

FASTING & PRAYER

Marks of a Bridge Builder

NOVEMBER 2-22, 2026

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HOW TO PRAY DURING THE FAST →**CARRYING IT FORWARD** →**RESOURCES** →**AT A GLANCE****PICK A WEEK:** Nov 2-8, Nov 9-15 or Nov 16-22**PRAY WITH A GROUP:** meet at least twice, and share highs and struggles in between**PRAY THROUGH ALL FOUR MARKS:** linger wherever the Spirit draws you**END WITH A FEAST:** share a meal and what God has been doing, on your final Sunday or soon after**NEED A GROUP:** visit the welcome table after Sunday service**SHARE WHAT GOD SHOWED YOU:** through the [Reflection Form](#)

SECTION 1

WHY WE FAST TOGETHER

At Cross Bridge, one of our cultural staples is being Better Together, especially around food. We're more likely to cook up a feast than to fast. Yet the early church fasted and prayed regularly (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23), to draw closer to God and with clear purpose.

WHAT IS FASTING AND PRAYER?

FASTING

Fasting is **abstaining from food** to seek God for a specific purpose.

PRAYER

Prayer is a **conversation with God** through Jesus that includes both listening and speaking.



Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

MATTHEW 4:4

People sometimes fast from things like social media or entertainment, but this congregational fast follows the biblical form of fasting from food. The two spiritual disciplines fit together naturally. Instead of eating, we use mealtimes to pray, and our hunger reminds us how much we depend on Him. Fasting also connects us to Jesus, who fasted in the wilderness, and builds the self-control to resist sin and hold fast to God's promises.

SEEKING GOD AS ONE CONGREGATION

Fasting and prayer are spiritual disciplines Jesus invites all believers to practice, not only the "ultra-spiritual." He taught us not to fast for show (Matt 6:16-18), and we also see the early church fasting and praying together. When we fast together as a congregation, we bring our concerns before God side by side, pray for one another, and share what He is teaching us. Our shared fast also strengthens our witness, both to the generations after us and to those outside our church who see God at work among us.

Over the first three years of our five-year vision, we've seen God unite us through His Word and root us in Jesus, the true vine, and we trust that He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion (Phil 1:6). Last year, Cross Bridge began fasting and praying together as a congregation. Each of us fasted on our own, but we shared a common purpose.

OUR FALL SERIES

WHOLLY YOURS

Our fall sermon series, Wholly Yours, asks what it looks like to give God all that we are and all that we have. Fasting is one concrete way to do that, offering Him our time and our bodies as we seek Him together.

OUR FOCUS THIS FALL

This fall, we're fasting and praying over the four marks of a bridge builder that we preached through: Missional in Life, Shaped by Scripture, Walking in Community, and Serving with Joy. Our focus is to stay open to the Holy Spirit's leading as we grow as bridge builders, bridging cultures to build a family in Christ and sharing the good news of God's kingdom, which brings reconciliation and renewal.

SECTION 2

HOW TO JOIN IN

01 CHOOSE A STARTING POINT

Start with any mark, and feel free to linger wherever the Spirit draws you.

Missional in Life

Shaped by Scripture

Walking in Community

Serving with Joy

02 CHOOSE A GROUP

Gather a few people to pray with, like family, small group friends, your CB Retreat group or a Tuesday prayer subgroup. Aim to meet at least twice during your week.

 **Need a group?** Visit the welcome table after Sunday service, and we'll help you connect.

03 CHOOSE A WEEK

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
WEEK 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
WEEK 2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
WEEK 3	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Group prayer

Any days your group chooses

Highs & struggles

Share them throughout the week

Sunday feast

Break your fast, then feast and reflect with your group on Sunday or soon after

04 CHOOSE A FAST

Three common options. Choose any fast that fits your health.

FULL	No food, but water permitted
PARTIAL	Certain foods or meals
DANIEL	Fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts; no animal products or processed foods

[See more types of fasts ↗](#)

05 CHOOSE A FREQUENCY

Decide how many days and which meals. Here are a few examples.

SUNRISE TO SUNSET	6 am-6 pm on Mon, Wed and Fri, water only
ONE MEAL A DAY	No lunch Mon-Fri, praying instead
ALL WEEK	The Daniel fast for your whole week

SECTION 3 · PRAYING THROUGH THE FOUR MARKS

MISSIONAL IN LIFE

PRAY · INVITE · BRING

Who am I bringing to “come and see”?

“

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

JOHN 1:45-46

PRAY

Lord, form us into a people who bring those you’ve placed in our lives, that they might come and see.

