



THE PARK CHURCH
7-DAY CHURCH-WIDE FAST

Fresh Start

RENEW

MONDAY, MAY 1 - SUNDAY, MAY 7



The spring season is upon us and it is the perfect time to kick off another Fresh Start Fast! The theme for this church-wide fast is: renew. As you reflect on how quickly the year is going by and all the things you may have planned for the coming months, it is important to take some time to renew your mind. This is why we will focus on technology for this fast. The thought alone may have given you some angst, but don't worry. You will find that fasting from technology allows you to be more present, spend more time meditating on God's Word, and create space for rest and renewal. Sounds refreshing, doesn't it?

During the Fresh Start 7-Day Fast, we encourage you to follow this daily fasting guide which includes the technology restrictions for the day, Bible reading and reflective journal prompts. Each day, we will focus on one of the things that Paul encourages us to meditate on in Philippians 4:8. Be mindful to make prayer a part of your daily routine as you engage in this time of fasting. Prayer is a key practice in our relationship with God because this is the way that we communicate with Him. We pray using words and silence; listening and waiting on the Holy Spirit to direct us is a major component of prayer. A humble heart and a mind open to Jesus is what He expects, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest (Romans 8:26-27).

Why Should We Pray?

- We pray because we love God.
- We pray to worship God for who He is.
- We pray to say thanks to our Father.
- We pray to God to praise Him.
- We pray to petition God.
- We pray to confess our sins.
- We pray to intercede for others.
- We pray against the enemies of God.
- We pray to listen to God.
- We pray to resist temptation.
- We pray because He directs us to pray.

The Model Prayer

"Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name"

—The prayer principles of adoration (praise for who God is) and thanksgiving (praise for what He has done).

"Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"

—The principle of affirmation, that is, agreeing with God's will and submitting to it.

"Give us this day our daily bread"

—The principle of supplication, in which we make requests both for ourselves (petition) and for others (intercession).

"And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" — The principle of confession in view of our need for forgiveness of sins.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"

—The necessity of renewal as we face the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" —A closing prayer that honors the Lord and completes our thoughts.

As you petition God in prayer for your concerns, also pray daily for:

- Sensitivity to the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Bishop Alexander and his family
- Wisdom for the Kingdom Team
- The Park Church/Congregation

What is a Fast?

A fast is a period of abstaining from something; denying self from a desire. While there are multiple types of fasts, this guide will focus on technology.

Why Should I Fast?

When you combine fasting and prayer, it can bring about a transformational revival – in you, the nation, and the world. It can be a very powerful tool in seeking God. The ultimate purpose of the fast is not you and what you seek, but God. Fasting is a true way to sacrifice for God and humble oneself to Him (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). Fasting is an act of worship and honoring.

How Should We Prepare for a Fast?

Spiritual Preparation

- Pray before you fast. Ensure that you communicate with God and seek His guidance regarding your fast.
- Ask God to help you to examine your heart, detect and repent any unconfessed sins.

Type of Fast for Renew: Technology

Technology Fast – Refrain from watching television, using social media or any other type of technology as suggested for each day. Below is a snapshot of the technology fast for the seven days. We encourage you to challenge yourself to eliminate distractions and use the time you would typically spend using technology to be present with the Lord and those around you. You may also find that you are incorporating more moments of stillness and reflection when technology is not a factor.

Day 1: Unplug from television, social media and other technology while spending time with others. Commit to being fully present.

Day 2: Unplug from television, social media and other technology until noon (unless it is work related).

Day 3: Unplug from television, social media and other technology until noon (unless it is work related).

Day 4: Unplug from television, social media and other technology during dinner time.

Day 5: Unplug from television, social media and other technology for the evening, starting at 5 p.m. (unless it is work related).

Day 6: Unplug from television, social media and other technology for the evening, starting at 5 p.m. (unless it is work related).

Day 7: Unplug from television, social media and other technology for 24 hours (unless it is work related).

During the fast, it is important to focus on God, rather than technology. The spiritual focus and growth will replace the normal presence of technology during the fast. It is our prayer that the Lord's most wonderful love and blessings will be poured out on you as you take this exciting step of faith.

Day 1

*Focus on whatever
things are true.*

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Meleakia Spearing

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology while spending time with others. Commit to being fully present.

Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

We allow our minds to dwell on a number of things in life, some false while other things are real. We get to choose whether we will meditate on fake news or what we know to be true. What we know to be true, comes from Who we know to be true; the character of God is praiseworthy! As we honor Him with our minds in this fallen world, let's aim to fix our minds on "whatever is true." This means we choose to focus on how good, merciful and kind our God is. Everything He does is excellent! His love and His favor toward us are beyond our mere human comprehension. All these things are true, therefore, think on these things!

