

FBC
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First Baptist Church
Lenten Prayer Journal
www.fbcmassillon.org

Prayer Journal

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HOW TO USE THIS 40-DAY PRAYER JOURNAL

We are excited to see what God has in store for FBC —and you— over these next 40 days. This Prayer Journal includes ten specific prayer requests by FBC, along with a place for you to name specific prayer requests for yourself, your family, or others. Our Prayer Journal is loosely modeled after material from the Pittsburgh Experiment (pittsburghexperiment.org) to enable “people to open their lives to God so He can make Himself known. It also serves as a tool of discipline and focus in seeking God’s guidance and direction.” Below, you will find an explanation of the steps to follow, the significance of 40 days, and how to pray, along with several different types of fasting to follow over the next 40 days.

Steps to Follow

(Steps 1-5 contain, in part, material from the Pittsburgh Experiment)

1. Decide What to Pray For

FBC has put down the requests or needs we would like you to pray for over the next 40 days. But as far as what you should put down, consider the following:

- Right now, what is your relationship like with God, yourself, and others?
- Are there unresolved portions of your past, or do you seek answers for the future?
- What is the need in your life that concerns you the most right now? Be specific.
- Focus on just one need at a time.

2. Pray Every Day

- Commit yourself to praying consistently about First Baptist and your prayer requests every day for 40 days.
- Setting a regular time each day is not necessary, but it can be helpful. Pray wherever you are and as often as you can.
- Lift the situations up to God and ask Him to meet you at the point of your need.
- Read the selected scriptures as a source of encouragement and guidance.

3. Listen

- Take time to be quiet in God's presence. Silence is the language of the Holy Spirit (*John Main, "The Meaning of Silence," p.156, Spiritual Classics, Edited by Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, 2000*)
- There might be things God, through the Holy Spirit, wants to say to you.
- There might be things in the church or in you that need to change before our or your situation is changed.
- Any ideas, questions, convictions, or concerns that come to your

mind during prayer could be part of the answer.

- Write them down each day in the spaces provided.

4. Have an Open Mind

- Let go of preconceived ideas about possible solutions. For example, if you aren't getting along with your boss, pray for that relationship rather than a transfer.
- Believe God is at work, even if you cannot see a difference.

5. Review the Results

- At the end of the 40 days, see where you are.
- Look at where you started—the situation, your attitude, emotions, everything that went into making it a need or prayer request. Look at where you are now.
- What was the progress from Day 1 to Day 40?
- What has changed? Situation, attitude, relationships—have you changed?

Answers may come in various ways: common sense, intellectual conclusions, circumstances, emotions, a decision of the will, other people, Scripture, sermons, or direct inspiration. They may be “yes,” “no,” or “wait.”

6. Share What God is Doing in Your life

To share how you are being affected by this time of prayer, email us at pastorfbcmassillon@gmail.com, drop off a card in the offering plate, or visit the Connect Corner located in the Narthex. Prayer requests and stories of encouragement and praise are welcome.

Significance of 40 Days

(From New Psalmist Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland, "40-Day Stretch Prayer Journal", 2010)

A goal of the 40-Day Prayer Journal is for one day to lead to 40 days and for 40 days to lead to a lifestyle of prayer. Here is the Biblical significance of 40 days:

- Judgment: 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God was removing evil (Genesis 7:4).
- Preparation: 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God was preparing people for action (Matthew 4:2).
- Restoration: 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God wanted to win people to Himself (Jonah 3:4).

We are God's adopted children, Jesus' brothers and sisters. We are God's family, and we matter to Him. God is interested in your prayers because He is interested in you. He's your Father and wants to hear what you have to say.

Jesus taught us how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13, "The Lord's Prayer." There is no other passage in Scripture that reveals in such a straightforward fashion how to pray:

- Pray regularly. Jesus said, "When you pray..." not "If you pray..."
- Pray privately. God is not impressed by public displays of piety.
- Pray sincerely. God is not interested in formulas. He wants to hear what is on our hearts.

• Pray specifically. Take the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer as a model. We also suggest that you kneel while praying (Psalm 95:6).

Remember, "busyness" is the archenemy of spiritual authenticity.

Therefore, try to slow down, reflect, and listen to God over these 40 days.

Fasting

We are providing three different types of fasting for you to participate in over these next 40 days: (1) a traditional food fast; (2) an Isaiah 58 “fast” by getting involved in serving the poor, oppressed, and hungry; and/or (3) a “fast” from any personality trait or habit that God is convicting you to change.

1. Food Fast

Following are guidelines for fasting from food for short periods of time. American Baptist churches generally understand a call to prayer, but few have been urged to fast as an act of worship and humility. Why are we now being urged to fast? Fasting is a spiritual discipline taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His disciples to fast, and He said our Heavenly Father rewards fasting. Matthew 6:16–18 states, “When you fast...,” not “If you fast...”

- Fasting gives you more time to pray. Use the time normally spent eating to honor God as we are present with Him in humble prayer. (See Romans 12:1-2.) At such times, God often reveals His will. (See Acts 13:2-4 and Ezra 8:23.)

- Fasting and prayer become partners in demonstrating the depth of our desire when praying.

Fasting helps us suppress our fleshly desires, including self-gratification and pride, while simultaneously increasing our spiritual strength and awareness. It shows that we are serious enough about prayers to pay a personal price. (See Joel 1:14.)

- Fasting releases God’s supernatural power. It is a discipline often used for empowerment from God. (See Acts 14:21-23.)

