# PRAYER AND FASTING

# Praying in Times of UNCORPORTAINTY

DEVOTIONAL



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## Praying in Times of NGORLAINLY

We face various kinds of uncertainties in life. It comes in the form of a dreaded disease, a lost opportunity, setbacks in business and career, a failing marriage, or a wayward son. Moreover, the damaging interruptions of the COVID-19 crisis and the onslaught of typhoons and floods are common challenges for all of us. We are also challenged with the unjust ways in our world that keep many in the mire of poverty and ignorance while being further exploited to death.

The series of devotions are reflections from the book of Habakkuk to guide CCBCers in engaging with God in prayer and fasting through such a time as this.

Through the story of Habakkuk, we practice wrestling, waiting, watching, listening, interceding, and worshipping as practice of praying. Instead of panic, we **PAUSE**.

#### As we pause through prayer and fasting, may we learn:

• To sustain intimate fellowship with God even through matters of unanswered queries on suffering and injustice,

• To develop a deeper passion towards seeking the honor of God's glory, and

• To wait and listen to God in prayer.

### How to make the most of this devotional guide:

- Set a time and a quiet place for the next six days to meet with God in prayer and devotions for at least half an hour.
- Bring your Bible, journal, and this devotional guide.
- Set your mind to worship either by singing or by being quiet in your heart and mind. Follow CCBC's Spotify account for the worship playlist.

• Pray for God to speak to you and as you meditate and pray.

• Read the suggested Scripture passage carefully. Observe and note what words or images resonate with you. Use the reflection questions as a guide.

• Jot down your thoughts. Turn it into prayer. You may use this guide in your prayer as well.

• Join us in our Daily Live Prayer at 6:00pm on CCBC's Facebook page.

# What is prayer and fasting?

#### **Fasting Guidelines**

"Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord." —Joel 1:14

Throughout history, God has called on His people to humble themselves through prayer and fasting. As a spiritual family, we practice prayer and fasting to deepen our intimacy with God. Fasting is a spiritual weapon God uses to advance His kingdom, move nations, spark revival and ultimately bring victory to His people.

Prayer and fasting are the only disciplines that fulfill the requirements of 2 Chronicles 7:14.

"If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sins, and will heal their land" —2 Chronicles 7:14

If you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. You will discover more time to pray and seek God. As He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sins, you will experience true blessings from God.

Fasting is vital part of your life as a Christian. Fasting is the voluntary abstinence from food or something for a specified duration of time in order to earnestly seek God's will, or to be more intimate with God as we spend extended time in reading His Word and spending time in prayer.

Biblical fasting is not just refraining to eat food but it is abstinence from food with a spiritual goal in mind. It goes hand in hand with prayer and is also a form of worship. Luke 2:37 says that fasting is a way of serving God, while Acts 13:2 says that fasting is ministering to God. Let us begin this season with consecration and being set apart for the Lord.

#### Why Fast?

"Let fasting be done unto the Lord with our eyes singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father who is in heaven." —John Wesley.

#### **Ol God Expects Us to Fast**

"And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their renewal in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face" (Matthew 6:16-17).

Jesus said "When you fast," not if you fast. This means that fasting, like prayer, is not an option. Fasting is something that is part of the Christian life.

#### **02 Jesus Fasted**

"And after He fasted forty days and forty nights. He then became hungry" (Matthew 4:2).

When He began His ministry, Jesus fasted for forty days. He knew he was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting may make you feel physically weak, but you will become spiritually stronger and more prepared to do God's work.

#### **03 The Early Church Fasted**

"Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:3; see also Acts 14:23)

The church fasted for Saul (Paul) and Barnabas whom the Holy Spirit had set apart for His use. Later, Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders in various churches and then fasted and prayed before commending these leaders to the Lord.

#### **04 Fasted Demonstrates Humility Before God**

"But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer kept returning to my bosom." (Psalms 35:13; see also 1 Kings 21:27-29; Ezra 8:21)

Humility allows you to expect the grace of God who delights in answering your prayers. When you humble yourself in prayer and turn from your wicked ways, God promises to hear and answer according to His perfect will.

#### **05** Fasting Makes Us Sensitive to the Leading and Power of the Holy Spirit

"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry" (Luke 4:1-2).

We are prone to forget our priorities. Fasting is a visible reminder to us that God takes precedence over all our needs. It lifts up the matter at hand to God who is able to bring about awesome works that bring Him great glory.

