

creating a culture of prayer

A WEEK OF PRAYER



daily studies

GETTING STARTED

This Wednesday and Thursday we will be gathering in the Worship Center for our next **Encounter**. The focus of this Encounter is to ask God to give us a deeper hunger to pursue Him and partner with Him in prayer.

This five-day study will help us pursue God in prayer and prepare us for Encounter. We have designed it for you to complete one section each day, starting Monday and finishing on Friday.

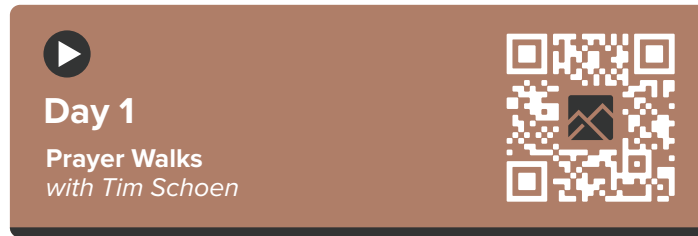
However, if your Life Group meets earlier in the week, please complete all five days before your Life Group or discuss beforehand which days you will cover together.

Here are the five prayer practices we will explore each day.

- **Day 1:** *Prayer Walks*
- **Day 2:** *Fasting*
- **Day 3:** *Praying Scripture*
- **Day 4:** *The Lord's Prayer*
- **Day 5:** *Using A Prayer Language*

All videos will be available throughout the week at rockypeak.org/prayerweek

Today we begin our five-day study on the *Priority of Prayer*. Scan the QR code below, or visit rockypeak.org/prayerweek to watch the quick interview about prayer walks. Then, complete this short study on the importance of prayer in Jesus' life.



1. While Jesus would often pray with His disciples and in large group settings, He also often pursued His Father in prayer one-on-one. There are five examples below—read each one and jot down a quick summary of each passage.
 - Mark 1:35-39
 - Luke 5:15-16
 - Luke 6:12-13
 - John 6:1-15
 - Matthew 26:36-46
2. Why do you think Jesus spent such regular time alone with the Father?
3. It seems that Jesus needed these times for refreshment, direction, and strength. Have you ever experienced a prayer time after which you felt refreshed, directed, or encouraged? What was that like?
4. Jesus often had to give up sleep or step away from the “work” of ministry to spend time with His Father alone. What types of changes in your schedule or priorities would you need to make to spend regular time pursuing God one-on-one?
5. In Luke 11:1, Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Perhaps the idea of changing your schedule to make prayer a priority, or even the idea of prayer being refreshing, seems unobtainable. Maybe, as you look at your life, you see a thousand hurdles keeping you from this goal. Spend a few minutes asking Jesus to “teach you how to pray” over these next few days.

For Parents

1. Discuss these questions with your kids:
 - What excites you about prayer? What makes you nervous?
 - Is there anything that is confusing about prayer?
2. Take a prayer walk together around your neighborhood. Encourage your kids to say short prayers for their neighbors as you walk by their homes.

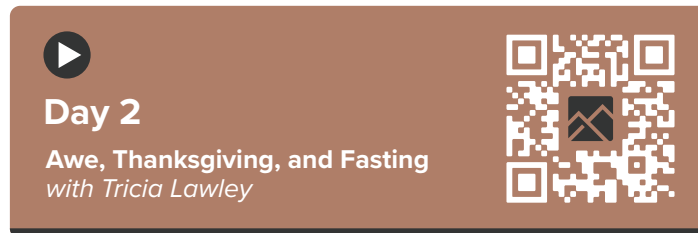
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DAY 2 • TUESDAY

AWE, THANKSGIVING, AND FASTING

On Tuesday, we are doing a 24-hour fast (from all food and beverages, other than water) as a church to prepare us for our Encounter services on Wednesday and Thursday. The reason we are going on this fast is to ask God to give us a greater hunger to pursue Him and partner with Him in prayer.