How do you fix your mind on what is true as you look out into this negative world?

Day 2

Focus on whatever things are noble.

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Traci Ethridge

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology until noon (unless it is work related).

Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

Take a moment to think about the word noble. What comes to mind? Did you immediately think about someone of good character or perhaps the values or principles that you live by? When we consider that Paul encourages us to focus on things that are noble, we can trust that his prompt is for us to pay attention to what is honorable in God's eyes.

In today's society, we are inundated with stories, images and information that pull us away from the things that are noble. This is why it is important for us to maintain our focus on the right things. Although we are living in much different times than when Paul wrote this message to the Philippians, it is evident that it was just as necessary of a reminder then as it is for us today.

How can you practice focusing more on things that are noble?

Day 3

Focus on whatever things are just.

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Traci Ethridge

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology until noon (unless it is work related).

Scripture Reading


Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

It is easy to become overwhelmed and frustrated by the injustice we see happening in this world. We may even wonder how we can possibly focus on things that are just when so many things around us are not. As Christians, we should be the example for the world, not the other way around. We are instructed to love one another and look out for the interest of others. We should be advocates for equality and stand up for what is right. To keep our minds focused on what is just, we must first keep our minds focused on God. We can look to Deuteronomy 32:4 as a reminder of God's character as it says "*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*"

What can you do today to keep your mind focused on what is just?

Day 4



*Focus on whatever
things are pure.*

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Minister Tonia Gathers

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology during dinner time.

Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

The enemy seeks to corrupt our minds. Paul challenges us to think about things that are pure. Having pure thoughts means having a mind that is free from moral taint and defilement. However, pure thoughts take conscious effort. We are to grapple with this concept and not just think about it passively.

The more we put these things in our minds, the more they stay in our minds. The more they stay in our minds, the more they become a part of who we are; and what we deposit in ourselves is what will come out. This is how we bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). When we change our minds, we change our lives!

What action(s) will you take today that will lead you to cultivate pure thinking?

Day 5

*Focus on whatever
things are lovely.*

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Minister Taura Glaze

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology for the evening, starting at 5 p.m. (unless it is work related).

Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

In a world that is ravished with tragedies, it's more than a notion to think on what is lovely. If you've watched the news lately, at times it may seem as if things will never get better.

Yes, the pain points all around us - or the ones close to home, are real. Yet, we find ourselves being encouraged by Scripture to think on what is lovely, ironically, by an apostle who penned this letter of joy, from a jail cell. Stuck in a circumstance that one would deem unlovely, Paul considered the spread of the Gospel as a lovely outcome of his unwavering commitment to Christ...the One who said, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

How does knowing that Jesus overcame the world bring fresh perspective to your circumstance and invite you to think on things that are lovely, today?

Day 6

Focus on whatever things are of good report.

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Minister Joy Williams

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology for the evening, starting at 5 p.m. (unless it is work related).

Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

In Philippians 4:8, Paul's instruction to the Philippians was to think on "whatever things are of good report." This was more than a nudge toward optimism. It required a shift in focus.

As life's events unfold, a bad report can creep in and test our perspective. Disturbing details about who or what matters to us, may leave us wondering about what's next. But Paul encouraged the early church, and today's believers, to think of the best not the worst. Because of Christ's redemption, we can expect God to work all things together for our good. No matter how tough a situation looks or how bad the news sounds, the good report is this: God is with us (Psalm 46:10-11). Nothing is too hard for Him (Jeremiah 32:17).

How could focusing on the "good report" of who God is in your life encourage you today?

Day 7



*Focus on whatever
things are praiseworthy.*

Reflection & Journal Prompt by Corrinda Brown-Cryer

Fasting

Technology Fast - Unplug from television, social media and other technology for 24 hours (unless it is work related).

Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

Reflection & Journal Prompt

As we close out our time of fasting, let's be intentional to acknowledge Godly virtues each day as you've done this week. He gives us the virtue of faith to navigate unpredictable life moments, hope to persevere when life is overwhelming, and love to grow in His word. The virtues of faith, hope, and love, provide a path for us to discover the many things that are praiseworthy in our lives. This should be our focus as we *breathe in God's goodness*. Take a moment to appreciate where God has extended virtue and praiseworthy reminders of His love toward us.

How is God shifting you to define virtue and discover what is praiseworthy in your daily life as you embrace His unconditional love?

Congratulations, you have completed the 7-day church-wide fast!
It is our prayer that you have been encouraged by meditating on
God's word and experienced a sense of renewal.

Even though this fast is complete, we hope that you will continue to
practice the discipline of removing distractions, being more present
and keeping your focus on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of
good report, and praiseworthy.

Isaiah 40:28-31

Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.

Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.