#### **©6 Fasting Brings About Personal and National Spiritual Revival**

"If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

"I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." (Daniel 9:3)

Fasting prompts revival to an individual and to the country. It brings forth spiritual and physical healing that will change and prepare us for greater things for God's kingdom.

#### **07 Fasting Is Good for Our Health**

Fasting improves our physical condition. Many impurities in the body are burned up when the body is denied food, thus, clearing the mind, cleansing and healing the body. Even people who are underweight who fast for spiritual purposes have been known to gain weight after completing their fasts. Many Bible teachers say that a three-day fast is especially beneficial for spiritual cleansing and also for breaking addictive habits.

#### **Preparing to Fast**

"My spiritual drought ended, but this taste for the majesty of God only made me thirst for HIM." —John Piper

#### **O1 Set Your Objective and Commit to a Type of Fast**

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading to know the objectives for your prayer fast. Once you know the reason you have for fasting, you must make a commitment. Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake.

• Choose the type of fast God wants you to undertake (e.g., water only fast, one meal per day fast).

• Determine how much time each day will be devoted to prayer and God's word.

#### **02 Be Expectant**

Be reminded that the Lord listens to a prayer from the heart. Be true and contrite as you expect results from our God.

#### **O3 Prepare Spiritually**

The very foundation of fasting is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.

#### **O4** Prepare Physically

The very foundation of fasting is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.

#### **05** Lessen Physical Activities

Limit your vigorous physical activities during this period. You need to conserve physical energy and you need to devote more time to prayer and reading the Bible.

#### **O6 Be In Faith**

Be strong and vigilant in prayer as you dedicate more time in fellowship with the Father. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Be clear and specific about your faith goals in your personal life, family, finances, church, and others. Believe that God is faithful and will answer your prayers.

#### **Caution!**

In spite of the absolute safety and benefits of fasting, there are certain persons who should not fast without professional supervisions. The following may opt for other fasting options:

• Persons who are physically too thin or emaciated

• Persons who are suffering or has a history of anorexia, bulimia, or other eating disorders

• Those who suffer weakness or anemia

• Persons who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood tissues, or who have heart diseases

• Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other vital organs

• Individuals who take insulin for diabetes, or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia

• Women who are pregnant or nursing

#### **Different Types of Fasting**

#### **Full or Complete Fast**

To fast completely from solid and liquid (food and water). Extreme care should be taken, especially if the person has underlying medical conditions.

#### Liquid Fast

To have water, juice or soup only for a period of time.

#### **Partial Fast**

To eat only certain kinds of food or have just 1-2 meals a day.

#### **Object Fast**

To fast from specific items like smartphone, gaming console, apps, social media, watching television or Netflix.

#### **Marital Fast**

Married couple agrees to abstain from physical intimacy for a period of time. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

### Daily Devotionals



### **01** It's Okay **01** to Complain

#### **Pause and Read:**

"How long, O Lord, must I call for help? But you do not listen! "Violence is everywhere!" I cry, but you do not come to save. Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight. The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted." (Habakkuk 1:1–4)

"Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, you will never die. You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment; you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish. Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? You have made people like the fish in the sea, like the sea creatures that have no ruler. The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food. Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?" (Habakkuk 1:12–17)

#### **Pause and Reflect:**

- 1. What are the complaints of Habakkuk?
- 2. Do you have similar complaints? Under what personal circumstances?
- 3. Like Habakkuk, do you ever ask God the questions "How long" and "Why"? How do you feel about complaining to God about your suffering?
- 4. How did God respond to you?

Tap or click to add text

We are overwhelmed by evil and suffering yet God seems to be absent. However, we can still pour out our heart and be honest with him about how we feel. We can call out to God even in His seeming silence and hiddenness in evil times.

#### **Pause and Pray:**

Perhaps there is something hidden deep in your heart that you need to wrestle with God. Find a safe place in your home and practice the prayer of wrestling with God. To wrestle with God means we believe that our cries and prayers matter to Him. "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (Psalm 13:1)

- 1. Start writing down your frustrations, sentiments, and disappointments to God. Pour out your lament through tears. Cling to God until you feel His presence. Pray bold and daring prayers.
- 2. Intercede on behalf of the nation. What are your cries for the Philippines? Plead with God and remind Him of His promises. Ask, seek, and knock.
- 3. Read a Psalm or worship Him through songs via CCBC Spotify. Turn your complaints into songs of praise.
- 4. Write down your personal prayer requests as you fast this week. Ask God for a personal breakthrough in your prayer life.