- Fasting is a way God prepares us for major events in our lives, such as an overwhelming victory or, some astounding new enlightenment or an awe-inspiring answer to prayer. Through fasting, we humbly receive God’s incredible blessings. Meditate on these scriptures: 2 Chronicles 20:2-3; Daniel 9; Nehemiah 1:4; Luke 4:2; Acts 13:2-3.

- Fasting does not manipulate God to get His blessings of answered prayers. God answers our prayers out of His grace. Fasting is a way He prepares us for His answers.

If you have any health issues, an eating disorder, or are pregnant or nursing, you should not participate in a food fast. Before deciding to proceed with a food fast, we strongly recommend a detailed review of scriptural fasting as contained in an article we have placed in the literature racks around the church. This article can also be accessed online by going to the following link: www.cru.org/train-and-grow/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting.html

2. An Isaiah 58 “Fast”

Isaiah 58:6-11: “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.” We encourage you to participate in an Isaiah 58 “fast” during these 40 days and beyond by participating in ongoing First Baptist Church ministries for the poor, oppressed, and hungry.

3. Fasting from a Personality Trait or Habit

(Catherine Marshall, "A Fasting on Criticalness", Spiritual Classics, Edited by Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, 2000)

You may want to pray over a particular personality trait or habit of yours, one from which you would like to "fast." Catherine Marshall teaches us about a way of fasting that is not from food, but from a critical spirit. One of the things we learn from fasting is how it reveals what controls us. Here, Catherine Marshall saw what was controlling her, and this released her to begin moving in a new direction, a direction free of a critical spirit. The Lord continues to deal with us about a critical spirit, convicting us that we have been wrong to judge any person or situation: Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matthew 7:1-2 NIV). You can fast from criticism, fast from sarcasm, fast from procrastination, etc. Upon completing your fast from whatever personality trait or habit you select, summarize what God is showing you and what steps you can take to change.

God's Love, Peace, Hope, and Blessings,

Please use the lines on the left to write what God is speaking to you about the FBC prayer request and on the right what God is speaking to you about your own prayer request. Example:

FBC Request

That we will experience
God in deeper ways as
we pursue His truth
rooted in the Bible.

My Prayer Request:

Daily Journal Entries

Day 1—March 5

Deuteronomy 6:5-6: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 2—March 6

Deuteronomy 10:12: And now... what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 3—March 7

Deuteronomy 11:13-14, 16: So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil... Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 4—March 8

1 Chronicles 16:34: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

FBC Request

That we will encounter the
living God in all His
beauty and glory through
engaging, life-
transforming worship

experiences.

My Prayer Request:

March 9 Sunday

Day 5—March 10

Psalms 59:16: ...I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 6—March 11

Psalms 91:14: "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 7—March 12

Proverbs 3:3: Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 8—March 13

Deuteronomy 10:18: He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.

FBC Request

That we will be in awe of
God so that we may
glorify, praise, honor, and
enjoy Him forever.

My Prayer Request:

Day 9—March 14

Hosea 12:6: But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 10—March 15

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

March 16 Sunday

Day 11—March 17

Matthew 22:36-40: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 12—March 18

John 13:34-35: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

FBC Request

That we will cultivate relationships with others that bridge all ages and social demographics.

My Prayer Request:

Day 13—March 19

Matthew 5:43-44: You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 14—March 20

Luke 6:27-31: But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 15—March 21

Luke 32-33: If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 16—March 22

John 14:15: If you love me, keep my commands.

FBC Request

That our church will become a secure home for God's people where we can grow and be nourished, supported, and encouraged.

My Prayer Request:

March 23 Sunday

Day 17—March 24

John 21:17: Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?”

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 18—March 25

John 14:21: Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 19—March 26

1 John 2:10: Anyone who loves his brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 20—March 27

1 John 3:17: If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in that person?

FBC Request

That we will be transformed
by the power of God and be
conformed to the image of
His Son.

My Prayer Request:

Day 21—March 28

1 John 3:18: Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 22—March 29

1 Corinthians 13:1: If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

March 30 Sunday

Day 23—March 31

1 Corinthians 13:2: If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 24—April 1

1 Corinthians 13:3: If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

FBC Request

That we will be effective witnesses
in our network of relationships

My Prayer Request:

Day 25—April 2

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love is patient...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 26—April 3

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love is kind.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 27—April 4

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love... does not envy...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 28—April 5

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love... does not boast...

FBC Request

That we will be transformed by the
power of God and be conformed to the
image of His Son.

My Prayer Request:

April 6 Sunday

Day 29—April 7

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love... is not proud.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 30—April 8

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... does not dishonor others...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 31—April 9

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... is not self-seeking...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 32—April 10

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... is not easily angered...

FBC Request

That we will be effective witnesses
within our networks of
relationships.

My Prayer Request:

Day 33—April 11

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... keeps no record of wrongs.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 34—April 12

1 Corinthians 13:6: Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

April 13 Palm Sunday

Day 35- April 14

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always protects...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 36—April 15

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always trusts...

FBC Request

That we will be good
stewards of the time,
talents, and treasures
God has given us.

My Prayer Request:

Day 37—April 16

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always hopes...

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 38—April 17

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always perseveres.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 39—April 18

1 Corinthians 13:13: And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Day 40—April 19

Colossians 3:12, 14: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience... And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

FBC Request

My Prayer Request:

Easter Sunday—April 20

Share with Us!

Please share how you were affected by this time of prayer. You can email us at pastorfbcmassillon@gmail.com or drop off a connection card in the offering. Prayer requests and stories of encouragement and praise are welcome.

1 John 3:11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

We aim for FBC to be a House of Prayer for our members, visitors, and the Massillon community.