



prayer & fasting
2016

January 24 - January 31

Suburban's Elders have issued a call to prayer and fasting to begin on Sunday, January 24 and end on Sunday, January 31.

“Looking To Jesus”

*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith
For the joy set before him he endured the cross,
scorning its shame, and sat down
at the right hand of the throne of God
Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)*

Perhaps this is the first time you've been challenged to participate in a week long time of prayer and fasting. Don't be intimidated. You can join in this season of seeking the heart of God in many ways and to whatever depth you are able. Please consider these ideas for this important week in your life, in the life of Suburban and in the life of our cities.

Prayer

Suburban's prayer room will be open at 6:30am Monday through Friday (will remain open until the building closes, which varies each night). There will be prayer ideas and helps in the room. Please stop by throughout the day and spend some quiet time in prayer.

Suggestions for Praying Creatively:

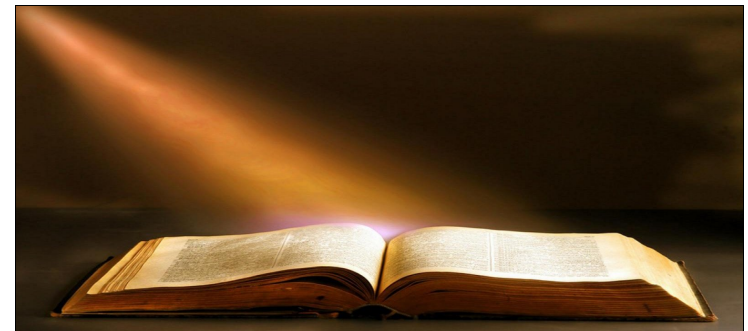
- Create a prayer space in your home—a special corner, a chair, a closet — and commit to a time each day that you pray in that place.
- Are you a Small Group leader or member? Use your Small Group time during this week to pray into God's heart for our cities.
- Find a like-minded friend and prayer walk your neighborhood. Pray for each household seeking God's love and blessing for their lives.
- Do a concordance search to understand what scripture shows us of God's heart for the world. Pray these scriptures over our cities.
- Set a prayer time with your children — pray for their friends and their schools.

***“ Devote yourselves to prayer,
being watchful and thankful. ” Colossians 4:2***



Recommendations for Further Reading on God's Attributes

- ◆ **God Is! A Fifty Day Exploration of God's Attributes**
by Reñe Schlaepfer
- ◆ **Knowing God**
by J. I Packer
- ◆ **The Attributes of God**
by A. W. Pink
- ◆ **Knowing the God You Pray To**
by Cynthia Bezek
- ◆ **Any Max Lucado book!**



**Happy Reading from
Suburban's Prayer Team!**

An Invitation To Praise!

Praise is the language of the believer who truly knows his/her God. It opens the very gates of Heaven to our earthbound frame. It lifts us up to reach into the very heart of God; for He loves the praises of His people.

Join with others in the song of praise this week and watch how God will change your heart and life.

It is impossible to praise or thank Him too much. Sometimes it is your response to the beauty of nature; or maybe the amazing out-pouring of His gifts in His people. Because we are made in His image, we are able to respond to His creation and His people.

A thankful heart has plenty of room for God. So, lift up your voice, speak to the Maker and let Him know how much you love Him.

The scriptures are so full of His praise, so praise Him as the Psalmist in Psalm 139:14... (The Message)

I thank you, High God-you're breathtaking!

Body and soul, I am marvelously made!

I worship in adoration-what a creation!

You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body;

You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,

how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book,

you watched me grow from conception to birth;

all the stages of my life were spread out before You.

The days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day.

Your thoughts - how rare, how beautiful!

God, I'll never comprehend them!

I couldn't even begin to count them -

any more that I could count the sand of the sea.

Take a walk through the Psalms if you can't think of anything; maybe you just need a jumpstart.

He will take any praise you have to offer and it will bless His heart.

Cheryl Black
Co-Leader Prayer Team Ministry

Fasting

Fasting can be even more intimidating than prayer. As lovers of the Lord we tend to naturally pray, but fasting is a discipline lost to our culture. Fasting is meant to provide space in our lives to focus on the Lord. It also provides a reminder to pray—when our bodies cry out for food or our flesh cries out for the thing from which we fast, that very cry is the call to prayer.

