

SEEKING GOD'S FACE

For the second year in a row, the churches of the Bellarine and Surf Coast are coming together to fast and pray, seeking God's face (Psalm 27:8; 2 Chronicles 7:14).

Why are we doing this?

To walk in the unity that Jesus prayed for us

Jesus prayed that His people would be one, just as He and the Father are one, so that the world would know Him (John 17:20-23). We desire to be a unified church that displays the diverse beauty of God, making known His manifold wisdom (Ephesians 3:10).

To see God move

We long to see God move in our region—to see people saved and restored (Acts 2:47; 2 Corinthians 5:17). We believe God is calling us to seek His face before we seek His hand (Psalm 105:4).

To bring God's blessing

God tells us that when His people dwell together in unity, He commands a blessing (Psalm 133:1–3). We desire to live under the headship of Jesus, our Lord and King (Colossians 1:18).

What we're encouraging you to do over this time.

Fasting to help you pray

From February 8-22nd, we're inviting you to fast and pray and/or practice an area of self-denial. This is because Jesus assumed His followers would fast. He taught them to do so with humility as they sought God (Matthew 6:16-18).

Sunday night corporate worship

We will gather as church communities on Sunday nights, February 8 (CBTB), 15 (TCF), and 22 (Wave), at 6:30 pm to worship and seek God's heart together (Psalm 95:6; Acts 2:42).

Prayer rooms

We encourage you to utilise the prayer rooms in your churches. Consider booking a time individually or with your life group to seek God and pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done" (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:9). Please check with your church for how to book a time.

Daily messages

We will send a daily message from the pastors to encourage us as we seek God together. Please check with your pastor about how to receive these messages.

Fasting: Understanding what it is and why fasting and prayer go together

Fasting is the intentional abstaining from food for a set time to heighten our awareness of our dependence on God, acknowledging that He alone is the source of life (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4, Joel 2:12; Ezra 8:21–23). Throughout Scripture, fasting is regularly paired with prayer and often brings revelation, direction, repentance, and heart change (Joel 2:12–13; Ezra 8:21–23; Acts 13:2–3).

This is because we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). Fasting, accompanied by prayer, re-centers our hearts on God as our true source of life and sustenance (Psalm 63:1; John 6:35).

Jesus assumes that His followers would both pray and fast (Matthew 6:5–6, 16–18). Yet despite this, fasting remains a neglected practice in the modern church. As John Mark Comer observes:

“It’s one of the most powerful—and neglected—of all of Jesus’ practices.”

Fasting and the governance of the Spirit

In Romans 8, Paul contrasts a mind governed by the Spirit with one governed by the flesh (Romans 8:5–8). “Flesh” (*sark*) refers to natural desires, good gifts from God (James 1:17), that are not meant to rule us.

As we deny bodily desires, fasting strengthens reliance on the Holy Spirit, reveals what controls us (1 Corinthians 6:12), and draws us into worship, fulfilling the greatest commandment (Mark 12:30).

Richard Foster writes, *“More than any other single discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.”*

So why fast? It focuses on God as the source of life, preparing our hearts for the work God wants to do in and through us (Isaiah 58:6–11).

What fasting is and isn’t

Some substitute fasting with giving up activities like social media. While this can foster self-control, a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), it is not biblical fasting. True fasting involves denying physical desires, particularly food, to remind us that we depend on God for everything (Psalm 63:1).

Fasting wisely

If you are new to fasting, consult a medical professional if needed. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a medical condition, fasting may not be appropriate. Caring for our bodies honours God (Proverbs 4:7; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). So, if fasting from food isn’t possible, consider an intentional act of self-control to focus your attention on God (1 Corinthians 9:24–27).

Ways to fast

Complete abstinence from food (Esther 4:16).

Partial fasting (skipping meals or foods), for example: skipping lunch, giving up coffee, or a Daniel fast (vegetables only; Daniel 1:8-16).

If fasting from food isn't possible, consider an intentional act of self-control.

Fasting is not meant to be easy. It is a conscious denial of fleshly desire to elevate the authority of the Spirit and deepen dependence on Him (Galatians 5:16-17).

How to fast

Choose what you will fast from (Luke 4:1–2). Ask someone to be a prayer and accountability partner (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12). Decide what you'll replace it with, what prayer will you pray? (Colossians 3:1–2).

Set aside a daily time for prayer and reflection (Psalm 5:3; Mark 1:35). At the end, share what you learned with a life group or trusted friend.

Ask the Holy Spirit: **“Is there anything You are asking me to trust and obey?”**