

## Prayer and Fasting Guide for Multiplying Pastors

### Why?

There are many examples of prayer and fasting throughout scripture. The model of the Antioch church stands out as one to be followed as you pursue church planting.

*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."* – Acts 13:2  
NIV

We believe this kind of prayer and fasting is vital to discerning God's will for you and your church as you move toward church planting.

### What?

This guide was created to lead you through 24 hours of prayer and fasting as you seek and discern God's answer to the question:

**How would you use me and our church in planting other churches?**

This guide is designed to be used individually, however, we encourage you to share it with others and encourage them to pray and fast simultaneously. You'll find ideas for a shared meal to break your fast and share your experiences at the end.

### How?

A day of fasting and prayer is best when planned ahead.

1. Put the day on your calendar far enough in advance to keep it free of all interruptions. Check family calendars to confirm you won't miss something you should be present for.
2. Choose a place to get away to.
  - a. An overnight stay is ideal if you have access to a cabin or retreat center or the ability to pay for a night in a quiet, tucked-away place.
  - b. You may also choose to spend the day at a retreat center or outdoors in a quiet setting free of people and distractions.
3. Communicate your plan to those who need to know where you are, your spouse, a child, and an admin or fellow staff member.

Your day will be more focused if you have what you need and have left behind what you don't.

1. You will need access to a Bible and a journal (and this guide). You will want to disconnect from all forms of electronic communication. There are several ways to do this.
  - a. Use a printed Bible and handwritten journal and leave your computer and phone behind.
  - b. Download the Bible and this guide to an electronic device (choose just one) and be prepared to turn on airplane mode during your fast so you do not receive any communication.
2. You will benefit from walking during your day of fasting and prayer. Be sure to have appropriate clothing to be outdoors and shoes for walking.
3. Decide whether you will fast from everything but water or include coffee, tea, or juice in your fast. Pack only what you need so you won't be tempted to break your fast early.

## Fast and Pray

6:00 pm

### Dinner

Your fast will begin after you eat dinner.

- Practically speaking, eat a healthy well-balanced meal.
- Use your mealtime to reflect on God's goodness in your life.
- If you're sharing the meal with others, make this question the focus

**How is God blessing you/us right now?**

7:00 pm

### Focus

Start by disconnecting your devices. If you have a Bible and journal, just turn them off. If you use them for listening to or reading scripture, download what you need and put them in airplane mode.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:6-7 NIV*

Use this time to reflect on the sources of anxiety in your life. What keeps looping through your mind? It might be as simple as a task you need to complete in the next few days or as big as your health, finances, or relationships. Whatever it is, write it in your journal. Ask God to take care of it and replace your anxious thoughts with his peace as you sleep tonight.

8:00 pm

### Rest and Sleep

Give yourself a full 8 hours of sleep. A well-rested body and mind will help you focus your heart and soul on God tomorrow.

6:00 am

### Wake and worship

Jesus said, *"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."* – Matthew 6:16-18 NIV

Get up and get ready to meet the world as you would any other day - except for breakfast. As you do, turn your mind to worship. Celebrate God's goodness and presence in your life and in this day.

7:00 am

### Confession and repentance

Take time to reflect on your actions, thoughts, and words, considering where you may have fallen short of God's standards. Confession, repentance, forgiveness, and restoration will remove anything that hinders your relationship with God.

- Acknowledge your sins honestly before God, admitting your faults and shortcomings. (1 John 1:9) Confess your sins directly to God, expressing remorse and a desire for forgiveness. (James 5:16) Be specific in naming your sins, avoiding vague generalizations.
- Repentance involves a sincere turning away from sin and a commitment to change. (Acts 3:19) Ask God for the strength to resist temptation and to live according to His will. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

- Trust in the promise of God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:7) Remember that God is merciful and compassionate, willing to forgive those who come to Him with contrite hearts. (Psalm 103:8-12)
- Embrace the assurance of God's love and acceptance, knowing you are forgiven and cleansed. (1 John 1:7)
- Offer thanksgiving to God for His grace and mercy, recognizing the privilege of being reconciled to Him. (Colossians 3:16-17) Rejoice in the freedom found in Christ, and commit yourself anew to following Him wholeheartedly.

8:00 am

## Gospels John 13-20

Listen to or read John 13-20. This begins with Jesus celebrating Passover with his disciples through his death, burial, and resurrection. John writes about some of Jesus' most intimate interactions with his disciples. As you listen or read, ask Jesus, "What are you saying to me through these scriptures?"

- Record what you hear in your journal.

9:00 am

## Walk

Get outside and walk. If you're an athlete, run or ride. Remember your fasting. It will be good for your body to move but strenuous exercise will increase your body's craving for calories.

- As you walk/talk with Jesus about what you heard from the reading of John.

10:00 am

## Fruit

Jesus said, "*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*" John 15:5 NIV

Spend the next couple of hours reflecting on the fruit in your life and ministry.

- What has Jesus done in you?
- What has Jesus done through you?
- Thank him for the fruit he has produced in and through you.

11:00 am

## Acts 1-6

Listen to or read Acts 1-5. This is Luke's account of the beginning of the church and the carrying out of his mission by his followers. As you listen or read, ask Jesus, "How are you accomplishing your mission in and through our church?"

- Record what you hear in your journal.

Noon

## Walk

It's time to get out and move again.

- As you walk/talk with Jesus about what you heard from the reading of Acts.

1:00p

## Now

Paul reminded the Philippian church, "*It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*" Philippians 2:13 NIV

Spend the next hour reflecting on how God is at work in your church right now.

- What's most important to him?
- What does he want you to give more attention to?
- What does he want you to give less attention to?
- How does church planting fit into God's priorities?

2:00 pm

## Acts 10-14

Listen to or read Acts 10-14. This is Luke's account of how the good news of Jesus found its way from the Jews in Jerusalem to the rest of the world. As you listen or read, ask Jesus, "How do you want to use our church to bring the good news to those not yet following you?"

- Record what you hear in your journal.

3:00 pm

## Dream

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.* – Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV

Take the next hour to dream. As you reflect on everything you've heard, read, and thought, what can you imagine God doing through church planting?

- Write it in your journal.

4:00 pm

## Walk

It's time to get out and move again.

- As you walk/talk with Jesus about your church-planting dreams. Do you have the faith and courage to ask him for more?

5:00 pm

## Next

Use the last hour of your fast to reflect on your experience and clarify what you've discerned is next.

- How would you use me and our church in planting other churches?

6:00 pm

## Dinner

Again, practically speaking, eat a healthy well-balanced meal. Resist the temptation to overeat in response to your hunger.

Use your mealtime to reflect on what you've experienced in the last 24 hours.

If you're sharing the meal with others who have also been fasting and praying, use this time for each person to share their answer to the final question.

- How would you use me and our church in planting other churches?

## Share

As you return from your fast, make a plan to communicate with those who most need to hear about your experience. This most likely includes:

- Your spouse (if you're married)
- Fellow leaders in your church
- Specific people who came to your mind while you were fasting and praying