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Welcome to our 'United' Prayer Guide

We at Enjoy Church carry a deep conviction that prayer changes things – not least of all us. We want to encourage you to join us for our week of prayer and fasting. We believe God will move powerfully amongst us, renewing and equipping us with the message of hope, truth & love when we are united in prayer.

If you've been with us for sometime you know that Enjoy's rhythm of prayer is to begin the annual and academic year by devoting ourselves to God through a focused time of prayer and fasting!

Throughout this booklet you will find a pattern to prayer based upon Ephesians 6 which we call the 'prayer shield'. This is an ongoing pattern and this guide will introduce you to the prayer shield where we focus on daily biblical principals as we commit to pray and fast together.

Information on why fasting is a spiritual discipline can be found at the back of the booklet.

Let's commit to unite in prayer!

With Love and Blessings
Chris & Sarah James



What is the..

PRAYER SHIELD?

The concept of the Prayer Shield is based on Paul's teaching on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10-20. Here he highlights the vital importance of each of us putting on the full armour of God, including the need for each of us to *"take up the shield of faith"* with which we *"can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one"* (EPHESIANS 6:16). The picture here is of the Roman phalanx, with all the soldiers lifting up their individual shields to ensure a protection over the whole company. In a similar way, we are called to lift up our individual shields of faith – bringing protection over not just our lives, but over the whole church.

How are we to do this? In Ephesians 6:18, Paul tells us how we are to appropriate all the weapons of our warfare: which is through prayer. Notice this strong call to be involved in praying for each other:

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people" (EPHESIANS 6:18).

The link between the shield of faith and *"praying in the Spirit, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers...for all the Lord's people"* seems clear. As we pray in faith for others, we lift up interlocking

spiritual shields, bringing us protection from the attacks of the enemy, as well as releasing God's blessing over our lives. The more of us who pray this way, the greater the prayer covering over our lives – and the more we can accomplish together for the Kingdom of God.

However, we must not stop with just defensive prayers. Rather, we must pray offensively as we take the good news of Jesus Christ into enemy territory. Notice that Paul concludes with the following request: *“Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel... Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should”* (EPHESIANS 6:19-20).

This highlights the need to undergird all our missional efforts with prayer. Not only will we be empowered and emboldened as we go, but others will become more spiritually receptive to the good news of the gospel. So, let's pray!

How to pray the PRAYER SHIELD

The Prayer Shield is not intended to replace your normal personal devotions, but can be prayed as part of them. There is a different emphasis for each day of the week, so why not set aside 10-15 minutes a day to pray over the areas covered in this booklet. As we lift this prayer shield up, let's pray with boldness and confidence knowing that when we pray in line with His Word and His will, He hears us and answers! Be encouraged by these prayer promises:

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.” (1 JOHN 5:14-15)

“And whatever you ask for in prayer, having faith and [really] believing, you will receive.” (MATTHEW 21:22 AMP)

“if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 CHRONICLES 7:14)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (PHILIPPIANS 4:6)

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (EPHESIANS 6:18)

People to pray over:

Your name:

Names of your family members:

Enjoy Church Leaders

Senior Leaders: Chris & Sarah James

**Directors
& Core Team:** Ross Jones, John Vivian & John Wallis

Pastors Team: Aaron & Becca Rath (Youth & Young Adults)
Paul and Nikki Obrey (Worship & Women)
Richard and Anna Price (Community Groups)
Phil & Jo Gay (New Peoples Pastors)

Community Leaders & Group Members:

Those in your sphere of influence e.g., place of work or education:

MONDAY:

Our Health and Protection

Pray that as a church we would know God's health and protection and supernatural healing and deliverance: -

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." (3 JOHN 2)

"Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you... I will give you a full life span." (EXODUS 23:25–26)

Pray: We declare divine health and strength over those you are praying for, declaring every part of their body will function as it was designed to function and that they will live a long and healthy life.

Where there are health challenges, command all sickness to leave and pray for full health and strength to return to their body.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (ISAIAH 53:5 KJV)

"Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivers them from out of their distresses. He sends forth His Word and heals them and rescues them from the pit and destruction." (PSALM 107:19–20 AMP)

Pray: that our work lives and our rest times would be balanced and blessed; that we would be full of energy and vitality to serve the Lord.