When we fast, we abstain from food (and usually beverages) to pursue God and supercharge our prayers. At the end of this study, you will find a short article by Pastor Michael which explains more about fasting. We suggest you start your study today by reading this article before watching today's video or completing the Bible study.

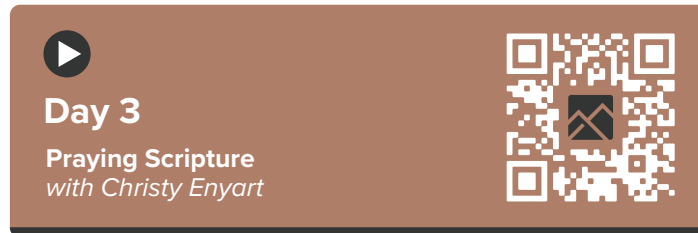


1. Have you ever fasted before? Why?
2. What effect did it have on you personally and in your relationship with God?
3. There are many references to fasting in the Bible. Below are just a few. Read each one and jot down your observations about who was fasting, why they were fasting, how they fasted, and the result of their fast.
 - 2 Chronicles 20:1-30
 - Luke 4:1-14
 - Acts 13:1-5
4. What would you like God to do in your life and the life of our church as we enter this 24-hour fast?
5. Before you begin the fast, ask the Holy Spirit what He wants to do in and through you as you fast. Also ask the Lord to strengthen you during the fast, especially if this is a new experience for you. And be sure to drink plenty of water!

For Parents

1. Talk with your children about what a “fast” is and share with them that Rocky Peak is starting a 24-hour fast. If you are participating, share with them why you are fasting.
2. Pray together for Rocky Peak's 24-hour fast. Ask the Lord to give all who are participating a new strength, courage, and dependence on the Spirit.

Praying Scripture is using God’s word as a prompt to know how and what to pray for. When we pray the Scriptures, we are praying in alignment with God’s heart. Scan the QR code below, or visit rockypeak.org/prayerweek to watch the quick interview on praying Scripture. Then, put it into practice by using the exercise below.



1. Praying Scripture exercise:

- a. Read Psalm 103:1-5. Now, read the verse again.

*“Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.” (Psalm 103:1)*

Now create your own prayer to God using this verse as a prayer prompt. Pray something like this: *Father, I want to praise you with my whole heart. Please help me to bring my whole heart into alignment with you. You are holy Lord. There is no one like you.*

- b. Now read Verse 2. Pause and create your own prayer to God based on this verse. Thank Him for all His benefits; list them by name and remember what He has done for you.
- c. Read Verse 3. Pause and create your own prayer. Ask God for forgiveness and healing in any area that comes to mind.
- d. Read Verse 4. Pause and create your own prayer. Ask God to redeem your life and crown you with love and compassion.
- e. Read Verse 5. Pause and create your own prayer. Ask God to satisfy you with good things and renew your youth. Thank Him for the ways He has done this already in your life.

2. Now try praying Scripture with a different type of passage. Read James 1:2-6 and use this passage to guide your prayer for God to “mature and complete” you.

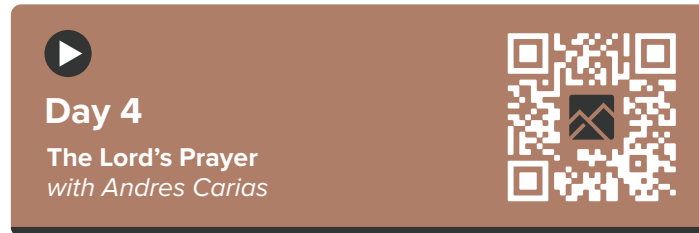
3. Optional: In your Life Group, pray Psalm 23 out loud together. Read each verse out loud then pause. Let the group pray spontaneously around each verse as they feel led and then continue through the whole Psalm.

