

CREATING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. -

MARK 1:35

Prayer is most effective when it isn't something we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate. To understand how to have a lifestyle of prayer, we can look at the example Jesus gave during His life on earth.

HAVE A CERTAIN TIME.

Jesus got up early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. Make a daily appointment with God – whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening – and faithfully keep it.

HAVE A CERTAIN PLACE.

Jesus had a specific place He went to pray. Having a designated place to pray helps us remove distractions and frees us to worship and pray out loud.

HAVE A CERTAIN PLAN.

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave them a prayer outline. We call it "The Lord's Prayer." As we pray every day, our plans for our prayer time can vary, maybe including worship music, Bible reading, and quiet time to listen to God. It doesn't always have to look the same; it just helps when we have a plan for connecting regularly with God.

CREATING A LIFESTYLE OF FASTING

Fasting helps us draw near to God and eliminates distractions for a spiritual purpose. In committing to a fast for the next 21 days, here are some things you should consider before starting your fast.

WHAT TYPE OF FAST SHOULD YOU DO?

You could fast a certain food item, a specific meal each day, or a common activity such as television or social media. Here are some types of fasts you could choose to do for the 21 Days:

- Complete Fast - In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.
- Selective Fast - This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meats, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.
- Partial Fast - This fast, sometimes called the "Jewish Fast", involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown.
- Soul Fast - This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

BEGIN AND END THE FAST WELL.

If you have any health concerns, consult your physician before beginning a food fast. If you are fasting food, begin and end the fast gradually by slowly removing/returning regular foods back into your diet. It is important to know your body and make smart, healthy decisions when fasting.