

PRAYER AND FASTING

A Day of Prayer and Fasting on Saturday 31st August 2019

When and Where

Each ministry unit can determine the time and place for their fasting and prayer. Some may choose to meet together and pray in the church; some may set aside time in a quiet space at home. It's your choice.

You might also consider breaking the 24 hour period into a number of shorter time slots filled by volunteers.

Remember

Remember how we fast and pray is not as important as doing the fast and prayer.

The major work of fasting is in the realm of the spirit. The discipline of fasting and prayer can bring breakthroughs in the heart and mind that will not happen any other way. It is a means of God's grace for the transformation of the human personality into the likeness of Christ.



What to do in the Time Set Apart for Prayer and Fasting

- Bring your Bible, a glass of water and some energy sweets if wanted.
- Spend some time worshipping God for his faithfulness. Thank him for blessings received.
- Offer your desires and prayers to God. Ask if this desire is in line with his will and his word for you and the church. Be still and listen.

Some possible texts to read and consider:

- Ephesians 1:3-14
- Matthew 6, Matthew 7
- Philippians 2:1-18
- Psalm 1, Psalm 43, Psalm 67
- Read and pray through one of the gospels.

Read and re-read these or any other text praying and listening for the word of God to you.

Why fasting and prayer?

Prayer and fasting are an essential part of the Christian life.

Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights before beginning his ministry (Matt 4). The apostles prayed and fasted before sending out Barnabas and Paul for ministry (Acts 13). Fasting has been an important part of the life of the Church from its beginning.

People fast and pray before significant events, when facing conflict and in times of disaster, in fact, wherever God's blessing is sought. In a world increasingly focussed upon the individual and doing things ourselves, a world where prayer can be seen as a sign of weakness, we need to see that prayer is a foundational part of our life as the family of God in Central Queensland.

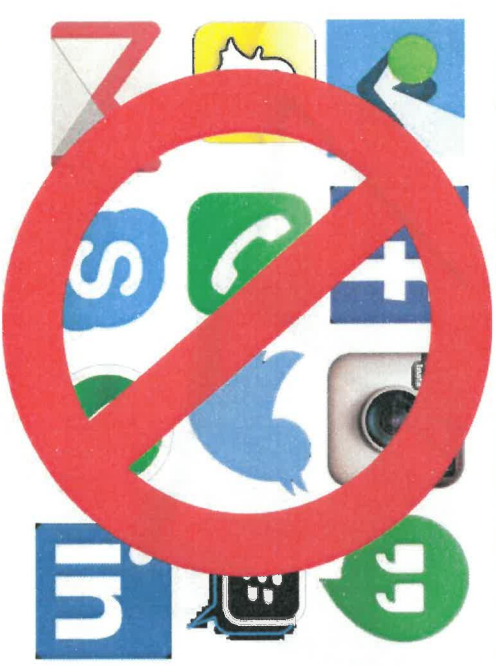
Our diocesan family faces many challenges. **I invite you to join with our diocesan family to stop, to pray and to fast.** The challenges we face will not be overcome in isolation; they require that we work together as one family, there is no 'us and them' simply 'us' gathering together for a day of prayer and fasting, lifting before God the challenges we face in each ministry unit, the diocese and our wider community.

+ David



How to fast

Normally we think of fasting from food, which is the way the Bible speaks of it. But it is not always possible to stop eating for 24 hours. There can be many reasons why fasting from food may not be possible for you, but we can fast from many things. We can fast from media, from noise, from rushing from place to place and we can fast from excessive talk - spending 24 hours in silence can be very liberating, giving us time to listen to our thoughts, to focus on prayer and to listen for God. We can also choose to fast from our technological devices, our computers, iPads and mobile phones and so on. Taking a pause from these things breaks their power over us. By putting God at the centre of our fasting and prayer, we learn to depend upon God alone.



Guidelines for Fasting from

Food

- Don't fast if you are sick, or have a medical condition which could be impacted by not eating.
- Stay hydrated, make sure you drink plenty of water and fluids.
- Feel free to eat energy sweets (like barley sugars) occasionally – every two to four hours.
- Break your fast if you begin to feel unwell.
- If you are new to fasting, begin by fasting for one meal. Spend the time with God that you would normally be eating.
- Begin after your evening meal and fast until the next evening. This way you miss 2 rather than 3 meals.
- Don't break your fast with a huge meal, eat small portions. The longer the fast, the more gently you need to break it.