



## A 12Stone Fast

12Stone Church is encouraging you to participate in fasting during the month of June. For many, this will be your first experience of any kind with fasting. To Fast = to not eat; to abstain from food

*(Note: If you have an eating disorder, please do not attempt to fast. If you have a medical condition, talk to your doctor before beginning.)*

While there are many Biblical examples of fasts (including a prolonged fast of 40 days) for June 2008, we are encouraging the fast commonly observed among the ancient Christian church, which was for a one day period. It became a practice of some to set aside Wednesday and Friday as a prayer/fasting habit of faith (including half fasts on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> days of the week, translating to the habits of men like John Wesley). For our context, this would equate to eating the evening meal on Tuesday with no solid foods until the evening meal on Wednesday. Then, repeated after the evening meal on Thursday with no solid food until the evening meal on Friday. These two 24 hour periods of fasting were accompanied by intentional moments of prayer.

John Wesley comments on such times, *"Sometimes God is often pleased to lift up the souls of His servants above all the things of earth, and to lift them up, as it were, into the third heavens. And fasting is chiefly an aid to prayer, so much so, that it has frequently been found a means, in the hand of God, of confirming and increasing, not one virtue, but also seriousness of spirit, sincerity, sensitivity, and tenderness of conscience, deadness to the world, and consequently a love of God, and of every holy and heavenly feeling."*

(Reread that quote carefully and mediate on it – it is deep and wide.)

Notice, fasting is added to prayer. Fasting has no spiritual power in and of itself. But when it is the setting aside of our physical needs/appetites/desires to channel our energies, our heart in seeking our Heavenly Father, it can be a powerful tool of grace.

### **Why June 2008?**

In preparation for this June series, the impression of the Holy Spirit was to invite 12Stone to fast and pray as we draw from the teaching of Acts 13:2-3. *"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."*

We are being obedient to the prompt. You are free to decide your level of participation as the Spirit impresses Himself upon you.

### **What's the Purpose?**

Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit who decides the purpose of this 12Stone fast in June 2008. In one sense, we do not know. We simply attend to his leading and walk accordingly. He will make



Himself known as we walk. But some things are noteworthy:

- 1) Humbling ourselves before the Lord and repenting for purity of heart pleases Him and frees us as candidates for His spiritual favor.
- 2) Per the June 1<sup>st</sup> teaching: Holy Spirit, “Invert” and “Infill!”
- 3) Heightened spiritual awareness and intensely deeper peace, confidence in the Lord and awareness of His presence often comes our way through these disciplines.
- 4) Laying aside the earthly things that consume our appetites in order that the Spirit of God might awaken us to His burden for souls is often a result of fasting.
- 5) Positioning our spirit to “hear” from the Holy Spirit is the open door to life in the early church and “life to the full” today. (John 10:10)
- 6) This is more about seeking than solving and therefore we come with open hearts and empty agendas. As a church, we have been entrusted to do our part as a force for Good News and Good in our County and beyond. This is a season in which we seek his favor for reaching spiritual unresolved souls. Simultaneously, we are on the ground floor of a high rise vision with many stories yet to come. We must hear from the Holy Spirit that we might “set apart” and “send” at His bidding (Acts 13:2-2). This is a year of great harvest and vision capturing for the years ahead.
  - a. Pray: “Father, draw the spiritually broken, those in need of You and continue this harvest of souls.”
  - b. Pray: “Father, draw us closer to You and set us apart and send us into Your work whether than means sending us into the workplace, to launch another 12Stone campus or into serving beyond this County.”
- 7) “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, here on earth, among us as it is in heaven!”

### **What Should I Do?**

Consider before the Lord your best sense of what pleases Him. If you do not get any specific prompts, simply express your heart by choosing.

Options:

- Fast Wednesday and Friday giving at least one of those meal times to specific prayer per the seven items above.
- Fast Wednesday or Friday giving at least one of those meal times to specific prayer per the seven items above.
- Fast another day of the week that better suits your calendar (giving at least one of those meal times to specific prayer per the seven items above.)
- Do not fast at all, but show up each week and pay attention to what God might be teaching you/us. And still pray, giving attention to prayer per the seven items above!

