

Mission24

PRAYER SHIELD

2HIFTD

**Victorious spiritual warfare through the power
of daily - structured prayer**



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Welcome to the Prayer Shield

Right from the early days of Mission24 we have sought to ensure that prayer is in the very foundations of everything we do. Learning to listen to the Holy Spirit, praying on the basis of God's Promises in His Word, proclaiming His Lordship in each situation and praising Him in advance for His answers, we have been privileged to see hundreds of thousands of people come to know Jesus and experience His miracle power in their lives. We believe that so much of the blessing we have seen over the years is a result of not only the teams prayers, but also of you, our partners, standing in agreement with us (Matt 18:19), to see the powerful supply of the Holy Spirit released to transform lives (Phil 1:19).

Our desire is that every partner of Mission24 gets involved in praying the Prayer Shield for themselves, their families and the people and work of this ministry. The more we press forward in serving the Kingdom of God and seeing lives transformed, the deeper our foundations in prayer need to be. As we each do this, we believe that by God's grace, we will build a spiritual shield of protection and see a greater anointing released amongst us and through us, giving momentum and fruitfulness to everything we set our hand to.

As we seek to fulfil our vision of 'equipping the Church' and 'reaching the world', preaching the Gospel to the North, South, East and West of the UK, and from here to Europe and the nations of the world, let's believe that's God's Spirit will be poured out in great power and we will see an unprecedented move of God in the Western world and beyond, reviving the Church to her true glory, and awakening the world to the reality of the risen Christ!

In this booklet you will find further information on what the Prayer Shield involves, with clear guidelines for praying 10-15 minutes each day. There are also guidelines for The Lord's Prayer and The Prayer of Jabez, as well as additional information on fasting, speaking in tongues and prayer walking. In addition to these, we would ask you to please regularly pray the New Testament prayers for evangelism for the Mission24 Team...

- For boldness (Acts 4:29, Eph 6:19)
- For the words to say (Eph 6:19)
- For open doors for the Word (Col 4:3)
- For healing, signs and wonders (Acts 4:30)
- For the ministry of Angels (Heb 1:14, Acts 8:26, Acts 10:3-6)
- For the wisdom of soul winners (Prov 11:30)
- For the convicting work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11)

You may also want to consider starting a prayer journal alongside the Prayer Shield, so that you can keep a record of your prayers with the answers!

Thank you for joining us as we pray for God to move powerfully in us and through us as a ministry.

With love and blessings

Jonathan Conrathe, Founder and Director of Mission24



What is the Prayer Shield?

The concept of the Prayer Shield is based on Paul's teaching on spiritual warfare in Eph 6:10-20. Here he highlights the vital importance of each of us putting on the full armour of God, including the need for each of us to "take up the shield of faith" with which we "can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." (Eph 6:16). The picture here is of the Roman phalanx, with all the soldiers lifting up their individual shields to ensure a protection over the whole company. In a similar way, we are called to lift up our individual shields of faith, bringing protection over not just our lives, but over the whole ministry.

How are we to do this? In Eph 6:18, Paul tells us how to appropriate all the weapons of our warfare: which is through prayer. Notice this strong call to be involved in praying for each other "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people".

The link between the shield of faith and "praying in the Spirit, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers...for all the Lord's people" seem clear. As we pray in faith for others, we lift up interlocking spiritual shields, bringing us protection from the attacks of the enemy, as well as releasing God's blessing over our lives. The more of us who pray this way, the greater the prayer covering over our lives – and the more we can accomplish together for the Kingdom of God.

However, we must not stop with just defensive prayers. Rather we must pray offensively as we take the good news of Jesus Christ into enemy territory. Notice that Paul concludes with the following request "Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel...Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should." (Eph 6:19-20). This highlights the need to undergird all our missional efforts with prayer. Not only will we be empowered and emboldened as we go, but others will become more spiritually receptive to the good news of the Gospel.

So, let's pray!