"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (ISAIAH 40:31 NKJV)

Declare that we are living under supernatural protection; that all plans of the enemy will come to nothing, and that we will enjoy safety and peace.

"If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the Lord, who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;" (PSALM 91:9–11)

TUESDAY:

His Provision

Pray for provision over every person and household at Enjoy Church. Pray also over the church as a whole – that there would be more than enough provision to extend Enjoy Church ministries and mission and so we can be generous on every occasion.

Pray: that we would put our full trust in God as our provider; not fearing what the future may hold, but knowing that He will richly supply all our needs.

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” (PHILIPPIANS 4:19)

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (PSALM 84:11 KJV)

As we honour God with our finances, pray that He will open up the floodgates of Heaven over us.

Pray that we will know His protection over our finances (see Malachi 3:10) and that we will know His abundant blessing over us (see Ephesians 3:20).

“Honour God with everything you own; give Him the first and the best. Your barns will burst; your wine vats will brim over.” (PROVERBS 3:9–10 MSG)

Speak protection and divine favour over jobs and businesses; declare that they will thrive and succeed. Pray for creative ideas, wise strategies and the ability to make wealth for the Kingdom.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,” (COLOSSIANS 3:23)

Declare that we will be a generous people, ready and willing to sow into the lives of others. Pray for abundance — more than enough to achieve all that God has for us to do individually and together.

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” (2 CORINTHIANS 9:10–12)

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:25-34)

WEDNESDAY:

Relationships

Pray for the church, the community of God's people, journeying together in genuine, Christ-centred community, loving one another, caring for one another and using our God-given gifts to serve one another and spur one another on.

Pray: for blessing, unity and protection over our relationships:

Declare that we will be free from all strife, gossip, bitterness, unforgiveness, distraction, and division; instead walking in grace, forgiveness, unity and living under a commanded blessing. (See Psalm 133).

“Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (EPHESIANS 4:1–3 NKJV)

Declare that as we walk in love, unity and honour towards one another, we will be an example of God's love to those around us.

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.” (ROMANS 12:10)

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (PHILIPPIANS 2:1–4)

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (JOHN 13:35)

Pray: for godly friendships to flourish and that we would spur one another on to grow in our faith.

“The righteous choose their friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.” (PROVERBS 12:26)

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (PROVERBS 17:17)

Declare that marriages in Enjoy will thrive, be long-lasting and an example to the world of Godly relationships.

“Let marriage be held in honour (esteemed worthy, precious, of great price, and especially dear) in all things. And thus let the marriage bed be undefiled (kept un-dishonoured);” (HEBREWS 13:4 AMP)

Pray: for strong relationships between parents and children. Pray that every member of your family will be wonderfully blessed and will radically love and serve Jesus.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother” – which is the first commandment with a promise – “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (EPHESIANS 6:1-4)

THURSDAY:

Spiritual Growth

Pray that every person who comes to Enjoy Church would have a desire to grow spiritually – to know Jesus better and to be growing to become more like Him. We pray that everyone at Enjoy Church will use the spiritual gifts they have been given to build up the body of Christ and to reach the lost.

Pray: that everyone will receive the empowering of the Spirit, be strong in the love of Christ and filled with the fullness of God!

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to measure of all the fullness of God.” (EPHESIANS 3:16-19)

Pray: that every believer in Enjoy will increase in their maturity as sons and daughters of the Father, becoming more and more like Jesus.

“We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (COLOSSIANS 1:9–10 ESV)

Pray: that each person will commit to keeping short accounts with God, confessing their sins and choosing to live a life of obedience and intimacy with God.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 JOHN 1:9)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (ROMANS 12:1–2)

Pray: that we would move from discipline to delight in prayer and reading the Word, and that we would live a life of worship and thanksgiving.

“...these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer...for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (ISAIAH 56:7)

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of his lips that openly profess his name.” (HEBREWS 13:15)

Pray: that we will continue to be committed to gathering together at weekend services, in Community Groups.

“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” (PSALM 92:13)

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (HEBREWS 10:24-25)

Thank God for our Enjoy leaders and pray for supernatural protection, wisdom, favour, blessing and insight over them; that they would hear God clearly and lead with authority and anointing.

“Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel” (EPHESIANS 6:19–20)

FRIDAY:

Bring in the Kingdom

Pray that as a church, we will fulfil God's mandate He has given to us, to bring the Kingdom of God into every life and sphere of society, starting in us where we are.

Declare that God's Kingdom will come and His will be done in our lives and over those we are praying for.

Pray: that each of us will grasp that we have been created with a purpose, that we are part of God's plan for humanity and have a unique calling and destiny to fulfil:

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (EPHESIANS 2:10)

Pray: that individually and as a church, we would give our all for the Kingdom of God, experiencing the joy of playing our part and using the gifts we have been given to serve the purposes of God.

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord." (ROMANS 12:11)

"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does." (EPHESIANS 6:7-8)

Pray: that, as a church, we will fulfill the mandate God has given us, seeing lives transformed from our neighbourhoods to the nations by the power of God's love.

Pray: for an increase of the miraculous among us; that we would have powerful, divine appointments to heal the sick, prophesy life, lead people to Christ, bring deliverance, release signs and wonders, and bless every place we go in Jesus' Name.

Pray: that we would rise up as the body of Christ, affecting change

in all areas of life; government, business, schools, the community; that we would be salt and light to the world, demonstrating the goodness and the glory of God.

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its

stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (MATTHEW 5:14–16)

“The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ’s body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.” (EPHESIANS 1:22–23 MSG)

Pray: for an awakening in our nation, that people would turn again to the one true God.

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.” (ISAIAH 60:1–3)

Pray: for revival across the nations. Pray for a breakout of God’s presence and power that would see men, women and children return to Him.

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He rules over the nations.” (PSALM 22:27–28 NKJV)

“Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.” (PSALM 2:8)

SATURDAY:

Effective Mission

Pray that as a church we would reach out to those who do not yet know Jesus and be bold in sharing Him with others. Pray also that we are generous in meeting the need where we find it.

Pray: that whatever sphere we are in, we would be Kingdom Ambassadors demonstrating the love and goodness of God to all those around us, being salt and light wherever we have the opportunity.

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (MATTHEW 5:16)

“The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.” (ACTS 11:21)

Pray: that we would be passionate and engaged in sharing the good news of Jesus to all those around us, consistently leading others to the Lord.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (MATTHEW 28:19)

Pray: for favour and good relationships with those in authority; for godly leaders in our government, for protection over our Royal family, and for Kingdom values to come back into the centre of our nation once again.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings, and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 TIMOTHY 2:1–2)

Write down the names of those you are believing to see come to salvation:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Pray for each by name, that God would:

Open their eyes to see their need of Him, removing any “rocks” in their lives that might be blocking their understanding of the gospel.

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 CORINTHIANS 4:4)

Bring people into their path to share and demonstrate the goodness of God to them (look for opportunities to be one of those people!).

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 PETER 3:15)

Take away any obstacles or arguments that they may have against God and His Church.

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2 CORINTHIANS 10:5)

Pray: for the Holy Spirit to be working in their hearts, convicting them of sin and bringing them to a place of openness and repentance.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” (EPHESIANS 1:17)

“When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.” (JOHN 16:8)

Pray : that, if they are local, they will come along to an event at Enjoy such as a Community Group social, a Celebration Service, or Alpha. Why not be the one to invite them!

“God our Saviour wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men.” (1 TIMOTHY 2:4–6A)

“I (Jesus) am sending you to them (the lost) to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” (ACTS 26:17–18)

SUNDAY:

Our weekend Gatherings

Pray for the coming together of God's people – for powerful times of encounter in the presence of God and the strengthening of the saints.

WORSHIP

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” (JOHN 4:23)

Pray: for an open heaven every time we gather together to glorify God.

Pray: that our hearts will be open and expectant as we meet together today.

Pray against any tactics of the enemy that would seek to distract people from entering into worship.

Pray: for anointing on the worship team and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Pray: that God would touch the lives of people as they focus on Him and put Him first – pray for healing, salvation and burdens to be lifted as we worship.