There are many types of fasts that Christians have entered into throughout the ages. The ancients often fasted from all food and took only water for a period of time. Some fast from meats and sweets and take only fruit and vegetables. In today's culture people often choose to fast from electronic media to deliberately quiet their hearts and minds to hear God's voice. As you consider how to fast, consider your physical condition and the demands of your life. Find a fast that will entail a true sacrifice, but also allow you to continue the work and service that God calls you to each day. If you are under a doctor's care, please talk to your doctor before you enter into a fast.

Some possibilities for your fast include:

- Take only broth, juice or some other liquid at one meal each day. Spend the time you would normally cook and eat focused on the Lord.
- Fast from one meal a day each day of the week.
- Fast from a specific food item—for instance coffee, soda, or sugar. When your body craves these things, go to the Lord in prayer.
- Fast from outside 'noise' - TV, music, radio, IPOD, etc., etc. Give space to the Lord's voice as you also seek Him in prayer.
- Fast for: One day . . . Three days . . . All seven days . . . during that week. Make your fasting days about listening to God's voice and praying for what God calls you to pray for.
- Pray into your fast — ask the Lord what you could give up that would bring Him delight.

***“Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly.
Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the
house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.”
Joel 1:14***

Encouragement From Steve Lee

Dear Suburban Family,

Suburban has scheduled a Week of Prayer and Fasting for the past five years and it has been a big blessing to the church. We've seen answers to prayer and received testimony from many people about the impact the week has had on their lives.

I want to encourage everyone who is a part of the Suburban family to participate in the 2016 Week of Prayer and Fasting. We'll kick the week off on Sunday, January 24th with a gathering for prayer and worship that evening and conclude the week on Sunday, January 31st by joining with folks from a number of other churches in our community for Adoration, a night of worship and prayer that Suburban will host.

The 2016 Week of Prayer and Fasting is particularly critical in the life of Suburban. During 2016, Suburban will identify and call a new senior pastor. The search committee is hard at work in this process and our prayer is that a candidate can be presented to the congregation for consideration and approval sometime in the next few months. Will you join the rest of the Suburban family to pray about the call of a new senior pastor?

I would encourage everyone to set aside some time in addition to your regular prayer schedule to pray. Pray alone at home ... pray at your place of work ... pray while you drive ... and join the groups that will be meeting at the church each morning and evening to pray. Set a goal of adding 15 minutes a day of focused prayer during the Week of Prayer and Fasting ... or perhaps 5 minutes a day is a more appropriate goal for you ... or perhaps 60 minutes a day would be a challenging goal for you. Set a goal that requires you to stretch your prayer life.

I would also encourage everyone to fast in some way during the week. One of the most meaningful fasts that people have done in recent years is a fast from entertainment and social media. Perhaps you could give up watching TV and movies for the week ... shut down Facebook and other social media sites for the week ... or limit your use of social media to just a 30 minute a day window when you check in. Perhaps God would have you give up food in some way ... a full food fast for a 24 hour period ... or perhaps 48 or 72 hours. Perhaps giving up a meal a day for the entire week ... or cutting down to just one meal each day for the week. Stretch yourself as you consider how you will join the rest of the family in fasting.

I'll be joining you in a commitment to increased prayer and in some type of fast. Let's see how God will impact our hearts and lives through this year's Week of Prayer and Fasting and let's watch to see how God will use the week to impact the whole church.

His, by Grace, Steve

Prayer Ministry Team Recommendations:

Slowly read Deuteronomy 32:1-4 looking for words or phrases that stand out to you.

Read it again, asking God to highlight what he wants to show you.

How is he calling you to respond?

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/devotional.

You are our ROCK! We do not want to stand on shifting sand. You are our anchor! You do not move. We will trust in you Lord, when all the world is swirling around we know we have solid ground on which to stand. You are the same, yesterday, today and forever. Faithful and true.

“God is Immutable”

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”
James 1:17

Day 7:

Simply put, immutable means unchanging or unchangeable. Some of the synonyms for immutable are revealing: Abiding, Immovable, Constant, Permanent. The point makes itself; our God does not change.

Depending on the translation you choose, our verse in James describes God as having “no variation or shifting shadow” (NASB), “no variation or shadow due to change” (ESV), “does not change like shifting shadows” (NIV) or even the KJV “no variableness, neither shadow of turning”. Regardless of the version you like the message is the same. God does not change.

Why is this important? Because it is that unchanging nature ... that means we can always place our confidence in Him. For all eternity! Regardless of current circumstances.

When Moses spoke his final song in Deuteronomy 32 extolling the Lord to Israel he called our God "The Rock!"(v4). When David composed Psalm 61 referring to a time "when my heart is faint" (v2) he asked God to "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy." God Himself is that Rock of refuge that is "higher than I."

