



Fasting Guide for Lent 2023

Why Are We Fasting?

As we approach Easter 2023, we would like to invite you to join us in a season of prayer and fasting liturgically known as Lent. Lent is a time set aside by the church to pray and fast during the weeks leading up to Easter. It is a practice instituted by the early church as a way of commemorating Jesus' fast in Matthew 4 before he began his public ministry. It also serves as an intentional time for God's people to reorient themselves to who or what they depend on for provision, security, and safety. This season will be a time for us to remember that what we need most cannot be purchased or earned through our own works.

What is Fasting?

In scripture, we are shown time and time again that when God's people wanted to express their desperation for God, they prayed as they fasted (1 Samuel 7:3-6). The people of God are a praying people from the beginning to the end of scripture. In addition to their constant prayerfulness, there are moments of intense longing where the authors of scripture make a point to tell us their prayers were accompanied by fasting.

Fasting is a way God's people express their dependence on God as they seek him in prayer.

How Do I Fast Well?

We are fasting as a church from March 1 to April 5, 2023. We will commit to praying and fasting during one meal each Wednesday until April 9, Easter Sunday. Although this will be our collective plan as a church, fasting from food is not required, nor is fasting on Wednesdays only. We encourage you to determine in what capacity you will fast with us in this season. Additionally, we've created this weekly guide that will provide you with weekly passages of scripture to prepare your heart for prayer and fasting as well as prayer prompts to help you pray in line with Mercy's mission of making disciples who love God, love each other, and love our world.

You can [sign up](#) to receive these emails directly to your inbox each Sunday as you make a plan for your week.



Week 1 | February 26, 2023

Scriptural Focus

As we enter this season of Lent, let us remember and meditate on the **holiness of God**.

There is no one holy like the Lord. There is no one besides you! And there is no rock like our God. – 1 Samuel 2:2 (CSB)

Lord, there is no one like you among the gods, and there are no works like yours. All the nations you have made will come and bow down before you, Lord, and will honor your name. For you are great and perform wonders; you alone are God. – Psalms 86:8-10 (CSB)

Prayer Prompts

- **Love God**

Pray, Lord “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the way of everlasting” (Psalm 139:23,24).

- **Love each other**

- Pray for the people of Mercy Church, that we would grow deeper in our love for God, and in our daily devotion to Him, and that our worship gatherings would exalt the Lord above all things.

- **Love our world**

- Pray for the one who is far from God and close to you. Pray, Lord give us our family and friends. Just as Paul longed for saving faith in Christ for those he knew, so we need to long for those we know to come to saving faith in Christ. Pray that the Lord would soften your heart and open your eyes to opportunities to share the gospel. *I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood. - Romans 9:2-3*



Week 2 | March 5, 2023

Scriptural Focus

Read Matthew 20:28 and reflect in prayer on why Jesus came to earth.

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. - Matthew 20:28

Prayer Prompts

- **Love God**
 - Give thanks to God for Jesus, His son, who “...existing in the very form of God did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant...” (Philippians 2:6,7). Repent of selfishness and areas in your life where you’ve been more focused on yourself and your glory than God’s glory. Pray that the Lord would make you and Mercy Church more like Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

- **Love each other**
 - Ask the Lord where he might be calling you to serve others. Is it in your family or community, or church body? What should be your *Next Step* in following Jesus?? Click [here](#) to learn about our Serve Team opportunities.
 - Pray for the Lord to raise up more serve team members to serve in all of our ministries. For it is, “From him, the whole body, fitted and knitted together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part...” (Ephesians 4:16).

- **Love our world**
 - Pray for the Lord to bless the efforts of our current ministry partners in Charlotte ([Queen City PRC](#), [Charlotte Dream Center](#)) and that He would lead us to other ministry partners who are working to meet the needs of our city with the love of Christ.



Week 3 | March 12, 2023

Scriptural Focus

Read the account of the prodigal son in Luke 15: 11-32 to prepare your heart for this time of prayer. Meditate on God's heart for those who are far from him and His desire to receive them into his Kingdom.

Prayer Prompts

- **Love God**

- Pray that you would share the Lord's heart for the lost. *Lord, give me the heart of the prodigal son's father, who, when he saw his son returning and still a long way off, ran to him. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. -- Luke 15:20*

- **Love each other**

- Pray that the Lord would show us how to increase our capacity to make room for the people He is bringing to Mercy Church.
- Pray for the Lord to provide a facility for Mercy Union County.
- Pray for wisdom for our elders in determining future plans for our Providence Road facility.
- Pray for wisdom for our Northeast Campus leaders on when to add a second worship service.