How to Pray the Prayer Shield

The Prayer Shield is not intended to replace your normal personal devotions but can be prayed as part of them. There is a different emphasis for each day of the week, so why not set aside 10-15 minutes a day to pray over the areas covered in this booklet. As we lift this prayer shield up, let's pray with boldness and confidence knowing that when we pray in line with His Word which expresses His will, He hears us and answers! Be encouraged by these prayer promises:

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." (1 John 5:14-15)

"Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24)

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chr 7:14)

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil 4:6-7)

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel." (Eph 6:18-19)

People to Pray Over

Your name:

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Names of your family members:

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Mission24 Leadership

Jonathan and Elaine Conrathe and family

Trustees

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Evangelists

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Administration and volunteers

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Lifelink Ambassadors

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Those in your sphere of influence e.g. place of work or education:

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SUNDAYS

Our weekend services around the UK and overseas

WORSHIP

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (John 4:23)

- Pray for an open heaven every time we gather together to glorify God.
- Pray that our hearts will be open and expectant as we meet together.
- Pray against any tactics of the enemy that would seek to distract people from entering into worship.
- Pray for anointing on the worship teams and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that God would touch the lives of people as they focus on Him and out Him first. Pray for healing, salvation and burdens to be lifted as we worship.

WORD

“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” (Eph 1:17-19)

- Pray for an anointing on the speaker and that people’s hearts will be receptive to the Word whenever it is preached; that they would have ears to hear what God is speaking personally to them. Pray for a spirit of revelation and understanding to be released.
- Pray against any distractions or resistance to what is being preached.
- Pray that people would not only hear the Word but would apply it to their own lives and be doers of the Word.
- Pray that children and youth will experience God’s presence, and know His word, and come to personal faith in Christ and become strong Jesus followers.

POWER, PRESENCE AND FELLOWSHIP

“...grant to your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word, by stretching out your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:29-31)

- Pray for the power and the presence of God to be manifest powerfully whenever we come together, and for words of knowledge and prophetic words to be released.

- Pray for lives to be transformed, as people encounter Jesus in a powerful way.
- Pray for signs and wonders, healings and miracles; that sickness will be healed, captives set free and emotional needs will be met.
- Pray for those who become Christians; that they would know the love of God at work in their lives and go on to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.
- Pray for good relationships and a sense of purpose and partnership to be established between Mission24 and the churches we serve.
- Pray for those who recommit their lives to Jesus; that they will quickly get connected back into church life.

MONDAYS

Our health and protection

- Speak divine health and strength over those you are praying for, declaring every part of their body will function as it was designed to function and that they will live a long and healthy life.

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” (3 John 1:2)

“... you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfil the number of your days.” (Exo 23:25-26)

- Where there are health challenges, command all sickness to leave and pray for full health and strength to return to their body.

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” (Isa 53:5)

“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions.” (Psa 107:19-20)

- Pray that our work lives and our rest times would be balanced and blessed; that we would be full of energy and vitality to serve the Lord.

“But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isa 40:31)

- Declare that we are living under supernatural protection; that all plans of the enemy will come to nothing, and that we will enjoy safety and peace.

“Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.” (Psa 91:9-11)

TUESDAYS

His provision

- Pray that we would put our full trust in God as our provider; not fearing what the future may hold but knowing that He will richly supply all our needs.

“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:19)

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” (Psa 84:11)

- As we honour God with our finances, pray that He will open up the floodgates of Heaven over us. Pray that we will know His protection over our finances (see Mal 3:10) and that we will know His abundant blessing over us. (see Eph 3:20)

“Honour the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; so, your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.” (Prov 3:9-10)

- Speak protection and divine favour over jobs and businesses of those who partner with the ministry. Declare that they will thrive and succeed. Pray for creative ideas, wise strategies and the ability to make wealth for the Kingdom. “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.” (Col 3:23)
- Declare that we will be a generous people, ready and willing to sow into the lives of others. Pray for abundance — more than enough to achieve all that God has for us to do individually and together.

“Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God.” (2 Cor 9:10-12)

WEDNESDAYS

Relationships

- Declare that we will be free from all strife, gossip, bitterness, unforgiveness, distraction, and division; instead walking in grace, forgiveness, unity and living under a commanded blessing. (See Psa 133)

“Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:1-3)

- Declare that as we walk in love, unity and honour towards one another, we will be an example of God’s love to those around us. “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.” (Rom 12:10)

“Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Phil 2:1-4)

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

- Pray for godly friendships to flourish and that we would spur one another on to grow in our faith.

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. (Prov 12:26)

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Prov 17:17)

- Declare that marriages in Mission24 will thrive, be long-lasting and an example to the world of Godly relationships.

“Marriage is honourable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” (Heb 13:4)

- Pray for strong relationships between parents and children. Pray that every member of your family will be wonderfully blessed and will radically love and serve Jesus.

“Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph 6:1-4)

THURSDAYS

Our spiritual maturity

- Pray that everyone involved with Mission24 will receive the empowering of the Spirit, be strong in the love of Christ and filled with the fullness of God!

“...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph 3:16-19)

- Pray that every one of us will increase in our maturity as sons and daughters of the Father, becoming more and more like Jesus.

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col 1:9-10)

- Pray that each person will commit to keeping short accounts with God, confessing their sins and choosing to live a life of obedience and intimacy with God.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom 12:1-2)

- Pray that we would move from discipline to delight in prayer and reading the Word, and that we would live a life of worship and thanksgiving.

“...them I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isa 56:7)

“Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Heb 13:15)

- Pray that we will continue to be committed to gathering together with and serving our local churches as well as building up the Body of Christ further afield.

“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. (Psa 92:13)

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” (Heb 10:24-25)

- Thank God for our Mission24 leaders and pray for supernatural protection, wisdom, favour, blessing and insight over them; that they would hear God clearly and lead with authority and anointing.

“...and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Eph 6:19-20)

FRIDAYS

Our destiny and purpose

- Declare that God's Kingdom will come, and His will be done in our lives and over those we are praying for.
- Pray that each of us will grasp that we have been created with a purpose, that we are part of God's plan for humanity and have a unique calling and destiny to fulfil:

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:10)

- Pray that individually and as a ministry, we would give our all for the Kingdom of God, experiencing the joy of playing our part and using the gifts we have been given to serve the purposes of God.

"...not lagging in diligence; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Rom 12:11)

"...with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free." (Eph 6:7-8)

- Pray that, as a ministry, Mission24 will fulfil the mandate God has given us, to equip the Church and reach the world with the life changing power of the Gospel.
- Pray for an increase of the miraculous among us; that we would have powerful, divine appointments to heal the sick, prophesy life, lead people to Christ, bring deliverance, release signs and wonders, and bless every place we go in Jesus' Name.
- Pray that we would rise up as the body of Christ, affecting change in all areas of life; government, business, schools, the community; that we would be salt and light to the world, demonstrating the goodness and the glory of God.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matt 5:14-16)

"And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Eph 1:22-23)

- Pray for an awakening in our nation, that people would turn again to the one true God.

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people. But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." (Isa 60:1-3)

- Pray for revival across the nations. Pray for a breakout of God's presence and power that would see men, women and children return to Him.

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He rules over the nations.” (Psa 22:27-28)

“Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession.” (Psa 2:8)

SATURDAYS

Our mission in the world

- Pray that whatever sphere we are in, we would be Kingdom Ambassadors demonstrating the love and goodness of God to all those around us, being salt and light wherever we have the opportunity.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt 5:16)

“And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” (Acts 11:21)

- Pray that we would be passionate and engaged in sharing the good news of Jesus to all those around us, consistently leading others to the Lord.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt 28:19)

- Pray for favour and good relationships with those in authority; for godly leaders in our government, for protection over our Royal Family, and for Kingdom values to come back into the centre of our nation once again.

“Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim 2:1-4)

Write down the names of those you are believing to see come to salvation:

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Pray for each by name, that God would:

- Open their eyes to see their need of Him, removing any “rocks” in their lives that might be blocking their understanding of the gospel.

