

Hello,

I am writing to let you know we will take part in a voluntary corporate fasting and prayer time. The dates and focus of prayer during this time are in a separate document also found on the website on the *Church Family* page. Those who are either unable to, or are limited in their ability to fast due to health conditions should be led by the Spirit in this endeavor and should consult their physician prior to the fast if they have questions.

Parents, we encourage you to talk with your children about what fasting with prayer is; why we do this, and include them in this fasting and prayer time in significant ways. If you yourself are unsure of the nature, purpose and benefits of fasting please let us know and we can talk with and/or resource you. Sadly, in many cases a child's life is not impacted by the faith of their parents beyond the fact that they require them to attend church services. This not only displeases and dishonors God; but it also fails to reflect our God given responsibility as parents.

Ask God for guidance and grace in how your family should implement this. Ask your child's doctor what is reasonable. Yes, fasting can be hard for a child, just like for an adult. (We don't not do something just because it's hard.) There are times when fasting is unavoidable, for example if directed to by a physician prior to a medical procedure. While fasting may not be physically fun, it can be done and result in lessons learned, as well as physical and spiritual blessings.

For young children who may not be able to abstain from food at all, we strongly encourage you to choose other appropriate things for them to abstain from during this time of corporate fasting and prayer. Whether this be a move towards light/less generous meals (i.e. smaller meals, less/no meat, abstaining from their favorite foods, less variety, etc.), and/or a break from certain activities of leisure and enjoyment (such as cell phone usage, listening to certain types of music, TV/movies, video games, computer, other electronics, or something else), do not neglect this opportunity to bless and disciple your children.

Including our children may be uncomfortable for some and/or require that more of the parent's time be diverted from other things so they can be more devoted to helping infuse meaning into the family's efforts. But it is important for us to make these types of sacrifices for our family. It is only for a brief period of time relatively speaking. It also teaches these little ones, or reminds them, that the faith of their parent's and relatives greatly influences their daily lives and (as we see in Scripture) has eternal implications. This is true even if they themselves have not made a commitment to Christ or don't fully understand everything. Our patriarch Joshua said it right when he declared, "...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Feel free to ask if you have any questions.

Grace & Peace

Michael