- **Love our world**

- Pray for a gospel awakening in the city of Charlotte. Pray that we would see more salvations, baptisms, and disciples made than we ever have before as a church.



Week 4 | March 19, 2023

Scriptural Focus

Pray through Psalm 67 and ask God to give you a heart for the unreached around the world to know and worship Him as God.

Prayer Prompts

- **Love God**
 - Spend time praising God for his mercy and grace. “Let the people’s praise you, God; let all the people’s praise you” (Psalm 67:3).
 - Pray that our missionary and church planting partners would abide in Christ. Apart from Christ, they can do nothing (John 15).

- **Love each other**
 - Pray that God would raise up people within Mercy who would desire to be sent as Church planters, core team members, and long-term missionaries.
 - Pray for the unity of our missionary teams around the world.

- **Love our world**
 - Pray that His way would be known on the earth and that His salvation would be known among all nations (Psalm 67:2).
 - Pray for Mercy Nairobi as they officially launch their church plant on April 2, 2023! The launch team includes Allan and M’lynn Waruhiu, Tori Bishop, Ashley Price, and Rachel Young.
 - Pray for Stu and Gracie, our missionaries in South Asia. They are currently in language school. Pray for them as they learn the language and build friendships in their city.
 - Pray for Sadie, one of our missionaries in South Asia. In August, she will complete her two-year commitment to her missions team. Pray that she finishes well and has clarity on what her Next Steps will be.
 - Pray for Catherine Mitchell as she is newly married to William Kojwang! Catherine has been the Discipleship Director for Uhuru Girls School since we sent her in 2017. Pray for her as she disciples girls to know Jesus.
 - Pray for Mercy’s mobilization efforts to send missionaries to unreached people groups (Luke 10:2). See Mercy’s [Missions page](#) for more information.



Week 5 | March 26, 2023

Scriptural Focus

Read Ephesians 4:11-16 as you prepare your heart to pray. Pray for Mercy church, that we would be a **maturing, multiplying, and multicultural** body of believers, built up in unity and love.

Prayer Prompts

- **Love God**
 - Pray for God to awaken the hearts of the upcoming generations in MercyKids, Mercy Students, and Mercy College. Pray they would grow up to love God with all of their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind (Matthew 22:37).
- **Love each other**
 - Pray that we would be a body of believers that continues to pursue with conviction our desire to be **a multicultural church** that reflects the kingdom of God. Ask God to search your heart and show you where you need to sacrifice comfort and preference to embrace the culture of another brother or sister.
 - Pray that God would show you how embracing cultural differences of others helps create beauty and strength within the body of believers.
 - Pray that God would use our Community Groups to build connection, strength, and unity amongst the body of Christ at Mercy Church. Pray that God would raise up new Community Group leaders to meet the needs of our growing church.
 - Pray our different Connect Groups (Young Professionals, Lydia Collection, PRIME) would be a place where people can connect with one another relationally and build each other up in their walk with Jesus.
 - Pray for the different equipping opportunities we have through Men's and Women's Bible Studies this spring.
- **Love our world**
 - Each ministry at Mercy Church is for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry in order to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Pray that the ministries of Mercy Church would produce disciples who love God, love each other, and love our world, and who also see themselves as sent to proclaim the hope they have in Christ.



Week 6 | April 2, 2023

Scriptural Focus

Read the following passages, and spend time asking and seeking the Lord for the things he has placed on your heart.

Philippians 4:6-7 (CSB)

Matthew 7:7-12 (CSB)

Matthew 6:25-34 (CSB)

Prayer Prompts

- **Love God**
 - Give thanks to God, who provides us with everything we need (Matthew 6:33).
 - Pray for the things weighing on your heart. Bring your burdens and concerns to Him. He invites you to bring your wants and desires and asks us to trust Him.
- **Love each other**
 - As you consider all that you have brought before God during your time of prayer, how is he asking you to step in and love people in the midst of your circumstances?
 - Pray for “your one.” Who is the person God has uniquely placed in your life who is close to you but far from Him so that you can share the hope of Christ with them?
- **Love our world**
 - Pray that God would help you see all of life as an opportunity to be a part of what he is doing to see His kingdom expand to the ends of the earth.

Next Sunday, April 9th, is EASTER Sunday. We'd love for you to join us!

Service Times

Mercy Northeast: 9 and 11 am

Mercy Providence Road: 8 am, 9:30 am, and 11:30 am