If someone asked you to name something you can’t live without and explain why they should get it too, you could probably come up with an answer and make a good case for it. Jesus’ first disciples talked about Him the same way. Andrew had just met the Messiah, and the first thing he did was find his brother Simon and bring him to Jesus. Philip did the same with Nathanael. When you find something that good, you want to share it.

It still works that way. Most of us came to Jesus because someone said “come and see.” Asking someone to come and see can feel daunting, and we often worry about how they’ll respond. When Nathanael scoffed at Nazareth, Philip answered with a simple invitation and trusted Jesus to do the rest. We can do the same, knowing that everyone is seeking something. Jesus alone is the bridge to God (John 1:51). Our part is to bring people to Him. Come and see, then come and bring. In our fasting and prayer, we ask God to show us who He has already placed in our lives and to give us the courage to invite them.

QUESTIONS TO PRAY THROUGH

01

Who brought you to come and see Jesus, and how did they invite you?

02

What groups of people do you regularly spend time with, and where could an invitation fit?

03

What holds you back from inviting someone?

04

Who is God placing on your heart? Pray for them by name, or ask God to bring that person into your life.

TRUTHS TO ANCHOR US

God spreads the aroma of Christ through us everywhere we go

Read [2 Corinthians 2:14-16](#)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel

Read [Romans 1:16-17](#)

Always be prepared to share the reason for your hope, with gentleness and respect

Read [1 Peter 3:15](#)

Jesus asks the Father to keep and guard us in His name

Read [John 17:10-12](#)

SECTION 3 · PRAYING THROUGH THE FOUR MARKS

SHAPED BY SCRIPTURE

HEAR · ABIDE · BECOME

How am I a parable of Jesus?

“

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus...

COLOSSIANS 3:16-17

PRAY

Lord, form us into a people who abide in you and are shaped by your word, that our lives may increasingly look like Jesus.

To be shaped by Scripture is to let the word of God do the work of God in our lives. A single workout doesn't change much, but months of steady practice do. Scripture works the same way. Reading and meditating on God's word over time is what transforms us.

Thankfully, we're not in this alone. Just as working out with others is easier than working out alone, Scripture sinks in more when we read it with others. Through conversation, song, and gentle correction, community helps the word of God do its work in our lives.

Pastor David Hansen describes a parable as a story that makes the invisible visible. Jesus is the greatest parable, the invisible God made visible in the flesh. When the word of Christ dwells in us richly, our lives become parables of Him, pointing people to the Jesus they can't see. You live like Jesus as His word lives in you. In our fasting and prayer, we ask God to let His word settle in us and change us, so that others can see Jesus in the way we live.

QUESTIONS TO PRAY THROUGH

01

How do you best take in Scripture, by reading or listening, and how can it become more than a habit?

02

Where is your life displaying Jesus well, and where has the display gone dark?

03

How can you encourage others to stay connected to God's word?

04

Reflect on this quote from British evangelist Gipsy Smith: "There are five Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian, but most people never read the first four."

TRUTHS TO ANCHOR US

Blessed is the one who delights in the law of the Lord

Read [Psalm 1](#)

We are better together as we sharpen one another

Read [Proverbs 27:17](#)

We are the salt and light of the world

Read [Matthew 5:13-16](#)

SECTION 3 · PRAYING THROUGH THE FOUR MARKS

WALKING IN COMMUNITY

GATHER · ENCOURAGE · STRENGTHEN

Who is seated at my dinner table?

“

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another...

HEBREWS 10:24-25

PRAY

Lord, form us into a people who make room at our table, that we may share our lives and spur one another on.

Two themes show up again and again in books, TV and film. In one, someone feels alone in a crowd. In the other, a struggling person is lifted up by friends, and together they do what none of them could do alone. These stories resonate because God made us for community.

Hebrews calls us to consider one another, paying attention to the people around us so we can stir each other up to love and good works. That kind of attention needs us to keep meeting together and keep encouraging one another (v. 25). You can't stir up a stranger.

Our faith grows when others ask how we're really doing and notice when we're missing. It perseveres when others encourage us through hardship and push back on sin's lies, and we contend for each other's faith when we carry one another's burdens and go after those who are drifting. Bonding as a family and bridging out to others go together, because when we carry one another, we are encouraged to keep building bridges. In our fasting and prayer, we ask God to show us who to pay attention to and who to invite to our table.

QUESTIONS TO PRAY THROUGH

01

Who have you noticed drifting, and how could you check in with them this week?

02

Who needs an encouraging word, or a gentle challenge to harmful self-talk?

03

Where can you grow family-like bonds, and where can you build bridges across differences?

04

What step could you take to invite someone to your table, whether that's dinner at home or takeout on a busy night?