“...whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Cor 4:4)

- Bring people into their path to share and demonstrate the goodness of God to them (look for opportunities to be one of those people!).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Pet 3:15)

- Take away any obstacles or arguments that they may have against God and His Church.

“Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor 10:5)

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to be working in their hearts, convicting them of sin and bringing them to a place of openness and repentance.

“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” (Eph 1:17)

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8)

- Pray that, if they are local, they will come along to a local church, the Alpha course or a Mission24 outreach or mission. Why not be the one to invite them!

“...who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (1 Tim 2:4–6)

“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:17-18)

Additional Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

1. Our Father in Heaven

- Picture the Cross and thank God that through Jesus you can call God "Father".
- By the Holy Spirit draw near to God's heavenly throne.

2. Hallowed be Your name

- Praise the Name of the LORD and thank Him for the blessings you have in Christ.

HIS NAME

IN CHRIST

The LORD our righteousness

I am forgiven and made righteous

The LORD who sanctifies

I am set apart for purity and ministry

The LORD my peace

I have peace and well-being

The LORD who is there

I have God's presence and power

The LORD our healer

I have restoration and wholeness

The LORD our provider

I have favour and provision

The LORD our banner

I have protection and victory

The LORD my shepherd

I have guidance and security

3. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done in these areas:

- Yourself
- Your Family
- Your Church
- Your Community and the Nation(s)

4. Give us today our daily bread

- Offer your requests to God.
- Ask Him to bless every area of your life and the lives of others.

5. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

- Ask God to forgive you.
- Forgive and release others.
- Set your will to forgive those who sin against you.

6. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

- Ask the Lord to keep you from sinful and compromising situations.
- Ask Him to protect you in all areas of your life.
- Put on the full armour of God.

7. For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- Worship God and make this declaration.
- Rejoice in the One who is eternal and has given you eternal life.

Additional Prayers Cont.

The Prayer of Jabez

“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So, God granted him what he requested.” (1 Chr 4:10)

There are four key elements or phrases to this prayer:

1. “Oh, that you would bless me” (a prayer for FAVOUR). Thank God that in Christ we’ve already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. (see Eph 1:3)

- Pray for a full release and manifestation of these blessings in your life and in those you are praying for.

2. “Enlarge my territory” (a prayer for INFLUENCE). For Jabez, this would have literally meant territory or land. For those of us ‘in Christ’ our territory is far more significant since it concerns people!

- Pray that you and Mission24 will have greater opportunities to influence more people, who God created, Jesus died for and who the Holy Spirit wants to bless through you and the ministry.

3. “Let your hand be with me...” (a prayer for ANOINTING). Once we start boldly praying ‘Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory’ we will find that we are more dependent on Him than ever, hence the need to pray for His hand to be with us. Throughout the Bible, the hand of the Lord is usually symbolic of God’s power or ability.

- Pray for His sovereign power to be released in your life and upon Mission24.

4. “And keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain” (a prayer for PROTECTION). This is a prayer of avoidance. It’s a recognition of our own vulnerability, where, in effect, we are asking the Lord to keep us out of situations that would be harmful for us.

- Pray that you and all team members will be spiritually protected as you put on the full armour of God (see Eph 6:10–18), done in the secret place of God’s presence, (see Psa 91) and pray for wisdom. (see Prov 2:7)

5. “And God granted his request.” This reveals the loving heart of our all-powerful God towards us. Here, He answered the cry of an Old Testament believer for FAVOUR, INFLUENCE, ANOINTING and PROTECTION. How much more will He answer His believing children in the New Testament age who are now ‘in Christ’!

Additional Information

Fasting is Feasting

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His followers to fast, and He promised that our Father God would reward us as we fast for the right reasons (see Matt 6:16–18).

To fast means to voluntarily reduce or eliminate your intake of food for a specific time and purpose. Sometimes it may be appropriate to fast everything but water, or you may decide to go on a juice fast, or simply fast from specific foodstuffs or drink, for example, sugar, red meat, chocolate, coffee, alcohol etc. Fast from food only if your health allows it at this time.