# A Y As Long As **02** We Keep Watch

#### **Pause and Read:**

"Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told." (Habakkuk 1:5)

"I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guard post. There I will wait to see what the Lord says and how he will answer my complaint." (Habakkuk 2:1)

#### **Pause and Reflect:**

- 1. What answers did Habakkuk receive from the Lord? Describe the character of God.
- 2. How and where did Habakkuk wait for God's response?
- 3. What do you think would be an equivalent of a watchtower for you? How would you describe Habakkuk's attitude?
- 4. What answers from the Lord are you waiting for?
- 5. How often do you go to your watchtower to seek the Lord and keep watch? When was the last time you stood at your guard post?

In times of darkness and uncertainty, God admonished Habakkuk and thereby his people to be vigilant and discerning regarding His plans and His movement. They ought to keep on seeking and listening to Him. Just like Habakkuk and God's people during that time, we must practice listening prayer.

#### **Pause and Pray:**

Waiting and listening takes discipline. Like a watchman, one must be vigilant, alert, looking out expectantly while waiting for the Lord's voice. Set aside time to practice the prayer of listening.

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits... my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning." (Psalm 130:5,6)

- 1. Take a break from whatever is occupying your mind to connect with God. Quiet your heart before Him and find your inner silence.
- 2. Sink into the Life-giver. Notice the emotions, noise and concerns that arise as you seek to simply be still before Him. Write them down and give them to God.
- 3. Be still in His presence through worship songs via CCBC Spotify.
- 4. Go over your personal prayer requests and ask God for a personal breakthrough.

5. Intercede for CCBC – pastors, staff, church leaders, ministry teams, missionaries, and the congregation.

# DAY We MoveO3 On By Faith



#### **Pause and Read:**

"Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God." (Habakkuk 2:4)

#### **Pause and Reflect:**

- 1. Who are the "proud" and "crooked" people that disturb you? What does the writer encourage us to do?
- 2. What does it mean to live out "the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God" in a world of uncertainties?
- 3. How is God speaking to you about living with and for Him?

Tap or click to add text

In times of uncertainty, we continue to trust in God and remain faithful to Him. The proud and the faithful live in contrast to this humility before the Lord. The proud trusts only in himself and his abilities, while the humble trusts in the Lord. The faithful is expected to persevere in the Lord despite uncertainty.

#### **Pause and Pray:**

We can grow tired of waiting and have the tendency to rule our own lives. But like Habakkuk, we can learn to wait and move on with the tool of faith. Practice the prayer of patiently waiting on the Lord even when He seems silent.

"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place," (Ephesians 6:13–14)

- 1. Come with an open heart and spend time to personally meditate on what God is telling you about the attitude of your faith in the midst of waiting.
- 2. Ask God to help you identify the distractions in your life that get in the way of waiting by faith. Confess and ask for cleansing and renewal.
- 3. Ask God to direct and empower you to stand firm and put on the full armor as you wait for Him.
- 4. Use worship in the background to help you focus. "Come before His presence with singing." (Psalm 100:2) Worship Him through songs via CCBC Spotify.
- 5. Go over your personal prayer requests and ask God for a personal breakthrough.
- 6. Intercede for those who are suffering from the devastation of typhoons, earthquake, pandemic, physical illness, emotional health struggles, job loss, and hopelessness.



### OAY God Is 04 In Control



#### **Pause and Read:**

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." (Habakkuk 2:20)

#### **Pause and Reflect:**

- 1. We see injustice, suffering, disaster, and sinfulness around us. How will God deal with all these things?
- 2. When you don't understand what is happening around you and your life, what do you usually do? Give up? Despair? Trust Him?
- 3. What is God telling us to do? What lessons can we learn about God in these verses?
- 4. How can we partner with God in times of crisis?

Evil and suffering may seem to flourish, but we must keep in mind that God is in control. No one can thwart His plans of seeing the whole earth covered in His glory. He is calmly seated on his throne. We must respond in reverence even in times of uncertainty and suffering. We must exercise hope that his reign will prevail.