WORD

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people” (EPHESIANS 1:17-18)

Pray: for an anointing on the speaker and that peoples' hearts will be receptive to the Word whenever it is preached; that they would have ears to hear what God is speaking personally to them. Pray for a spirit of revelation and understanding to be released.

Pray: against any distractions or resistance to what is being preached.

Pray: that people would not only hear the Word, but would apply it to their own lives and be doers of the Word.

Pray: for our children and youth groups: that they will experience God's presence, and know His Word, and come to personal faith in Christ and become strong Jesus-followers.

POWER, PRESENCE AND FELLOWSHIP

"...give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness." (ACTS 4:29–31 NLT)

Pray: for the power and presence of God to be manifest powerfully whenever we come together, and for words of knowledge and prophetic words be released.

Pray: for lives to be transformed, as people encounter Jesus in a powerful way.

Pray: for signs and wonders, healings and miracles; that sickness will be healed and emotional needs will be met.

Pray: for those who become Christians; that they would know the love of God at work in their lives.

Pray: for good relationships and a sense of purpose and belonging to be established through Community Groups, Connect Groups and volunteer teams.

Pray: for those who re-commit their lives to God; that they will quickly get connected back into church life.

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

The Lord's Prayer

1. Our Father In Heaven

Picture the Cross and thank God that through Jesus you can call God "Father" By the Holy Spirit draw near to God's heavenly throne

2. Hallowed be Your name

Praise the Name of the LORD and thank Him for the blessings you have in Christ

HIS NAME

IN CHRIST

The LORD our righteousness	I am forgiven and made righteous	The LORD who sanctifies	I am set apart for purity and ministry	The LORD my peace	I have peace & well-being
The LORD who is there	I have God's presence & power	The LORD our healer	I have restoration & wholeness	The LORD our provider	I have favour & provision
The LORD our banner	I have protection & victory	The LORD my shepherd	I have guidance & security		

3. **Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**

Pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done in these areas:
Yourself
Your Family
Your Church
Your Community and the Nation(s)

4. **Give us today our daily bread**

Offer your requests to God
Ask Him to bless every area of your life and the lives of others

5. **Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us**

Ask God to forgive you
Forgive and release others
Set your will to forgive those who sin against you

6. **Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil**

Ask the Lord to keep you from sinful and compromising situations
Ask Him to protect you in all areas of your life
Put on the full armour of God

7. **For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Worship God and make this declaration
Rejoice in the One who is eternal and has given you eternal life

The Prayer of Jabez

“Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request.” (1 CHRONICLES 4:10)

There are four key elements or phrases to this prayer:

1. “Oh that you would bless me” (a prayer for FAVOUR)

Thank God that in Christ we’ve already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (see Ephesians 1:3).

Pray for a full release and manifestation of these blessings in your life and in those you are praying for.

2. “Enlarge my territory” (a prayer for INFLUENCE)

For Jabez, this would have literally meant territory or land. For those of us ‘in Christ’ our territory is far more significant since it concerns people!

Pray that you will have greater opportunities to influence more people, who God created, Jesus died for and who the Holy Spirit wants to bless through you.

3. “Let your hand be with me...” (a prayer for ANOINTING)

Once we start boldly praying ‘Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory’ we will find that we are more dependent on Him than ever, hence the need to pray for His hand to be with us. Throughout the Bible, the hand of the Lord is usually symbolic of God’s power or ability.

So pray for His sovereign power to be released in your life.

4. “And keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain” (a prayer for PROTECTION)

This is a prayer of avoidance. It’s a recognition of our own vulnerability, where, in effect, we are asking the Lord to keep us out of situations that would be harmful for us.

Pray that you will be spiritually protected as you put on the full armour of God (see Ephesians 6:10–18) and pray for wisdom (see Proverbs 2:7).

5. “And God granted his request.”

This reveals the loving heart of our all-powerful God towards us. Here, He answered the cry of an Old Testament believer for FAVOUR, INFLUENCE, ANOINTING and PROTECTION.

How much more will He answer His believing children in the New Testament age who are now ‘in Christ’!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fasting is Feasting

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His followers to fast, and He promised that our Father God would reward us as we fast for the right reasons (see Matthew 6:16–18).