In Mission24, we also encourage the practice of fasting from other things, particularly during extended seasons of prayer. For example, you may want to give up social media or your favourite television programme (or TV altogether!) – anything that might be distracting you from putting God first in your life.

WHY FAST?

The overall purpose of fasting is not to simply fast from food, but to FEAST ON GOD! There are a number of ways that fasting can benefit us in our relationship with the Lord.

1. It can give us extra time to seek God and to hear His voice more clearly. Notice this great event in the history of the church in Antioch:

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” (Acts 13:2-3)

This is an encouragement for us to combine fasting with extra time in worship and prayer. As we do, we can expect that God will meet with us and speak to us more clearly.

2. It is a way of us demonstrating our spiritual desperation. Fasting reveals the depth of our desire for God and His presence, enabling us to fully turn to Him and seek Him for breakthrough in our lives or the situations we are praying for. An example of this call to seek the Lord with fasting is found in the book of Joel: “Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart; with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” (Joel 2:12)

3. It prepares us to receive a new anointing for life and ministry. We have the supreme example of Jesus, who already filled with the Spirit, still spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness, overcoming the devil and his temptations. The result? He returned “in the power of the Spirit” ready to enter into His earthly ministry.

4. It helps us bring our soul and body into submission to the Holy Spirit. In (Psa 35:13), David says, “I humbled my soul with fasting”. In (1 Cor 9:27), Paul says “I discipline my body”, no doubt helped by the fact that he was “often in fasting”. (2 Cor 12:27)

5. It positions us for spiritual victory and breakthrough. When faced with a vast enemy army, King Jehoshaphat “proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord.” (2 Chr 20:3)

The Lord heard them, spoke to them and dramatically delivered them!

6. It’s a way of us asking God for His special protection. Ezra was needing protection and safety as he and the exiles returned to Jerusalem.

“So, he “proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey.” As they fasted and prayed, God answered their prayer.” (Ezra 8:21, 23)

HOW ARE WE TO FAST?

1. Make sure that you decide in advance how long you are going too fast for and what you are going to fast from.

Then ask for God’s help and strength. It’s better to be realistic in your goal and then stick to it, than be over-ambitious! Determine, where possible, that you will use the extra time and focus to read the Word, worship and pray.

2. Check that you are fasting for the right reasons.

First and foremost, it is to spend time with the Lord, and then to seek His blessing and breakthrough.

3. Combine your fasting with actions and life change.

In Isaiah 58 the Lord rebukes His people for just attending to the physical aspects of fasting, and then highlights that the TRUE FAST looks like this:

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?” (Isa 58:6)

It’s worth reading this whole passage in Isaiah 58 and asking the Lord to speak to you about how He is asking you to change, and who He is asking you to bless.

4. Fourth, make sure you finish well.

Especially if you are fasting for any length of time, finish by celebrating with a light, healthy meal, not a large unhealthy spread! Ask the Lord to help you continue to grow spiritually beyond the fast.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

It’s so important for us to recognise that fasting doesn’t change God or His willingness to hear us. However, it does change us, removing barriers which then enables the Spirit to work more powerfully in and through us. The author and theologian Andrew Murray put’s it like this; “Fasting helps to express, to deepen, to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything...to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God”.

Let’s use the discipline of fasting to restore our focus and to revive the power of prayer in our lives.

Additional Info Cont.

Speaking in Tongues

WHAT IS SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

It's a way of communicating with God through a language(s) given by the Holy Spirit which are unknown to the person concerned. These may be human languages, as on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). Alternatively, languages that are less easy to detect may well be angelic (see 1 Cor 13:1).

WHY SPEAK WITH TONGUES?

The simple answer is because it is both thoroughly Biblical and very helpful!