#### **Pause and Pray:**

When things seem to go wrong in life despite our prayers, we must understand that God is in control. From an earthly perspective, things look bad. But a prayerful perspective encourages our hearts that God is in charge. Oftentimes, we want quick answers, but we must learn and practice the prayer of enduring faith or perseverance.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:2–4)

- 1. Rest in God's loving, peaceful presence. "Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from Him." (Psalm 62:1)
- 2. Pray for someone you know who needs peace and perseverance in the midst of crisis. Pour out your soul to the Lord.
- 3. Worship Him through songs via CCBC Spotify.
- 4. Go over your personal prayer requests and ask God for a personal breakthrough.
- 5. Intercede for your family and relatives.

# DAY Renewing05 Our Awe



#### **Pause and Read:**

"I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy." (Habakkuk 3:2)

#### **Pause and Reflect:**

- 1. What kind of prayer is Habakkuk 3:2?
- 2. What is the motivation of Habakkuk's prayer?
- 3. What would it look like for you to pray like Habakkuk?

Tap or click to add text

There were no definite answers to the questions of God's silence and hiddenness in times of suffering and uncertainty. But the result of waiting and listening to God is a desire to "renew the awe," the passion to see God glorified and out of that to experience his mercy and grace. We must seek spiritual restoration and renewal.

#### **Pause and Pray:**

When we come to the Lord in prayer, we must look backward in reverence of what He has done in the pages of the Bible and lean forward in faith to experience His great acts again. As we stand in awe of Who He is, we are also drawn to practice the prayer of confession and repentance.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun." (Psalm 19:1–4)

- 1. Seek the Lord's face and gaze upon His beauty. Enumerate some of the great things He has done in the past. Invite God to do such great things again today. Pray, "Do it again, Lord..."
- 2. Awe in God moves us to a fuller picture of the state of our hearts. It leads us to a prayer of confession. Ask God today to renew your heart and awe in Him. Pray, "Lord, revive me."
- 3. Like Habakkuk, pray boldly for God to work in your situations. Declare God's character as you pray for revival in your life, family, and church. Seek revival from God of all power.
- 4. Intercede for the world. Pray for God's mercy among the nations.
- 5. Worship Him through songs via CCBC Spotify.
- 6. Go over your personal prayer requests and ask God for a personal breakthrough.

# **DAY** From Terror **06** to Trust

#### **Pause and Read:**

"I trembled inside when I heard this; my lips quivered with fear. My legs gave way beneath me, and I shook in terror. I will wait quietly for the coming day when disaster will strike the people who invade us. Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights." (Habakkuk 3:16–19)

#### **Pause and Reflect:**

- 1. How did Habakkuk respond to the sovereign power of God?
- 2. What was Habakkuk's attitude in the midst of almost complete loss?
- 3. Recall a significant loss or devasting event in your life. How did you respond and go through it?

The times may fill us with terror and despair. We may want to give up. The terror of what may be ahead is daunting. But the faithful can quietly wait in the Lord according to his promise of salvation. The faithful experiences a deep assurance of the Lord's enabling to see them through uncertain times.

#### **Pause and Pray:**

Like Habakkuk, we can trust God for strength. We can fight despair and loss through songs of praise. Yes, in times of uncertainty, we can practice praise and worship.

"I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise. 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness, for you have so exalted your solemn decree that it surpasses your fame." (Psalm 138:1–2)

- 1. Worship Him through songs via CCBC Spotify.
- 2. Thank God for a week of prayer and fasting with Him.
- 3. Describe your Prayer and Fasting experience. Share your story through your social media accounts. Don't forget to tag CCBC and use the hashtag #CCBCPause.



#### **Breaking the Fast**

#### **Ol End Your Fast Gradually**

Depending on your type of fast, it is not ideal to eat solid food immediately after you fast. Abrupt reintroduction of solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several snacks to smaller meals. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

#### **O2** Continue to Pray

Build from the momentum you gained during the fast. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Practice and discipline yourself with the habit of prayer throughout the year.

#### **03 Pursue Greater Intimacy With God**

When you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, and as you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence and hand at work (John 14:21). A regular fast has been greatly rewarding to many Christians. Some do them every week.

#### **O4 Experience the Joy of God's Presence**

Bask in the fullness of joy in the Lord as you abide in His glorious presence.

"You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11).

### PRAYER AND FASTING 2021

## Praying in Times of NGORLAINEY

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