To fast means to voluntarily reduce or eliminate your intake of food for a specific time and purpose. Sometimes it may be appropriate to fast everything but water, or you may decide to go on a juice fast, or simply fast from specific foodstuffs or drink, for example, sugar, red meat, chocolate, coffee, alcohol etc. Fast from food only if your health allows it at this time.

At Enjoy, we also encourage the practice of fasting from other things, particularly during extended seasons of prayer. For example, you may want to give up social media or your favourite television programme (or TV altogether!) – anything that might be distracting you from putting God first in your life.

WHY FAST?

The overall purpose of fasting is not to simply fast from food, but to FEAST ON GOD! There are a number of ways that fasting can benefit us in our relationship with the Lord.

It can give us extra time to seek God and to hear His voice more clearly

Notice this great event in the history of the church in Antioch:

“While they were worshipping 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.” (ACTS 13:2–3)

This is an encouragement for us to combine fasting with extra time in worship and prayer. As we do, we can expect that God will meet with us and speak to us more clearly.

It is a way of us demonstrating our spiritual desperation

Fasting reveals the depth of our desire for God and His presence, enabling us to fully turn to Him and seek Him for breakthrough in our lives or the situations we are praying for. An example of this call to seek the Lord with fasting is found in the book of Joel: *“‘Even now’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning’”* (JOEL 2:12 NASB)

It prepares us to receive a new anointing for life and ministry

We have the supreme example of Jesus, who already filled with the Spirit, still spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness, overcoming the devil and his temptations. The result? He returned “in the power of the Spirit” ready to enter into His earthly ministry.

It helps us bring our soul and body into submission to the Holy Spirit In Psalm 35:13, David says, “*I humbled my soul with fasting*”. In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul says “*I discipline my body*”, no doubt helped by the fact that he was “*often in fasting*” (2 CORINTHIANS 12:27 ESV).

It positions us for spiritual victory and breakthrough

When faced with a vast enemy army, King Jehoshaphat “*proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord.*” (2 CHRONICLES 20:3B–3C)

The Lord heard them, spoke to them and dramatically delivered them!

It's a way of us asking God for His special protection

Ezra was needing protection and safety as he and the exiles returned to Jerusalem.

So, he “*proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey*”. As they fasted and prayed, God answered their prayer. (EZRA 8:21, 23)

HOW ARE WE TO FAST?

First, make sure that you decide in advance how long you are going to fast for and what you are going to fast from. Then ask for God's help and strength. It's better to be realistic in your goal and then stick to it, than be over-ambitious! Determine, where possible, that you will use the extra time and focus to read the Word, worship and pray.

Second, check that you are fasting for the right reasons; first and foremost to spend time with the Lord, and then to seek His blessing and breakthrough.

Third, combine your fasting with actions and life change. In Isaiah 58 the Lord rebukes His people for just attending to the physical aspects of fasting, and then highlights that the TRUE FAST looks like this:

“... Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen; to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?” (ISAIAH 58:6 NIV)

It's worth reading this whole passage in Isaiah 58 and asking the Lord to speak to you about how He is asking you to change, and who He is asking you to bless.

Fourth, make sure you finish well. Especially if you are fasting for any length of time, finish by celebrating with a light, healthy meal, not a large

unhealthy spread! Ask the Lord to help you continue to grow spiritually beyond the fast.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

It's so important for us to recognise that fasting doesn't change God or His willingness to hear us. However, it does change us, removing barriers which then enables the Spirit to work more powerfully in and through us. The author and theologian Andrew Murray puts it like this; "Fasting helps to express, to deepen, to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything...to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God".

Let's use the discipline of fasting to restore our focus and to revive the power of prayer in our lives.

Speaking in Tongues

WHAT IS SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

It's a way of communicating with God through a language or languages given by the Holy Spirit which are unknown to the person concerned. These may be human languages, as on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). Alternatively, languages that are less easy to detect may well be angelic (see 1 Corinthians 13:1).

WHY SPEAK WITH TONGUES?

The simple answer is because it is both thoroughly Biblical and very helpful!