For Parents

1. Ask your kids to share one of their favorite Bible verses and/or share one of your own. Have each child share what it is about that verse that has impacted them.
2. As a family, pray one of those shared verses. Encourage your kids to keep it simple by focusing on one truth that your verse is declaring, and pray that over your family.

DAY 4 • THURSDAY
THE LORD'S PRAYER

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray using the model prayer we refer to as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Today, we’ll learn how to use this prayer as a prayer prompt for your own times of prayer. Scan the QR code below, or visit rockypeak.org/prayerweek to watch the interview, and then answer the following questions.

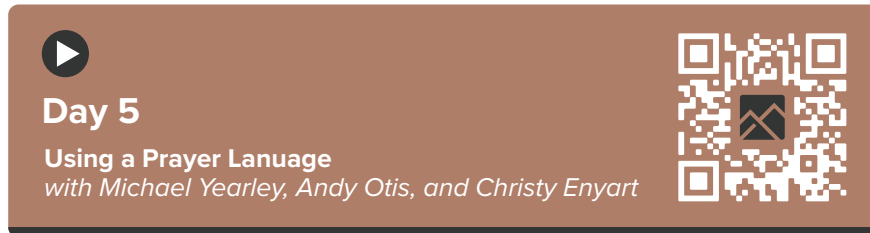


1. In the video, Dre said the Lord’s Prayer declares God’s identity and reveals our identity. Read Matthew 6:9-13 two or three times and then answer the following questions.
 - a. What is this prayer declaring about God’s identity, character, and actions?
 - b. What is this prayer declaring about our identity because of God’s work in our lives?
2. Often, when in the Lord’s Prayer, the Spirit will lead us to focus in and dwell on one specific verse.
 - a. As you read through the prayer, is there a verse or phrase you sense the Spirit leading you to focus on? Why?
 - b. Write out your own short (or long) prayer based on that verse.

For Parents

1. Read Matthew 6:9-13 to your kids or invite them to read it out loud with you. Ask your kids to share what they notice and invite them to ask any questions they have.
2. As a family, choose one verse in The Lord’s Prayer to focus on together in this coming week. Commit to specific times in which you will gather together and pray for that topic (ex: dinners, bedtime).

One of the supernatural gifts the Holy Spirit gives to some (not all) believers is the ability to speak or pray to God in a language they have never learned. This mysterious gift is often described as “speaking in tongues” or praying to God in a “prayer language.” In today’s video, three of our Rocky Peak pastors and directors will share how God uses this supernatural gift in their prayer lives. Watch today’s video and then complete today’s study. (A quick heads-up: this video interview is much longer than the rest of the interviews this week!)



1. When you think about the gift of tongues, what thoughts first come to your mind? Why do you think that is your initial reaction?
2. Have you ever experienced this gift or seen it used in a healthy or unhealthy way? If so, explain.
3. What have you been taught about the gift of tongues in the past?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 and 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 13-19, and 26-28.
 - a. According to these passages, what is the purpose of the gift of tongues?
 - b. What do you think it means when Paul writes, “anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves”? (1 Corinthians 14:4)
 - c. How does Paul view this gift?
 - d. Do these passages challenge any teaching you’ve received in the past about the gift of tongues?
5. Spend some time in prayer. If you are feeling led, ask God to give you this gift if that’s what He wants for you.

For Parents

1. Discuss with your kids: what is one thing you learned about prayer this week?
2. Discuss one prayer practice your family wants to continue in the future, and how you will make that happen. Then close in prayer, asking God to keep growing your family’s culture of prayer.

Hungry for God

A guide to fasting



Fasting is an important spiritual discipline that can lead to spiritual growth, answers to prayer, and a deeper relationship with God. It is mentioned often in the Bible. In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster writes,

Scripture has so much to say about fasting that we would do well to look again at this ancient Discipline. The list of biblical personages who fasted becomes a “Who’s Who” of Scripture. Moses the lawgiver, David the king, Elijah the prophet, Esther the Queen, Daniel the seer, Anna the prophetess, Paul the Apostle, Jesus Christ the incarnate Son.

