

Pray With Us

a call to prayer and fasting



NBC PRAYER AND FASTING OCTOBER UPDATE

I am so grateful that Scott and Sharon asked Simone and me to produce this monthly Prayer and Fasting newsletter. It has caused me to revisit prayer and fasting with more purpose and intention.

Spiritual Batteries Recharged

My spiritual enthusiasm batteries are recharged every time I explore and research each month while seeking God's direction for me to take as I write.

I keep being reminded that my attitude is vital when it comes to living in ongoing, growing connection and communication with God through prayer.

However, this month the Holy Spirit is emphasising to me that prayer is God's idea and I am responding to his prevenient grace as he seeks me out to keep building an authentic, ever-deepening relationship with me.

Reminders keep coming, telling me that it's vital I do all I can to stop bombarding God with all my thoughts, requests and ideas without trying to hear what God is attempting to say to me.

This is where fasting and quietness can be helpful for many. For other people you may be fasting and have music on or speaking out loud rather than praying internally to God. All of this and everything in between is fine as long as it helps you connect with God

Prayer Is an Activity Between at Least Two Beings

Australian pastor Stuart Robinson expands on this in his book *Praying the Price* when he says, “Prayer is an activity which mentally, emotionally and spiritually engages at least two living beings, otherwise it is only soliloquies self-talk.” [A monologue by us which doesn’t give God opportunity to respond.]

In another part of his book Stuart shares some powerful stories about Christians who were not only fair dinkum in their prayer life, but they also combined fasting with it.

Combining Prayer and Fasting Releases Powerful Spiritual Forces



Regarding this Stuart states, “When Christians combine prayer with fasting, powerful spiritual forces seem to be harnessed and released. Hence, ‘no study of prayer...could ever be complete without a careful look at the importance of fasting...’” [In the second part of this statement Stuart quotes prayer warrior and author Dick Eastman.] **My reaction to this inspiring quote is WoW please bring it on Jesus!**

I was challenged when Stuart outlined that in the western church (which includes us Aussies) “fasting is hardly a widespread or fashionable spiritual discipline’.

He made me sit up and take more notice when he said that fasting seems more widespread in the general community and sports that within our churches.

“While fasting has become a political mechanism in many countries, or even a means of fundraising through sponsorships of some well-known charities, it is either ignored or mentioned only jokingly in large sections of the church...

“There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. ... So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.”

— **Ezra 8:21, 23 (NIV)**

Even in Some Sports, Fasting Is Accepted as Essential

"Even though it is also acceptable for practitioners of that other great 'religion' of our times, professional sport, for boxers, jockeys and others to be expected to fast to reduce body weight...before their respective events, mostly, at least in well fed western societies fasting is often regarded as something of a far removed medieval monastic religious discipline..."

As I read again the above portion in Stuart Robinson's book, God impressed upon me how I had been sucked into exactly that kind of thinking for a number of years.

