

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

40 DAYS

**OF PRAYER
& FASTING**

*Securing the Miraculous
through Sacrifice and Surrender*

May 7 – June 15, 2017



A Time to Pray & Fast Partnering in Prayer for the Gospel

May 4, 2017

Dear Church Family,

As a body of believers, we have the incredible privilege of partnering in the furtherance of the Gospel message. Over the next 40 days, we'll have the opportunity to fellowship together in a concert of prayers and fasting to bring a fresh revival to our Gospel commission. During the 40 days, let's praise him and be mindful of His grace and blessings. At the conclusion of our 40 day journey let's be prepared to make a covenant with the Lord to give more of ourselves in the form of our Time, Talents and Treasures. By giving more of ourselves, we demonstrate to God our obedience in glorifying Him with our time and talents and being good stewards of the treasures He has given us to do the work He has set before us. Jesus encourages us to come before the Father, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9) Imagine what God can do when we unite in one Spirit praying every day for God's love to be poured out in us and through us, for His glory.

We are also asking you over the next 40 days to set some time aside for Fasting. Please refer to the attached guide on the purpose and practice of fasting. The church leadership understands that prayer is the bloodline for our spiritual bodies and our direct line of communication with the Lord. Therefore as a church body, we are setting aside these 40 days to commune with the Lord and ask him for direction and guidance not only for our individual lives but for our church body. We will be revitalizing our prayer lives and making prayer a center point for growing our relationship with Christ personally and corporately.

Each day, starting on Sunday May 7th and continuing for a total of "40 days", you will be provided with a specific focus area for your daily prayers and devotions. Each focus area will be accompanied by Scripture passages for reflection and guidance. It is my prayer that you will use the time you spend with God to heighten your awareness of who He is and in turn deepen your faith, your trust, and your dependence upon Him. You are encouraged to pray individually, as a family, as a small group, and in addition there will be opportunities to pray corporately. We have established a Prayer Room located in Classroom 3 where you can come before and after service for additional prayer time and to pray with the church leadership and Worship Warriors. I also extend to the church body the opportunity to be actively engaged in our Prayer Ministry, led by Brother Robin Buzby.

During your time in prayer and fasting, it's important to be reminded of just how precious an opportunity and privilege it is to be able to communicate with our Father, the Creator of this universe, and the Author of our salvation. It is a privilege only afforded through the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We should approach humbly, recognizing our total and utter dependence upon Him. What a gift to be able to lay aside all our anxieties and "...in everything, by prayer, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6) Let's unite together in lifting up our hearts, our prayers and petitions, in anticipation of God's desire to unleash His power through prayers of faith.

What a Mighty God We Serve!

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Hamlin Sr., Senior Pastor

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“Look at the birds. They don’t plant or gather the harvest. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? ... Why worry... first, be concerned about His Kingdom and what has His approval. Then all these things will be provided for you.” **Matthew 6:26, 28, 33**

GUIDE TO FASTING AND PRAYER

In over fifty references to fasting in the Old and New Testaments, there is no specific command to fast, with the exception of the Day of Atonement for the Jews. In the New Testament it was assumed that fasting would be a part of the normal devotional life of the believer.

Mathew 6:16 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 the truth, they have received their reward in full. Notice that Jesus assumed that His followers would fast.

Mathew 9:15 Jesus answered, “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; then they will fast.” Again, Jesus assumed that His followers would fast.

If these verses indicate that fasting should be a normal discipline in the church (and the numerous examples of fasting support the idea), then what does it mean to fast? What is the purpose of fasting, and how do we go about fasting?

Fasting: Voluntarily going without food and sometimes water, generally for religious purposes.

Four Types of Fasting Referred to in the Bible Are:

1. **Normal Fasting** – going without food for up to 40 days (Ex.34:28; Ezra 8:21,23; Dan.6:18; Luke 2:37; Mark 2:18; Matt. 4:2; Acts 13:2-3; 14-23 and others).
2. **Partial Fasting** – abstaining from certain foods (Daniel 10:3).
3. **Absolute Fasting** – going without food or water no more than 3 days (Esther 4:16; this is very rare in the Bible)
4. **Voluntary Group Fasting** – called for a specific reason for a specific group of people (1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Chronicles 20:3; Jonah 3:5; and others).

Purpose of Fasting:

1. Fasting as a means of worship, which must be God-centered, God-intended, and God-ordained.
2. Fasting as an expression of grief, distress, or repentance.
3. Fasting as preparation for God’s guidance and renewal (Daniel 9; Ex. 24).
4. Fasting to reveal the things that control us and hinder our intimacy with God.
5. Fasting to remind us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”
6. Fasting to help keep our balance in life.

Practice of Fasting:

1. **Occasional Fasting** – eat a light meal (fruit, vegetables, yogurt, etc). Skip 2-3 meals, and drink a lot of water. Break the fast with fruit juices followed by a light meal. Avoid oils, dressings, and starch for a couple of meals.
2. **Regular Discipline of Fasting** – begin slowly with a partial 24-hour (2 meal) fast once a week for several weeks. During this fasting time, drink fruit juices. After succeeding with this for several weeks, move to a 36 hour (3 meal) fast. Break these fasts with a light meal of fruit and vegetables.
3. **Optional Fasting** – if skipping meals is not possible, try fasting certain types of food (sweets, soft drinks, etc.) or leisure activities (TV, sports, etc.).

Points to Remember While Fasting:

1. Monitor your inner attitudes and maintain a worshipful attitude.
2. Be careful not to call attention to what you are doing.
3. Devote this fasting time to devotional activities.
4. Seek the Lord regarding extended fasting.*
4. Remember that the major work of scriptural fasting is in the realm of the spirit.

**** If you are diabetic, diagnosed with hypoglycemia or other serious medical conditions, please seek advice from your physician prior to fasting from food.***