First, it's clearly Biblical. It seems from the New Testament that speaking in tongues was a normal part of the experience of the early church. In the longer ending of Mark's Gospel we have Jesus simply saying that believers would "*speak with new tongues*" (MARK 16:17C). This was clearly the experience of the disciples in the Book of Acts. Significantly, speaking in tongues accompanied the infilling of the first Jewish believers in Jerusalem (see Acts 2:4), as well as the first Gentile converts in Caesarea (see Acts 10:44–46) and later in the highly influential church in Ephesus, hundreds of miles away in Asia Minor (see Acts 19:6).

In addition, tongues was clearly such a frequently used gift in the church at Corinth that Paul felt he needed to spend significant time in correcting their misuse of tongues: that is they were speaking in tongues in public gatherings without the gift of interpretation. At the same time, he also affirmed the proper use of tongues before making this remarkable statement about his own personal prayer life:

"I thank my God that I speak in tongues more than you all." (1 CORINTHIANS 14:18). Given that Paul was the greatest apostle in history and was inspired by the Spirit to write huge portions of the New Testament, we can only conclude that praying in tongues was clearly something he found helpful in both his personal life and ministry.

There's lots that can be said, but here are three primary ways that tongues is very helpful:

1. *It's a great way to praise God*

Do you ever find yourself frustrated with your lack of vocabulary? You may want to express your love for someone, but after you have said "I love you" for the umpteenth time, you would like to have more varied words at your disposal. Because the gift of tongues comes from the Holy Spirit and we speak them from our spirit, not our mind, we are not limited by our natural vocabulary, we can express more freely our praise to God and our love for Him. When the Holy Spirit first came on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost we read how they all "*began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*" (ACTS 2:4B). It is clear from the

response of Jews from other nations who heard them speaking in their native languages that this was the language of praise: *“we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our tongues!”* (ACTS 2:11B) (see also Acts 10:46). Similarly, the apostle Paul clearly praised God this way, telling the Corinthians: *“I will sing with my spirit [i.e. with tongues], but I will also sing with my understanding”* (1 CORINTHIANS 14:15B)

2. *It's a great way to pray*

The early Christians not only praised God in tongues, they also prayed this way. For example, Paul clearly states: *“I will pray with my spirit [i.e. with tongues], but I will also pray with my understanding”* (1 CORINTHIANS 14:15A). He earlier makes clear that using tongues in this way as a prayer language is clearly not for edifying the listeners, but rather is a way of the speaker communicating with God: *“anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God.”*

3. *It's a great way to edify ourselves*

There's a third wonderful benefit of speaking in tongues. As we praise and pray in tongues, something happens in us, too: we get spiritually strengthened. As Paul puts it: *“He who speaks in tongues edifies himself”* (1 CORINTHIANS 14:4A). The word 'edify' means to build up. We can see from the Bible, and from the experience of many others, that speaking in tongues is a hugely helpful means of a Christian staying spiritually edified.

A word of caution: Paul, writing in 1 Corinthians 14 highlights that in the presence of others, especially with unbelievers, we need to prioritise intelligible gifts like prophecy. If and when a tongue is spoken in public then it would need to be interpreted. However, this is not the case in an all-believers gathering when everyone is praying out loud together, or praying in tongues as a form of interceding for others!

HOW CAN I SPEAK WITH TONGUES?

First, be filled with the Spirit. Tongues comes from the Holy Spirit and is an overflow of being filled with the Spirit. If you have not been filled with the Spirit, then eagerly desire Him and ask for Him to come and fill you. The promise of Jesus is: *“how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.”* (LUKE 11:13). You may want to ask a Spirit-filled believer to pray with you.

Second, speak out what God gives you. In Acts 2:4 it makes clear concerning the disciples that it was they who began to speak with tongues *“as the Spirit enabled them.”* In other words we, like them, have to open our mouths, co-operate with the Spirit and give voice to what the Spirit is giving to us. Just as with your natural language you can choose to start or stop speaking, so it is with speaking in tongues.

Third, persevere and grow. Sometimes it takes time for people to become sufficiently confident and fluent in speaking in tongues. It's important that we persevere in this, so that we can pray boldly and powerfully.

