

Pray With Us

a call to prayer and fasting



NBC CALL TO PRAYER AND FASTING – APRIL

How is your fasting and praying going? Don't forget to drink lots of water when you fast from food.

Have you worked out yet when you will fast and what you might pray about? I say 'might' because when I fast I have found that God leads me in my thoughts and prayers beyond what I started praying about.

And if you have never fasted from food before I suggest you start by just missing one meal. If you are fasting from television or your device will it be all day or for a few hours or what will it be?

I'm interested to hear from you please email me at laurie.robertson@salvationarmy.org.au

Self-Denial

Fasting has been around for many centuries. In his book *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough*, Elmer L. Towns reveals that in the Old Testament the Hebrew term *tsom*, translated as 'fast', refers to the practice of self-denial. It's the same in the New Testament concerning the Greek word *nesteia* – 'fast' – which also refers to self-denial.

For the majority of our existence The Salvation Army has practiced self-denial (fasting from something) in relation to our annual appeal for finance to help fund our health, education, water, food, micro-financing, teaching skills to enable employment and other practical and Christian growth ministries in many countries around the world.

As we put aside our money for this year's Self-Denial Appeal many of us would have been praying for God to use the money powerfully for the growth of his Kingdom.

Heads Up

NBC's next sermon series covering the weeks from 12 April – 31 May will be focusing on Walking Humbly with God. Each message will use key verses from Ephesians. I'm so glad we know this in advance as it gives us opportunity to read Ephesians a few times before we hear the teaching and preaching.

Why do people fast and pray?



Throughout the centuries there have been a variety of reasons for God's followers/disciples to combine fasting with praying. Crying out to God in grief, calling for a revival of faith in Jesus Christ, asking God to intervene in a crisis, for healing and seeking to prepare deeply for Christian events, such as Easter, are some of the incentives prompting people to fast and pray.

- Why are you wanting to fast and pray?
- What specifically for NBC will you be praying for?
- What is currently stopping you fasting and praying?

As you fast and pray do it in the ways that best suit you – the ways that you feel most free in prayer. This will vary from quiet contemplation to walking around shouting out prayers and all in between!

Some New Testament Scriptures on fasting

Matthew 4:1,2; Matthew 6:16-18; Matthew 9:14,15; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:1-9;
(specifically verse five but helpful to read all nine verses for context)

Prayer points

- We read in Matthew 6:16-18 some essential advice from Jesus for our praying and fasting. In The Message verse this passage starts by saying, "When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don't make a production out of it." Other translations use "be humble" or "humbly". Dear Jesus, please help us to understand the importance of humility being a continuing life theme.
- Please pray for the person you will be inviting to NBC this Easter, asking that God will prepare both your hearts so that through your time together a genuine connection will grow.
- Pray for our regular community lunch. We want it to be a welcoming space where meaningful connections form and lasting relationships begin to grow.
- Pray for the ministry of our thrift store and for Manoah and all the volunteers. May their gracious service continue to be a blessing to every community member who comes. We passionately want uplifting, spiritual connections occurring on a regular basis.
- Dear God, please guide my heart, shape my actions and help me to live a life that reflects your character. May your goodness be revealed through me by the way I speak, love, forgive, and serve

Laurie Robertson