notice how He assumed they would indeed fast. At XRDS we see fasting (in its broadest sense) as a deliberate withdrawal from something, so that we can make more room for God in our lives. It may be some type of food your fasting, or specific kinds of food (like sweets) or drinks (like soda's, or alcohol). It may also be media or entertainment, or anything else you normally enjoy doing. How and when you fast is ultimately between you and the Lord (Matthew 6). If you have any questions about fasting, feel free to contact us.

Historically, church bells have been used to signal a time for prayer and worship. We do not have church bells, but we would nevertheless like to invite all of our community and our LIFEgroups to pray and fast together this week at our Community Centre. In this devotional guide we have written down some ideas for prayer and fasting that you may find useful for your prayers at home. You can pray this at any time that suits you. Even though you might be alone, do know that our community is praying with you. Have a blessed week!

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How to use this devotional guide¹

— Read —

For each day we have selected a short Bible passage for you to read. As you read these passages, notice how God uses prayer to bring His plans to fulfillment.

— Pray —

You are given a few daily prayers you can pray on that day of the week. You can say these prayers out loud or whisper them if you're at work (takes about 5-10 minutes, depending on your private prayers). In the evenings you are also warmly invited to join us at the Community Center (Bovenkerkerweg 49, Amstelveen) for an evening of Community prayer. We will meet from Mon-Fri between 19:30-21:15. (We open around 19:00).

— Deny —

Each day we will give you some suggestions for fasting that will help you remind yourself of your dependence on God. We pull away from certain activities to focus our attention on God. Naturally, participation is voluntary, and you are completely free to arrange a fast of your own choice as well. Perhaps you could consider asking the Lord what you could give to Him this week?² The main goal is to seek the Lord and His will for our lives and to make space for Him.

— Give —

Each day we will give you some suggestions on how to give something to others. By temporarily saying no to ourselves and giving to others, we imitate Christ who gave Himself for us.

¹ We are grateful to Word of Life church for letting us use their Lent prayer booklet as an inspiration.

Monday 20 January

— Read —

Matthew 21:18-22

— Pray —

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A Prayer for Crossroads Community

Dear Father, we ask that you would give unto us a spirit of deep wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You; please help us to know You intimately and illuminate the eyes of our understanding; grant us to experience and know the hope of Your calling, the riches of the glory of Your inheritance in our believing community, and the immeasurable greatness of Your power that is available to us who believe; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Your own prayers (making your needs known and praying for others)

Listening (sitting with Jesus)

Closing prayer

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom You have made. We bless You for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. And we pray, give us such an awareness of Your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth Your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to Your service, and by walking before You in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

— Deny —

Deny yourself all fluids today except for water (or coffee/tea you make at home and bring to work).

— Give —

Spend some extra time with the Lord today by praying, listening to worship music or reading the scriptures by yourself or with your spouse (10-60 minutes).

Inspired? Join us for evening prayer at the office prayer room from 19:30 – 21:30. Every night will be hosted by one of our staff members and supported by a prayer group in the church. We would love for you to join us! Address: Bovenkerkerweg 49 in Amstelveen.

Tuesday 21 January

— Read —

Luke 18:1-8

— Pray —

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A Prayer for Crossroads Community

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world, evermore give us this living bread, that He may live in us, and we in Him. Give unto us the living waters that your Son distributes freely to all who believe in Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Your own prayers (making your needs known and praying for others)

Listening (sitting with Jesus)

Closing prayer

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, watch or weep today. Give your angels charge over us. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous: all for Your love's sake. Amen.

— Deny —

Deny yourself access to digital screens for entertainment purposes today (phones, tablets, computers, laptops, TV) unless necessary for work, school and essential communication.

— Give —

Reach out to a friend at Church you haven't been in contact with for a while or with who you have lost contact. Call, text, e-mail or message them and express to them what their friendship means to you.

Inspired? Join us for evening prayer at the office prayer room from 19:30 - 21:30. Every night will be hosted by one of our staff members and supported by a prayer group in the church. We would love for you to join us! Address: Bovenkerkerweg 49 in Amstelveen.

Wednesday 22 January

— Read —

Acts 2:42-47

— Pray —

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A Prayer for Crossroads Community

Almighty Lord, we bless you and thank you for all Your goodness, faithfulness and lovingkindness to us and our community. We ask today that you would help us to embrace one another. Please fill our hearts with gracious love; bind us together through your Holy Spirit, and transform us into a joyful and generous community. Help us to provide for the poor among us, and to worship You with humble hearts. May we have goodwill with all people, and may Your name be glorified through our community, according to your grace. Fill us with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom, and help us to be fruitful in every good work through Your Spirit. Amen

Your own prayers (making your needs known and praying for others)

Listening (sitting with Jesus)

Closing prayer

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

— Deny —

Try to fast breakfast, lunch and/or dinner today.

— Give —

Invite someone from church to your home or to a restaurant for a coffee, lunch or dinner sometime next week or this month.

Inspired? Join us for evening prayer at the office prayer room from 19:30 - 21:30. Every night will be hosted by one of our staff members and supported by a prayer group in the church. We would love for you to join us! Address: Bovenkerkerweg 49 in Amstelveen.

Thursday 23 January

— Read —

Matthew 18:21-35

— Pray —

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A Prayer for Crossroads Community

Lord, make us an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Your own prayers (making your needs known and praying for others)

Listening (sitting with Jesus)

Closing prayer

Dear Father, from whom all blessings flow; help us to find new ways to embrace one another in peace, love and hope; unite us together by Your Spirit and build us up together into a house of prayer for all nations for Your name, by Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

— Deny —

Think for a minute about who you might have wronged in the past, consider contacting them to apologize or ask for forgiveness.

— Give —

Take some time to forgive the people that may have wronged you in the past. Is there someone you need to forgive? Ask for the Lord to bless them and show His love to them.

Inspired? Join us for evening prayer at the office prayer room from 19:30 - 21:30. Every night will be hosted by one of our staff members and supported by a prayer group in the church. We would love for you to join us! Address: Bovenkerkerweg 49 in Amstelveen.

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Friday 24 January

— Read —

Matthew 9:35-38

— Pray —

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A Prayer for XRDS Community

Lord Jesus, you stretched out Your arms of love upon the hard wood of the cross, so that everyone might come within the reach of Your saving embrace, so clothe us in Your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of You. We ask that You would call and send more workers into Your great harvest; for the honor of Your name. Amen.

Your own prayers (making your needs known and praying for others)

Listening (sitting with Jesus)

Closing prayer

O dear God and Father of all, whom the whole heavens adore; let the whole earth also worship You, all nations obey You, all tongues confess and bless You, and men and women everywhere love and serve You in peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

— Deny —

Fast breakfast and lunch, eating a meal tonight instead.

— Give —

Write down a brief word of encouragement and give it to a neighbor, send it to a friend or post it on social media for our church community.

Inspired? Join us for evening prayer at the office prayer room from 19:30 - 21:30. Every night will be hosted by one of our staff members and supported by a prayer group in the church. We would love for you to join us! Address: Bovenkerkerweg 49 in Amstelveen.