

**Monday** - Today begins Trietsch's call to 25 Days of Prayer and Fasting. As we learned yesterday in worship, fasting was traditionally "refraining from eating food." The Bible describes three main forms of fasting: 1) The Normal Fast, involving the total abstinence of food. *Luke 4:2* reveals that Jesus "did eat nothing." Afterwards "He was hungered." Jesus abstained from food but not from water. 2) In *Acts 9:9* we read of an Absolute Fast where for three days Saul "neither did eat nor drink." The abstinence from both food and water seems to have lasted no more than three days (*Ezra 10:6; Esther 4:16*). 3) The Partial Fast—in *Daniel 10:3* the emphasis is upon the restriction of diet rather than complete abstinence. The context implies that there were physical benefits resulting from this partial fast. However, this verse indicates that there was a revelation given to Daniel as a result of this time of fasting. Nowadays we speak of 'fasting' from anything (food, TV, a favorite activity, etc.) for the purpose of spending more time in prayer.

**Tuesday** - With Jim taking a new appointment in ministry, Trietsch celebrates for him at the same time we make plans to receive a new Sr. Pastor! These are exciting, energizing, and important times for us! Our time of prayer is so critical as we discern God's will for our future. We need everyone to be in prayer and fasting! Why? First of all, Jesus himself set an example for us of fasting (*Matthew 4:2*) Not only did Jesus himself fast, but he even told us how to and not to fast (*Matthew 6:16,17*) Fasting is a great spiritual discipline, but as with all disciplines, we must remain humble and be careful not to make this spiritual practice a substitute for other things God expects from us (*Isaiah 58:6*)

**Wednesday** - One important aspect of fasting is the laying aside of food for a period of time when the believer is seeking to know God in a deeper experience. It is to be done as an act before God in the privacy of one's own pursuit of God (*Exodus 34:28; 1 Samuel 7:6; 1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 6:17*). (*Isaiah 58; Zechariah 7:5*).

**Thursday** - Fasting goes hand-in-hand with praying. It leads into a time of confession (*Psalms 69:10*). Fasting can be a time of seeking a deeper prayer experience and drawing near to God in gut-level, serious prayer (*Ezra 8:23; Joel 2:12*).

**Friday** - The early church often fasted in seeking God's will for leadership in the local church. Read (*Acts 13:2*) and notice how prayer and fasting led to the appointment of Paul and Barnabas as ministers of the gospel. Read (*Acts 14:23*) and see how the same power of prayer and fasting was used to strengthen the leadership of the laity of the early church. As you can see, when the early church wanted to know the mind of God, there was a time of prayer and fasting. We are called to do the same, so please do your part by participating in our 25 Days of Prayer and Fasting.

**Introduction: Living life unplugged**

- How much battery life do you have?
- I. What plugs us into our power source?
    - *"So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them (Paul & Barnabas) and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit..." Acts 13:3,4*
    - *Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Acts 14:23*
  - II. Why do we need to get plugged in?
    - A. Jesus set an example of fasting
      - *After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. Matthew 4:2*
    - B. Other examples of powerful fasting
      - Ghandi
    - C. How should we fast today?
      - *"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, 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 men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen. Matthew 6:16*
  - III. So, what about fasting and public prayer?
    - *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Matthew 6:5-8*
    - A. What immature prayer looks like
    - B. Praying in a restaurant
    - C. Praying before sporting events
    - D. Praying out loud
    - E. Teaching children to pray
  - IV. An interesting biblical note in "prayer & fasting" *Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:29*
  - V. An inspiring biblical command: "A Call to Prayer & Fasting"
    - *In the ninth month of the fifth year a time of fasting before the LORD was proclaimed for all the people in Jerusalem. Jeremiah 36:9*