CONCLUSION

Of course all of this doesn't mean that you have to speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues doesn't make a person a Christian and speaking in tongues is not the only or even necessarily the most important spiritual gift. It depends on the context. So, for example, if someone needs encouraging, then we need the gift of prophecy, if someone is sick, the gift of healing etc. But when it comes to personal praise, prayer and edification, speaking in tongues is a wonderful gift that you can receive if you would like to. Receiving the gift shouldn't lead to an attitude of superiority but rather one of humility. As someone recently said: "to be filled with the Spirit doesn't make me better than you, it makes me better than me!"

Prayer walking

Prayer walking is as simple as it sounds – praying as you walk. One simple definition is ‘praying on-site with insight’. When we prayer walk we are stepping into our God-given authority to bless people and places in Jesus’ name. This simple activity is a great way to bring transformation to our local communities by asking God to break in with His love and power.

GETTING STARTED

Know your local area

Know the places and people that make up your local community. Ask God to show you how you can pray with greater insight for the people, places and events in the community. What positive qualities and opportunities does the community have to offer? Are there any signs that God is already at work? How could you serve your community? God may show you ways to display His love by practical acts of kindness.

Know local people

If appropriate, find out what the needs are in your local community by speaking to those in your area. What challenges are people likely to face as they go about their daily lives? As you prayer walk, the focus is on those living in your community, so be intentional about praying for God’s blessings on what you see and feel. Even in difficult areas, pray positively. Focus on God’s plans and purposes for the place and people who live there. ‘Your Kingdom come, Your will be done...’ is an excellent place to start.

Know local needs

Are there problems with unemployment, crime or poverty in your area? What needs and concerns are in evidence? What do you see that detracts from people’s quality of life?

You could put all this information onto a physical map of your community, or write it down in one place. This will help inform your prayers, and you can add to it as you prayer walk.

HOW TO PRAY

Pray for discernment; ask the Lord to show you what He sees and to know His heart for your community.

Pray for blessing; ask for God’s intervention in the life of each person

and home you pass. You may want to pause at key buildings such as a school, community centre, hospital or local business. Ask for His will to be done in this community “*as it is in heaven*” (MATTHEW 6:10)

Pray with empathy; see and feel what the residents live with every day; intercede for the things that express brokenness and grieve God’s Spirit. Give thanks for the blessings and all the good things you see in your community.

Pray from scripture; prayers based on God’s Word can be very powerful.

Pray in God’s power; allow times of silence for the Holy Spirit to speak to you, then speak out with confidence in the power of Jesus’ name.

SOME PRACTICALITIES

If you are prayer walking in a group, start and end together

Agree a place and time to start prayer walking. Begin by explaining why you’ve gathered together to pray, and if relevant, share specific prayer points. Breaking into pairs or small groups can help you to pray for different parts of your area, and is safer than prayer walking alone. If splitting into smaller groups, then agree a place and time to end together. You can then share what you’ve prayed and heard from God. Write it down so that you can keep track of how to pray for your area in the future.

Choose whether or not to plan your route

You can plan ahead to ensure that you pray for specific areas, or simply ask the Holy Spirit to guide your time – just make sure you don’t get lost!

Use your natural and supernatural senses

As you prayer walk, be aware of your surroundings; what you see, smell, hear and touch. But also be aware of what God is saying to you as you move around your community; if any Bible verses pop into your head or if you have any pictures, visions or words of knowledge, then turn these natural and supernatural senses into prayer.

Choose whether to pray silently or out loud

The point of prayer walking isn’t about being seen praying; it’s about seeing and praying. Pray quietly, but don’t be afraid to speak out prayers if you feel compelled to. However, don’t draw attention to

yourself – you can be on the scene without making one!

Keep going

Prayer walking is also a way of claiming a specific area for God. When Joshua and the army were claiming Jericho, God instructed them to walk once around the city for six days, and seven times on the seventh day (see Joshua 6). Why not commit to making prayer walking a regular habit!

As you keep praying, continue to ask for God's blessing; praying for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done in your community. If you feel that God is highlighting specific things or challenges, think about how to take action; how could you be part of God's solution practically, as well as prayerfully?

Whatever you do, don't stop praying!

Thank you for praying the Prayer Shield.

We know there is much power when we agree together in prayer! Please let us know of any breakthroughs you receive in prayer, any answers or any prophetic words that you think the leadership should consider.

You can email: info@enjoychurch.co.uk