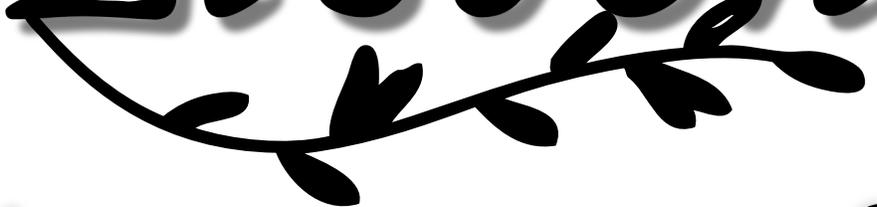




be still and
SIMPLY
Listen



A CALL TO PRAYER AND FASTING

SIMPLY *Listen*

“ If you dwell in Me and My voice dwells in you,
anything you ask will come to pass for you.
Your abundant growth and your faithfulness
as My followers will bring glory to the Father.

- Jesus -

Simply Listen is a month-long call to prayer and fasting for our congregation, beginning June 1. These 30 days are an opportunity to turn down the noise in our lives, and focus upon the voice of Jesus. Our desire as a congregation is to simply listen for how God is calling us to grow together. Just as Jesus' invitation is to all, we invite everyone who desires to grow deeper in their spiritual life and relationship with Christ to join in this special time.

For some of you, that will mean fasting for the very first time. For others, it will mean fasting with a new level of intensity and intentionality like never before. Regardless of where you are starting, my prayer is that you will be committed to taking a step forward.

**“ Therefore, everyone who hears these ”
words of mine and puts them into
practice is like a wise man...
- Jesus -**

Jesus made it clear in His teachings that information without application is not very helpful. Only when the words and realities of the Bible are applied to our lives will we begin to see the world of Scripture come to life in us. God truly longs to do more than of us could ever ask or imagine, both in us and through us. But that sort of life will not come simply because we are more educated on the blessings of prayer and fasting. We must actually take action if we want to experience these blessings.

The Bible does not necessarily prescribe how one must fast, but Scripture does describe various ways that individuals go about fasting as a companion to prayer. What is most important is to prayerfully consider the motivation for fasting. Remember - God delights more in obedience than sacrifice. While we are asking everyone to participate in fasting to prayerfully ask God's direction for our congregation, you may feel led to fast for other requests during this time. What matters most is that you obey the leading of God's Spirit as you consider your fast.

Four Primary Ways to Fast

Generally speaking, there are four common ways Christians choose to fast.

1 .

MAJOR FAST

A major fast is when you abstain from food or drink for twenty-four consecutive hours or more. A major fast requires a certain level of physical health, and it is recommended that you check with your doctor if you are doing a major fast that lasts for more than a few days in a row. Some examples from Scripture of a major fast can be found in Matthew 4:2; Acts 9:9; Esther 4:15-16, just to name a few.

2 .

MINOR FAST

in a minor fast, you choose to abstain from food for a certain period of time (i.e., 6 am to 3 pm or sunup to sundown). This fast is sometimes called a 'Jewish fast,' and it can last for days at a time, eating only at a set time of the day. In a minor fast, most people will drink liquids during the day and have one small meal after sundown each evening.

3 .

PARTIAL FAST

A partial fast is when you give up only certain foods during the course of your fast. This fast is seen most clearly in Daniel 1, where Daniel abstains from certain foods out of devotion to God for a period of time. During a partial fast, some people choose to give up certain foods they enjoy in an effort to turn their hearts more deeply toward God.

4 .

SOUL FAST

Technically speaking, biblical fasting only refers to abstaining from food or drink (or both) for a spiritual purpose. However, some people choose to fast from things other than food. Some people will give up television, social media, or other activities for a soul fast to focus on prayer.

Be Still and Listen...