TRUTHS TO ANCHOR US

The early church grew as it gathered and shared life together

Read [Acts 2:42-47](#)

We are one body, and every part needs the others

Read [1 Corinthians 12:14-26](#)

We encourage one another every day, so that none of us is hardened by sin's deceitfulness

Read [Hebrews 3:13](#)

We carry one another's burdens

Read [Galatians 6:2](#)

SECTION 3 · PRAYING THROUGH THE FOUR MARKS

SERVING WITH JOY

SEE · SERVE · REJOICE

Where does my duty become my delight?

“

Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

LUKE 10:20

“

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

1 PETER 4:10-11

PRAY

Lord, form us into a people who serve one another with the gifts you've given, that our duty may become our delight.

Think of the Patriots and Falcons in Super Bowl LI. At halftime the game looked over. Rewatch it knowing the final score, and the worry is gone. All that's left is anticipation. Christians know the outcome too. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, sin and death are defeated, and our standing with God is secure.

Jesus commands and equips us to serve His purposes. When the seventy-two came back rejoicing that even the demons submitted to them, Jesus shared their joy and pointed them to a deeper one: their names were written in heaven. We can rejoice in what God does through us, and rejoice even more in what He has already done for us.

That changes why we serve. When our identity is secure in Christ, we aren't serving to earn God's approval or a place in His family. Our names are already written, so we're free to give ourselves to the people in front of us, however it goes. We serve in His name and rejoice that He has written ours. In our fasting and prayer, we ask God to root our joy in Him and to show each of us where to use the gifts He has given us.

QUESTIONS TO PRAY THROUGH

01

When serving goes well or badly, how does it affect your sense of standing with God?

02

How does your identity in Jesus shape the way you serve?

03

When you serve, what is it about the experience that brings you the most joy?

04

What gift has God given you, and where might He be asking you to use it?

TRUTHS TO ANCHOR US

God prepared good works in advance for us to walk in

Read [Ephesians 2:10](#)

Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart, and His yoke is easy

Read [Matthew 11:28-30](#)

"Well done, good and faithful servant"

Read [Matthew 25:14-30](#)

Count it all joy, even in trials, because God is growing us through them

Read [James 1:2-4](#)

SECTION 4

HOW TO PRAY DURING THE FAST

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Remove distractions and come with repentance and self-examination. Ask the Lord to:

- Sustain you and guard you against temptation
- Keep you connected to your group
- Help you lean on one another and pray for others
- Open your heart and mind to hear His voice
- Use your hunger to draw you closer to Him

PRAY TOGETHER

Notice the prayers, verses and words that stir an "Amen." Write down what keeps repeating; it may be God confirming His leading.

PRAY ALONE

Like Jesus, find a quiet place away from noise and screens. Silence can feel awkward at first, and it often becomes the place where God speaks most clearly.

REFLECT AND RECORD

Keep track of the threads, themes, words and verses God shows you. Ask yourself:

- What did God reveal during this fast?
- What encouraged me most?
- How did fasting help me notice His presence?
- What hope or burden am I carrying for our church?

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

LISTEN QUIETLY

Make space, and trust God to speak in His time.

ALIGN WITH SCRIPTURE

God speaks through His Word. Let it shape what you hear.

DISCERN THE SPIRIT

He guides us and never leads contrary to Scripture.

CONFIRM TOGETHER

Notice what repeats or resonates across different people's prayers.

TRUST HIS TIMING

Answers may come quickly or slowly. He will make His will clear in His perfect time.

SECTION 5

CARRYING IT FORWARD

Last year, many of us shared both struggles and breakthroughs as we fasted and prayed together, and we saw God's faithfulness in fresh ways. We hope for the same this year.

As you take part, celebrate what God is doing, whether in moments of clarity, answered prayer, or simple encouragement. We especially want to hear how He is speaking to you as you pray through the four marks of a bridge builder.

SHARE YOUR REFLECTION

Please use the anonymous Reflection Form to share what God has shown or blessed you with during this time. Your reflections will encourage our church family and help us discern God's leading together. We're also exploring ways to share these reflections with the wider congregation, so the whole body can be built up and encouraged by what God is doing among us.

[REFLECTION FORM ↗](#)

RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED READING ON FASTING AND PRAYER

The Place of Fasting
in the Christian Life

[C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE ↗](#)

What Is Biblical
Fasting and Does It
Work?

[CRU ↗](#)

Fasting for Beginners

[DESIRING GOD ↗](#)

Purpose of Fasting

[BIBLEPROJECT VIDEO ↗](#)

A PRAYER FOR BRIDGE BUILDERS

Lord, raise us up as bridge builders. Send us to others, shape us by your word, bind us to one another, and give us joy in serving, so that many more would belong to the family of Christ.