



# Gathering Grand Rapids

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## **Call to the Church of Jesus Christ in Grand Rapids to humble ourselves before God to FAST and PRAY.**

- Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14.

## **RECOMMENDED TIME FRAME - April 10-16, 2011**

### **WHY FAST?**

- Jesus sets the example for fasting. He assumes we will follow His example and fast also. He does not say *"if you fast"* but *"when you fast"* (Matt 6:16-18; Matt 9:15, 17).
- Fasting is a primary means of humbling oneself before God. Humility is an attitude of the heart. *"A broken and a contrite heart - these O God, You will not despise"* (Ps. 51:17; See also Ps.35:13; Ezra 8:21; Matt. 23:2; Ps. 69:10; Is. 58:5; Joel 2:12-17).
- Self sacrifice gets God's attention. *"Fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice everything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the Kingdom of God"* (Andrew Murray).
- Fasting opens the door to God's power. *Power for spiritual conquest comes from the Holy Spirit as people seek God's face in consecrated diligent prayer with fasting* (Bill Bright). *Fasting releases the exact power (anointing) of God to meet the need that you have* (Bob Rodgers).
- Fasting brings unity and blessing to the church (Acts 9:9; 13:2,3; 14:23).
- Fasting brings about supernatural healing (Is. 58:8; I Sam.1:12). All through the Bible, God has honored fasting and prayer with miracles of healing.
- Fasting breaks Satan's power (Neh.4:17-20; Is. 58:6, 8; Matt. 17:21).
- Fasting draws me closer to God (James 4:8).
- Fasting gives me understanding of God's Word and God's will for my life and allows me to receive direction from God for my life.
- Fasting increases my physical health and well-being (I Cor. 6:19-20; Romans 6:13; Daniel 1).
- Fasting increases the effectiveness of prayer. *"Fasting is God's chosen way to deepen and strengthen prayer. You will be the poorer spiritually and your prayer life will never be what God wants it to be until you practice the privilege of fasting"* (Wesley L. Duevel). *The New Testament often links prayer with fasting. Abstinence from food can be a valuable aid in spiritual exercises. From the human side it promotes clarity, concentration and keenness. From the divine standpoint, it seems the Lord is especially willing to answer prayer when we put that prayer before our necessary food"* (William MacDonald).
- Fasting and prayer precede revival. *I believe the power of fasting as it relates to prayer is the spiritual atomic bomb that our Lord has given us to destroy the strongholds of evil and usher in a great revival and spiritual harvest around the world. Increasingly I have been gripped with a growing sense of urgency to call upon God to send revival to our beloved country* (Bill Bright).

- Fasting Enables Us to Hear God -- *"Intercession without the direction of the Holy Spirit is pointless and ineffective. It is essential to discover God's direction for our prayers." (Consider the elders of the early Church in Acts 13:2). "One of the greatest hindrances to our hearing the Lord is our inability to focus on Him and His Word. Fasting allows us to remove distractions that hinder our concentration. We can fast from any pleasure. The Lord may lead you into a fast from television, eating sweets or other specific foods, or activities. Abstaining from food and other things that have control over our physical senses, sharpens our spiritual senses. We can better see the Lord and His plans. When a believer covenants to deny his flesh in an act of humility before the Lord, that person is a threat to the kingdom of darkness!" (Alice Smith).*
- If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

### **HOW TO FAST?**

Prayerfully consider the terms of your fast, what you will fast and for how long. What is distracting you from your relationship with God? What do you need to abstain from in order to create more space for God and attentiveness to God?

Biblical fasting, stated simply, is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose. Some may fast a certain meal each day, or a certain food for the week or month. Consider "no meats-no sweets," like a Daniel fast of good healthy fruits and vegetables. Or an Esther fast of three days with water and juice. Consider abstaining not only from food but also from secular TV, movies, radio, technology, and secular reading materials during your fast.

Read God's Word and journal consistently. As you fast and seek God, write down what you see, hear, feel, and experience. *"Hearing from God is one of the best things that can happen during a fast. When you take time to read the Word of God, pray, and wait on the Lord, you can hear the voice of God speaking to you. You stop listening to your body and catering to its desires so your soul can become quiet. Then you can listen to God only"* (Elmer Towns).

When you get hungry, you need to feed on more of God. "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it" (Ps. 81:10). You need to cry out to God until you are satisfied with spiritual food. *"Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man who trusts in Him"* (Ps. 34:8). *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"* (Matt. 5:6). *I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger"* (John 6:35).

*Gathering Grand Rapids* suggests you keep in mind the following prayer points while you fast, which will be the prayer focus of the 2011 Gathering at the Delta Plex, April 16, 2011.

# PRAYER GUIDE

## Pray for City, State and National Government

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14:34)

We ask the Lord to:

- turn legislators' hearts toward Jesus and open their ears to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- raise up "Josephs," "Daniels" and "Deborahs" to lead us.
- bring bipartisanship within our legislators. May the disunity be stopped and God's righteous principles come forth.
- grow us into disciples that seek the "joy of the city." (Acts 8:8)

## Pray for Family

You will be the father of many nations . . . I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you." (Genesis 17: 4-7)

We ask the Lord to:

- shape families as vibrant vessels for Kingdom advancement.
- turn children's hearts to the fathers and fathers' hearts toward the children.
- provide the armor of God and a spirit of forgiveness and thanksgiving for husbands and wives.
- strengthen struggling families with the dignity of employment.
- set the lonely all around us in family; the orphan, the widow, and the stranger.

## Pray for Youth

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

We ask the Lord to:

- provide overseers with integrity and vision, teachers with passion and knowledge and safe learning environments for all.
- give youth the ears to hear call and vocation in the midst of boredom and purposelessness.
- protect youth from the lies and idols of popular culture.
- raise up "Pauls" to disciple this next generation.
- stoke the fire of prayer in youth today.

## Pray for The Church

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)

We ask the Lord to:

- foster unity within the church of Jesus Christ, placing denominationalism, racism, traditions, strife, envy, jealousies, competition and doctrinal issues to the side and giving us all a true Love for the body of Christ.
- grow our pastors and church leaders in holiness, integrity and Christ-like character, strengthening them in Christ as they stand and live in righteousness and godliness before their communities.
- give us the guidance of the Holy Spirit to move us into a united season of Kingdom mission here in Grand Rapids, in the U.S. and throughout the world.
- break our heart for the plight of the the global church, especially in Japan and in the Middle East, raising up His Bride to announce that the Kingdom of Heaven is near.