Each of these fasts can be a valuable way of connecting with God more deeply. If you are physically able, fasting in some form of the first three fasts listed is encouraged. As Scripture witnesses, there is something about giving up food that physically and spiritually realigns us in ways nothing else can. However, abstaining from other activities and experiences can be a powerful way of turning down the noise in our lives. Take time to be still and listen for God's voice leading you in the proper way to spend this time of fasting.

Keep in mind, that fasting not only involves abstaining from food or activity, but replacing these moments in our day with Scripture and prayer. While we turn away from material sources of strength during a fast, we turn to God as our true source of inner strength.

Now that we have discussed various types of fasts, let's look at some practical suggestions for starting well. At the end of these suggestions, you will have the opportunity to fill out and sign a Fasting and Prayer Commitment.

“ You don't have to be great to start, but
you do have to start to be great.”

- Zig Ziglar -

1. SET YOUR OBJECTIVE

Begin by asking God to help you understand why you are fasting. As a congregation, we are fasting together for God's guidance and direction for our church. Why else are you considering a fast?

- Personal Spiritual Renewal
- Guidance from God
- Healing - Physical, Mental, Emotional
- Salvation of Lost
- All of the Above

2. CHOOSE YOUR FAST

We are inviting everyone who feels led to participate in this special time of fasting for the entire month of June, which means that your fast will be a daily occurrence. You will need to look at the four types of fasts, and decide where the Lord is leading you.

3. PREPARE YOURSELF

In these days leading up to this fast, take time to adequately prepare

MIND

Prepare your mind. Begin asking the Lord to mentally prepare you for the journey you are about to take.



BODY

Prepare your body. It is often recommended to drink plenty of water in the days leading up to a fast. It's important to avoid the urge to overeat in the days leading up to a fast, which can make things more difficult at the start of a fast.

HEART

Prepare your heart. It can be helpful to spend time in confession and repentance before entering a time of fasting.



4.

MAKE A PLAN

You need to make a plan to use the times usually given to eating as times of prayer, worship, and Bible study. When families fast together, this time may be used for reading Scripture and praying together. When individuals in a family fast individually, they may use meal times with others to share what God is doing in their life. Making a plan for how you will repurpose meal times or other activities is important.

5. START AND STICK WITH IT

Simply start your fast and stick with it if you are to make progress in this discipline. Chances are, especially if this is your first fast, you might not make it as long as you had intended. That's okay. When you're hungry, pray. If you break down and give in to hunger, pray. Either way, get back up and keep moving forward toward God. Fasting is an exercise in grace - so make sure to give yourself some.

When children are learning to walk, there's a lot of steps, wobbles, and falls. But we don't ridicule our children as they are trying something new. We cheer them on, help them up, and watch them go again. The same is true with our Heavenly Father. As we are learning to walk in new ways of experiencing our faith, the kindness of God lifts up in our struggles and successes.

6. SHARE WITH OTHERS

Finally, share both the burden and blessing of fasting with trusted others around you. We are taking this journey of fasting and prayer together as a congregation, and we are called to encourage and help one another along. You may also be led to find a small group you can be accountable to for your fast, whether that is within your home or church. Make sure to sign up to receive daily texts and emails for the month of June, so you can find encouragement in strength in the prayers of others around you.



Join In And Simply Listen

Text LISTEN to 423-200-4021
or sign up online
wesleymemorialchurch.com

SIMPLY COMMIT

While these steps are not a formula for the perfect fast, we pray that they will provide you with a helpful framework for taking your next bold step toward God in prayer and fasting. On the next page you will find a Fasting and Prayer Commitment. We ask that you prayerfully consider and fill out this commitment. You can bring it with you to service, and lay it on the altar for the month of June.

**MY COMMITMENT TO
FASTING AND PRAYER**



I COMMIT TO A FAST OF:



FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE

I WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE TO:



FOR HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT

**I SIGN MY NAME AS A COMMITMENT TO
SEEKING THE LORD DURING THIS TIME. I KNOW
IT IS BY HIS STRENGTH AND GRACE THAT I
TAKE THIS JOURNEY WITH OTHERS.**

