



## 40 Days of Prayer & Fasting February 6<sup>th</sup> – March 16<sup>th</sup>

Below are detailed instructions for our 40 Days of Prayer & Fasting. We are asking the Church to commit to a few items during these 40 days.

- 1) Sign-Up for 1 day of 24-Hour Biblical fasting. (Only for members that are medically able to conduct a 24-Hour Biblical Fast)
- 2) In addition to the 24-Hour Fast, we are also asking that each member Fast from one item or activity and replace it with prayer for the full 40 days. Even if you are unable to participate in the 24-Hour fast, we would hope that all members can Fast in this method. For example, Fast from playing games on your phone and replace that time with prayer. The purpose of this Fast is to pick something that takes your time and attention and is challenging for you to give up for 40 days, and replace that time with purposeful prayer related specifically to Top Hand's Built To Serve Campaign.

**If you have additional questions, please ask a member of the Campaign Leadership.**

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### *How to Conduct a 24-Hour Fast*

#### What is Fasting?

***To fast is to voluntarily go without food, or some other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God, for a specific period of time for the sake of some spiritual purpose.*** Fasting is very counter-cultural in our overindulged, consumerist culture. Fasting is a way to temporarily set aside our earthly desires in order to intensify our desire for God. Fasting is an attitude of trust and dependence upon God. It is a way of saying, "God, I want you more than my necessary food" (see Job 23:12).

#### Why Fast?

Jesus fasted (Luke 4:2) and his language suggests that fasting is not a matter of "if," but of "when."

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. 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 men 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).

"How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; they will fast" (Matthew 9:15).

## How Do I Conduct a 24-Hour Fast?

Before you start, understand that fasting is hard! It sounds much easier than it proves to be in practice. You may be surprised how on edge you feel when missing a meal. But remember, nothing worthwhile comes easily. Besides, when was the last time you intentionally took a step of faith outside your comfort zone? A 24-hour fast may be the most significant spiritual step you've taken in a long time.

*To help you take this step of faith, below you'll find some practice suggestions. These seven basic steps will prove helpful to those who are new to fasting or have never seriously considered it.*

### Step One: Ask the Medical Questions

If you have any special health concerns, it is highly recommended that you consult your physician before conducting a fast. **There are certain people who should not consider a fast (from food): expectant mothers, diabetics, and those on certain medications.**

### Step Two: Schedule Your Fast

Pick a date on our "24-Hour Prayer and Fasting" calendar. Sign up to fast on a day that works best with your schedule. To conduct a 24-hour fast, you are essentially committing to miss meals. For example, you would eat dinner one night, and then not eat again until dinner the next night (thus, missing breakfast and lunch).

### Step Three: Plan Times of Prayer

Make specific plans to pray during your fast. The most obvious times might be during the meals that you will be missing. As your schedule permits, set aside some additional periods of time for prayer.

### Step Four: Determine the Type of Fast

For those that signed up for the 24-Hour Fast, we are asking you to conduct a Biblical Fast (drinking only water).

### Step Five: Eat Healthy Before and After

Eat a healthy meal (low-fat, low-sugar) before and after your fast.

### Step Six: Expect Some Side Effects

Everyone reacts differently to going 24 hours without food. Some common side effects include headaches, bad breath, less energy, irritability, and hunger pangs. Use hunger pangs as a reminder of your hunger for God and your total dependence upon Him. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

### Step Seven: End with Thanksgiving

As you break your fast, thank God for the communion you had with Him. Thank Him for the things He taught you. By faith, thank Him for the prayers He will answer through your times of prayer.

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Adapted from an article by Jim Leggett