First, it's clearly Biblical. It seems from the New Testament that speaking in tongues was a normal part of the experience of the early church. In the longer ending of Mark's Gospel we have Jesus simply saying that believers would "speak with new tongues" (See Mark 16:17). This was clearly the experience of the disciples in the Book of Acts. Significantly, speaking in tongues accompanied the infilling of the first Jewish believers in Jerusalem (see Acts 2:4), as well as the first Gentile converts in Caesarea (see Acts 10:44–46) and later in the highly influential church in Ephesus, hundreds of miles away in Asia Minor (see Acts 19:6).

In addition, tongues was clearly such a frequently used gift in the church at Corinth that Paul felt he needed to spend significant time in correcting their misuse of tongues: that is they were speaking in tongues in public gatherings without the gift of interpretation. At the same time, he also affirmed the proper use of tongues before making this remarkable statement about his own personal prayer life:

"I thank my God that I speak with more tongues than you all." (1 Cor 14:18). Given that Paul was the greatest apostle in history and was inspired by the Spirit to write huge portions of the New Testament, we can only conclude that praying in tongues was clearly something he found helpful in both his personal life and ministry.

There are lots that can be said, but here are three primary ways that tongues are very helpful:

1. It's a great way to praise God.

Do you ever get frustrated with your lack of vocabulary? You may want to express your love for someone, but after saying "I love you" for the umpteenth time, you would like to have more varied words at your disposal. Because the gift of tongues comes from the Holy Spirit and we speak them from our spirit, not our mind, we are not limited by our natural vocabulary, and can express more freely our praise and love to God. When the Holy Spirit first came on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, we read how they all "began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (see Acts 2:4). It is clear from the response of Jews from other nations who heard them speaking in their native languages that this was the language of praise: "we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our tongues!" (see Acts 2:11 and 10:46). Similarly, the

apostle Paul clearly praised God this way, telling the Corinthians: “I will sing with my spirit [i.e. with tongues], but I will also sing with my understanding.” (1 Cor 14:15)

2. It’s a great way to pray.

The early Christians not only praised God in tongues, they also prayed this way. For example, Paul clearly states: “I will pray with my spirit [i.e. with tongues], but I will also pray with my understanding” (1 Cor 14:15). He makes clear that using tongues in this way as a prayer language is clearly not for edifying the listeners, but rather a way of the speaker communicating with God: “anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God.”

3. It’s a great way to edify ourselves.

There’s a third wonderful benefit of speaking in tongues. As we praise and pray in tongues, something happens in us too: we get spiritually strengthened. As Paul puts it: “He who speaks in tongues edifies himself” (1 Cor 14:4). The word ‘edify’ means to build up. We can see from the Bible, and from the experience of many others, that speaking in tongues is a hugely helpful means of a Christian staying spiritually edified.

A word of caution: Paul, writing in (1 Cor 14) highlights that in the presence of others, especially with unbelievers, we need to prioritise intelligible gifts like prophecy. If and when a tongue is spoken in public then it would need to be interpreted. However, this is not the case in an all-believers gathering when everyone is praying out loud together or praying in tongues as a form of interceding for others!

HOW CAN I SPEAK WITH TONGUES?

1. Be filled with the Spirit.

Tongues comes from the Holy Spirit and is an overflow of being filled with the Spirit. If you have not been filled with the Spirit, then eagerly desire Him and ask for Him to come and fill you. The promise of Jesus is: “how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” (Luke 11:13). You may want to ask a Spirit-filled believer to pray with you.

2. Speak out what God gives you.

In (Acts 2:4) it makes clear concerning the disciples that it was they who began to speak with tongues “as the Spirit enabled them.” In other words, we like them, have to open our mouths, co-operate with the Spirit and give voice to what the Spirit is giving to us. Just as with your natural language you can choose to start or stop speaking, so it is with speaking in tongues.

3. Persevere and grow.

Sometimes it takes time for people to become sufficiently confident and fluent in speaking in tongues. It’s important that we persevere in this, so that we can pray boldly and powerfully.