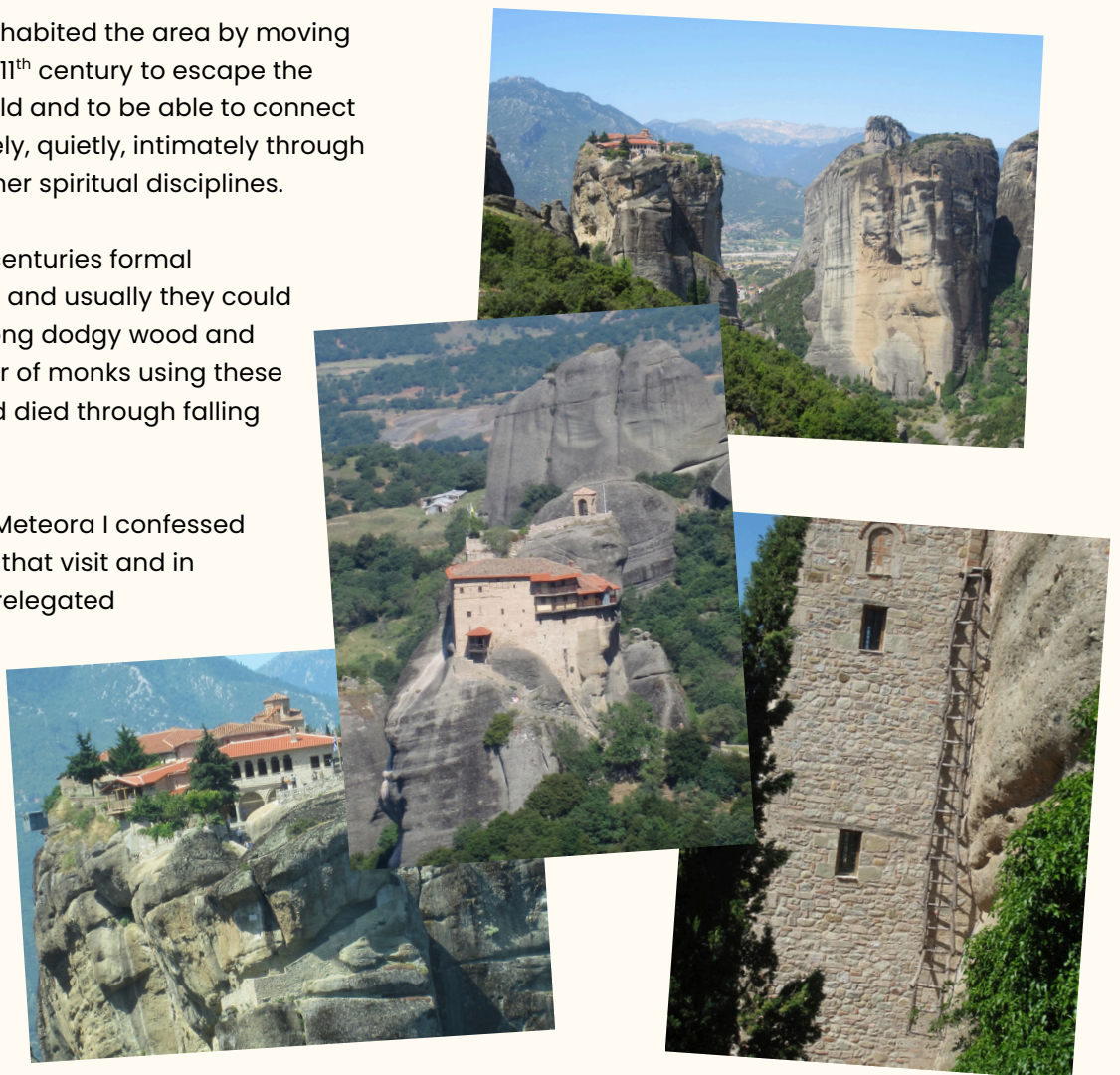
Meteora Monk Memories and My Confession About Neglecting Fasting

Not long before I had read this passage in Stuart's book God had reminded me about visiting Meteora in Greece 14 years ago as part of a Footsteps of Paul adventure. Meteora is famous for its isolated medieval monasteries. They are high up on rugged mountains.

Christian monks first inhabited the area by moving into caves there in the 11th century to escape the temptations of the world and to be able to connect with God more intensely, quietly, intimately through prayer, fasting and other spiritual disciplines.

In the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries formal monasteries were built and usually they could only be accessed by long dodgy wood and rope ladders. A number of monks using these ladders to bring in food died through falling off them.

As I relived our visit to Meteora I confessed to God that yes during that visit and in some years following I relegated fasting to something done in the distant past – even though, for a number of years previously, I had regularly fasted.



Sermon on the Mount and Fasting



In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-18) Jesus covers three key areas for his disciples – giving, praying and fasting. He expects us to be active givers, prayer-ers and fasters! The Scripture quotes him saying, “When you give..., When you pray..., When you fast..., not; if we get around to living like this.

I pray that we will all want to delve deeper into prayer and fasting because they are conduits for the grace, love and power of Jesus to flow freely into and out of us.

We fast from something so we can feed more effectively from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And please remember that while fasting from food is the principal method used, there may be health or other reasons why you can't fast from food. When this is the case I encourage you to spend time in prayer working it through with Jesus. I suggest you ask the Holy Spirit to give you ideas about other things you can fast from.

Please Pray for Our Sunday Sermons

Living Like Jesus | 27 September – 25 October Current Sermon Series

- Following Jesus is more than knowing about Him – it's learning to live the way He taught us to live. As we move from a series “all about Jesus” to one focused on “living like Jesus,” we'll explore His teachings and what they mean for the way we live each day. Dear Jesus please help me to really want to involve you in every part of each day and to do all I can to be more closely intertwined with you.
- Jesus calls us to love God and our neighbour, seek His Kingdom, extend forgiveness and mercy, live with humility and serve others, and to walk in faith and repentance. Dear God what do I need to refine in our prayer life so we will be stronger in these areas of life?
- As we follow His teaching, may His words shape our choices, our relationships, and our everyday lives, so that we don't just know about Jesus, but become people who reflect His heart to the world around us. Oh Lord Jesus what new or improved actions are needed from me so that I **really do** become totally engaged in **Living Like You?**

Also as you read the NBC News Bites please pray for the events and people mentioned!

Joyfully serving Jesus

Laurie Robertson

P.S. thanks again to Simone – my proofreader!