Richard Foster

On top of this, Jesus assumes His followers will fast. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs us,

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 6:17-18**

Notice that Jesus says “when” you fast — not “if” you fast.

In spite of this, fasting has often become a neglected spiritual discipline by modern-day Christ-followers. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, comments on this teaching of Jesus about fasting in the Sermon on the Mount:

For evangelicals, this whole question of fasting has almost disappeared from our lives and even out of the field of our consideration. How often, and to what extent have we thought about it? What place does it occupy in our whole view of the Christian life and the discipline of the Christian life? I would suggest that the truth probably is that we very rarely thought of it at all. . .

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Studies In The Sermon On The Mount*

As a result, many modern-day Christ-Followers often have a lot of questions about this important spiritual discipline. Today we will address five of these frequently asked questions.

What is fasting?

In the Bible, fasting simply refers to abstaining from food and beverages (or certain kinds of food and beverages) in order to pursue God for some specific spiritual purpose.

Why should we fast?

Fasting is a way to pursue God's Presence and supercharge our prayers. When we fast, we abstain from food because we are hungry for something more important than food. We are hungry for God — and for His will, direction, and intervention in our lives.

What should we expect while fasting?

Everyone is a little different when it comes to their experience of fasting. Some people find that when they fast, they experience a heightened sense of God's Presence and a deep sense of spiritual well-being. They find it easier to connect with God and hear His voice through the Word and prayer. For others, fasting is more of an act of obedience. They don't necessarily feel closer to God or experience more spiritual power while fasting. However, they often receive powerful answers to prayer or major spiritual breakthroughs after the fast.

When should we fast?

Fasting can be done at any time, but historically, people in the Bible usually fasted during times of special need. For example, King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:1-30) and Queen Esther (Esther 4:16) led Israel in fasts when the whole nation was facing imminent destruction through war or genocide. The prophet Joel called Israel to fast as an act of repentance for their sin and rebellion:

*Declare a holy fast;
call a sacred assembly.
Summon the elders
and all who live in the land
to the house of the Lord your God,
and cry out to the Lord . . .*

*“Even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Joel 1:14; 2:12*

Daniel fasted to seek God for insight into a mysterious “revelation” he received (Daniel 10:1-3). Jesus fasted to prepare for His ministry (Matthew 4:1-11). The leaders of the church at Antioch were worshipping the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit spoke to them with strategic instructions for Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-4). Paul and Barnabas fasted when they commissioned elders for their new churches (Acts 14:23). As you can see, in Scripture, fasting is usually associated with times of special need — whether it’s for deliverance, repentance, guidance, or empowering. However, the Holy Spirit may lead you to fast for a wide variety of reasons.

How should we fast?

When people fast in the Bible, they usually abstain from all food and beverages — except for water. However, Daniel is an exception. At one point in his life he went on a “partial fast” where he fasted from all “choice foods”, including meat and wine (Daniel 10:1-3). Occasionally, there are examples of an “absolute fast” — where someone fasts from all food and beverages, including water (Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9). This is highly unusual. In *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster writes,

There are also several examples in Scripture of what has rightly been called an “absolute fast,” or an abstaining from both food and water. It appears to be a desperate measure to meet a dire emergency. . . It must be underscored that the absolute fast is the exception and should never be engaged in unless one has a very clear command from God, and then for not more than three days. **Richard Foster**

Fasting in the Bible lasts various lengths of time. There are examples of one-day, three-day, seven-day, twenty-one day and forty-day fasts. If you believe the Holy Spirit is calling you to go on a long fast, it’s always a good idea to consult with your doctor to make sure this is safe for you. It is also important to stay hydrated when you fast.

Fasting is an important spiritual discipline. When led by the Holy Spirit, it can lead to spiritual growth, answers to prayer, spiritual breakthroughs, and a deeper relationship with God.