Consider having a partner on the journey (agree with one another what each will do) and encourage one another.

Consider keeping a prayer journal with any Spirit prompts along the way.



Pay Attention: the Holy Spirit will often speak in this season on days other than fast days since this season resets your thinking throughout and entire week.

Relax: You do not make anything happen in fasting! The expectation is that we SEEK God and know that He attends to humble, sincere seeking. We do not need to compare experiences or elevate one type of experience over another.

Remember: this is individual on one level, yet wholly corporate on another. God will be working across the church and we contribute to a collective seeking in this season. In the case of Acts 13:2-3, the Holy Spirit spoke and it meant that Paul (Saul) and Barnabas were sent out to advance the gospel, while the rest of the church was sent out (back) to their own homes throughout Antioch to live out and witness and gospel. All were fully following the Holy Spirit.

### **Directions for ONE DAY Fasting**

(Abstain from solid food for approximately 24 hours.)

Choose one of these three:

- Some will choose water only (drinking only water for the day).
- Some will choose to drink water plus juice for the day.
- Some will choose to drink water plus whatever they can get in a blender and through a straw for the day.

Choose one of these noting that water (hydrating) is critical in all three.

Notice: We are not prescribing the choice in liquid.

WE ARE strongly encouraging you to educate yourself on what we believe to be one of the best web sites regarding fasting. Dr. Bill Bright was a man of great faith and used mightily by God. His web pages on "How to Fast" remain with many spiritual and practical insights into fasting. Note, his work applies primarily to longer fasts, but are very helpful for any length of fast. (See: [www.billbright.com/howtofast/](http://www.billbright.com/howtofast/))

### **A Sidebar to the Family Cook (often Mom with kids)**

All this sounds pretty spiritual if you don't have kids in the house, if you don't have to cook, see and smell others' food, and you don't have to nourish a family!

Some suggestions offered from moms in similar places:

- Prepare meals ahead of time and freeze them, so less cooking needs to be done.
- Pray while you're preparing food for the kids (and i.e. juice for yourself).
- Cut back for that day on social activities for yourself and the kids to have a slower day with more down time.
- Get up early that day to have quality prayer time, or set a quiet time with kids off in a "special room" to get some quiet moments to pray.
- One mom writes: "From my experience and talking with others, I realize that it often comes down to trusting God that He will provide the extra energy."



### **Contemplation: (Comments on Fasting)**

In the 1700's, John Wesley provided insight in the practice and purpose of fasting. The following random excerpts are taken from his message, "When You Fast."

*"Fasting has been the appointed means: For it was not by intelligence or reason, that the people of God have been, in all ages, directed to use fasting as a means to these ends; but they have been, from time to time, taught it by God himself, by clear and open revelations of His will. A good example is found in the Book of Joel, where God says to His people, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning' . . . Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing. Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly . . . Then the LORD will be jealous for His land and take pity on His people. The LORD will reply to them: I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations." (Joel 2.12ff)"*

*"Let our intention be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father in heaven; to express our sorrow and shame for our many transgressions of His holy law; to wait for an increase of purifying grace, focusing our attention on things above; to add seriousness and earnestness to our prayers; to avert the wrath of God, and to obtain all the great and precious promises which He has made to us in Jesus Christ."*

*"We cannot be warned too often of trying to 'establish our own righteousness'; trying to procure salvation or any other need by our works and not by grace, for this is so deeply rooted in all of our hearts. Fasting is a way which God has ordained for us to receive His unmerited mercy; God is not obligated to give us anything, but He has promised to freely give us His blessing."*

*"This is a time for expanding our prayers, both in behalf of ourselves and of others. Let us now grieve over the sins of our people; and cry aloud for the Church, that the Lord may build her up, and cause His face to shine on her. Thus, we may observe, the men of God, in ancient times always joined prayer and fasting together; likewise the Apostles..... and even our Lord fasted and prayed."*