

Pray With Us

a call to prayer and fasting



NBC PRAYER AND FASTING FOR AUGUST

My sister Valmae is an avid reader of the Bible and Christian books. Recently she gave me a copy of *Prayerfulness—Cultivating a Bible-enriched prayer life*.

Because I am writing this monthly newsletter on prayer and fasting I jumped to chapter 10 which is headed – Prayer, Fasting, Decisions and Promises. Straight away God hit me with a new learning.

The author, Peter Adam writes: “Jesus assumes that his disciples engage in self-denial expressed in fasting. In the sermon on the mount, he introduces the topic not by saying ‘if you fast...,’ but ‘when you fast ... ,’” Matthew 6:16 NIV

As I read this the difference between if and when just hit me right between the eyes! ‘When’ doesn’t leave any wriggle room whereas ‘if’ does!

So I looked up *The Message* version and sure enough ‘when’ is used there as well. So this fasting concept is not optional and actually it isn’t a concept but an expectation of Jesus’ disciples. And in reading through to verse 18 I found that when we fast we are to be circumspect, humble and keep acting normal. We are not to make a song and dance about it as if we are super Christians or looking for kudos – praise.

Matthew 6:16–18 says: ¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ 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..” NIV

And in *The Message* it reads: 16–18 “When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don’t make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won’t make you a saint. If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn’t require attention-getting devices. He won’t overlook what you are doing; he’ll reward you well.”

HUMBLING OURSELVES BEFORE GOD

In *Prayerfulness* Adam explains that, in a number of places throughout the Old and New Testaments, fasting is linked to humbling ourselves before God which matches perfectly the words of Jesus from Matthew 6 and my experience.

I've found that the longer I keep connecting with Jesus the more aware I am of how much I need him. It's confronting and strangely uplifting as God keeps showing me how far from being like Jesus I am, while encouraging me with how far I've come.



Our life is full of opportunities to keep growing and developing as people and through our faith-filled discipleship of Jesus we have a loving mentor, teacher and friend who ensures we learn within his never-failing safety net.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?

- What am I doing in response to God's promptings and revelations about me?
- Who are the support people I have to discuss what God is teaching me?
- If I had to give up something I already do to spend more time with Jesus what would it be?

PLEASE PRAY FOR ALPHA AND LIFE GROUPS



Alpha Wed evenings 5 Aug - 9 Sept 7:00-8:30pm @ NBC Salvos. There will also be another Alpha course beginning on Friday 7 August at 10am for those who are unable to attend on Wednesday.

Alpha is a relaxed, conversation-based course exploring the Christian faith. For more information, please email alpha@nbc.org.au

Alpha is for everyone. Young, old, new to faith, long in faith, those with questions, and those with answers. We

also have child minding available, so please consider attending even if you have participated before, as your contributions to new conversations are invaluable.

Also please pray for all **NBC Life Groups**. Perhaps these groups might like to decide to spend some time fasting as a group activity. Maybe for August the day the group is held could be a fast from something day to spend more time with God.

NBC ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES AND PRAYER POINTS FOR AUGUST

Over the next few weeks, our sermon focus will be on the life and ministry of Jesus.

Our faith is, and always will be, all about Jesus. As we keep Him at the centre of our lives, His love, grace, and example shape the way we live each day. In Micah 6:8, God calls His people "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Jesus perfectly embodied these words throughout His ministry. In every encounter, He showed compassion to the hurting, welcomed the outcast, stood for what was right, and served with humility and love. As we follow Him, may our lives reflect His heart, living with justice, mercy, and humility, so that in all we do, we point others to Jesus.

Upcoming Dates:

- Junior Soldiers | 2 August
- Donuts after Church | 2 August
- Kids in the Kitchen | 4 August
- Alpha starts | 5 August
- Everyday Justice | 5 August
- MRI Conference | 8 August
- Dance Connections starts | 8 August
- Gen X Lunch | 9 August
- Kids in the Kitchen | 11 August
- EKKA Show Day | 12 August
- Alpha | 12 August
- Dance Connections | 15 August
- Disciples in Mission Gathering | 16 August
- Junior Soldiers | 16 August
- Fellowship Lunch | 16 August
- Alpha | 19 August
- Sisterhood Rising | 20 August
- Prayer Powerhouse | 23 August
- Brickmasters Starts | 25 August
- Alpha | 26 August
- Thrift Open | 29 August
- Fix it Forward | 29 August
- Dance Connections | 29 August
- 5th Sunday Funday | 30 August
- Leadership Community | 30 August

Joyfully serving Jesus

Laurie Robertson