CONCLUSION

Of course, all of this doesn’t mean that you have to speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues doesn’t make a person a Christian and speaking in tongues is not the only or even necessarily the most important spiritual gift. It depends on the context. So, for example, if someone needs encouraging, then we need the gift of prophecy, if someone is sick, the gift of healing etc. But

when it comes to personal praise, prayer and edification, speaking in tongues is a wonderful gift that you can receive if you would like to. Receiving the gift shouldn't lead to an attitude of superiority but rather one of humility. As someone recently said: "to be filled with the Spirit doesn't make me better than you, it makes me better than me!"

Additional Info Cont.

Prayer Walking

Prayer walking is as simple as it sounds – praying as you walk. One simple definition is ‘praying on-site with insight’. When we prayer walk, we are stepping into our God-given authority to bless people and places in Jesus’ name. This simple activity is a great way to bring transformation to our local communities by asking God to break in with His love and power.

GETTING STARTED

1. Know your local area.

Know the places and people that make up your local community. Ask God to show you how you can pray with greater insight for the people, places and events in the community. What positive qualities and opportunities does the community have to offer? Are there any signs that God is already at work? How could you serve your community? God may show you ways to display His love by practical acts of kindness.

2. Know local people.

If appropriate, find out what the needs are in your local community by speaking to those in your area. What challenges are people likely to face as they go about their daily lives? As you prayer walk, the focus is on those living in your community, so be intentional about praying for God’s blessings on what you see and feel. Even in difficult areas, pray positively. Focus on God’s plans and purposes for the place and people who live there. ‘Your Kingdom come, Your will be done...’ is an excellent place to start.

3. Know local needs.

Are there problems with unemployment, crime or poverty in your area? What needs and concerns are in evidence? What do you see that detracts from people’s quality of life?

You could put all this information onto a physical map of your community or write it down in one place. This will help inform your prayers, and you can add to it as you prayer walk.

HOW TO PRAY

Pray for discernment; ask the Lord to show you what He sees and to know His heart for your community.

Pray for blessing; ask for God’s intervention in the life of each person and home you pass. You may want to pause at key buildings such as a school, community centre, hospital or local business. Ask for His will to be done in this community “as it is in heaven”. (Matt 6:10)

Pray with empathy; see and feel what the residents live with every day; intercede for the things that express brokenness and grieve God’s Spirit. Give thanks for the blessings and all the good things you see in your community.

Pray from scripture; prayers based on God’s Word can be very powerful.

Pray in God's power; allow times of silence for the Holy Spirit to speak to you, then speak out with confidence in the power of Jesus' name.

SOME PRACTICALITIES

If you are prayer walking in a group, start and end together. Agree a place and time to start prayer walking. Begin by explaining why you've gathered together to pray, and if relevant, share specific prayer points. Breaking into pairs or small groups can help you to pray for different parts of your area and is safer than prayer walking alone. If splitting into smaller groups, then agree a place and time to end together. You can then share what you've prayed and heard from God. Write it down so that you can keep track of how to pray for your area in the future.

1. Choose whether or not to plan your route.

You can plan ahead to ensure that you pray for specific areas, or simply ask the Holy Spirit to guide your time – just make sure you don't get lost!

Use your natural and supernatural senses

As you prayer walk, be aware of your surroundings; what you see, smell, hear and touch. But also be aware of what God is saying to you as you move around your community; if any Bible verses pop into your head or if you have any pictures, visions or words of knowledge, then turn these natural and supernatural senses into prayer.

2. Choose whether to pray silently or out loud.

The point of prayer walking isn't about being seen praying; it's about seeing and praying. Pray quietly, but don't be afraid to speak out prayers if you feel compelled to. However, don't draw attention to yourself – you can be on the scene without making one!

3. Keep going.

Prayer walking is also a way of claiming a specific area for God. When Joshua and the army were claiming Jericho, God instructed them to walk once around the city for six days, and seven times on the seventh day (see Joshua 6). Why not commit to making prayer walking a regular habit!

As you keep praying, continue to ask for God's blessing; praying for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done in your community. If you feel that God is highlighting specific things or challenges, think about how to act; how could you be part of God's solution practically, as well as prayerfully?

Whatever you do, don't stop praying!



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