When I consider God’s immutability, I’m reminded of the old Prudential Insurance symbol of the Rock of Gibraltar standing strong and tall above the swirling waters. Immoveable. Life certainly swirls with waves and whirlpools of challenges around that Rock. But I know I can go to the Eternal Rock for an eternal comfort and safety that transcends circumstances.

Our God, the Mighty One of Israel, does not change! He is immutable! He is not worn down by time but remains as the eternal Rock. You can have confidence to run to Him -- always.

Vern McDonald

A Note From Claudia Lee

I’ve long loved Christmas and Easter. What we remember during those months on the church calendar inspires me to worship, awe, and a desire for total surrender. For the last several years I’ve also come to love and cherish the month of January and the Week of Prayer and Fasting. In so many ways this month of listening to and pursuing the heart of God has provided the energy and direction I need for the year to come.

I’m remembering the first time the Elders called us to a week of Prayer and Fasting. It was the first time I fasted consistently for a week and allowed that fast to shape my prayers. Every time my body cried out for the thing from which I was fasting that hunger pang became a call to prayer. It was incredibly powerful in my life.

With that first experience as my starting flag, I’ve come to look forward to January as the month that we at Suburban join in the Church of the Valley’s call to pray and fast for one week. God has consistently met me during January and given me food for thought and direction through my season of prayer and fasting. This year Suburban’s Week of Prayer and Fasting theme of “Looking to Jesus” raises excitement in me. I’m eager for the Week of Prayer and Fasting Booklet and the devotional thoughts the Elders will provide on the character of Jesus. Among other personal prayer goals, I know I will bring the search for our next Pastor to Jesus as I look at Him. I’m eager to hear from Him how I can trust His character in all aspects of the search and selection process. I’m eager to pray into the search needs within the context of the beauty of the character of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I’m eager to join in the heart of Jesus as He loves us, His church, and as He shows us that He can and WILL provide for us.

Even if you’ve never fasted before, I hope that this is the year you give this ancient spiritual discipline a try. And if you are not physically able to fast from food, I hope you will find another ‘prayer trigger’ – something that can be a regular automatic call to pray when you see or feel it.

Love and blessings,
Claudia

Prayer & Fasting Schedule

- **Kick-Off Sunday, January 24, 6-7:30pm in B3**
- **Prayer Opportunities Monday through Friday, Jan. 25-29**
 - Early Morning Prayer ... 6:30-7:30am in the prayer room**
 - Monday ... led by Rodney Knous**
 - Tuesday ... led by Bruce Penner**
 - Wednesday ... led by Jamey Mills**
 - Thursday ... led by Steve Lee**
 - Friday ... led by Jerome Leonard**
 - Evening Prayer ... 7:00-8:00pm in B3**
 - Monday ... Missions' Leaders**
 - Tuesday ... Carey Penner and Kim Simmons**
 - Wednesday ... Rick Herbert**
 - Thursday ... Jerome Leonard**
- **Adoration, Sunday January 31, 6:00pm at Suburban**
 - Praise & Worship with our community's COV churches

Prayer Team Recommendations:

Read Romans 8:28 slowly. What words pop out at you?

Read it again, this time underline or circle the most significant words or phrases.

Read it one more time, this time accentuate those words.

Ask the Lord if there is something he wants to show you.

How is he calling you to respond?

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/devotional.

“God is Sovereign”

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8:28

Day 6:

You have to ponder a bit to think what it means for God to be Sovereign. It means that God is boundless, unrestricted, and supreme. It means that God is all-powerful. It means that God is in control, in both the big things in our world such as governments and leaders, and the personal things such as difficult relationships and health issues. Do you really believe that God is in control? Take a moment to think of an area in your life where you worry about the outcome. We all have them, whether it is financial issues, a health issue, an upcoming test.

Sometimes when we look at issues big and small, it is really hard to see how God could be managing His creation. The Romans passage not only claims that God knows what is happening in our lives but orchestrating grace and mercy according to His purpose. If you’ve ever wondered how your situation could ever work out, think back to Jesus on the Cross. As far as the disciples understood at that moment, Jesus was defeated, the ministry had ended and it seemed God had abandoned His Messiah. All was lost. But then Sunday Came, the stone was rolled away and they realized that God’s plan was working according to design, amazing beyond their comprehension. Over a short time they came to see that God was truly in charge and worthy of their trust. Then the work really began, as God used them to shape His world.

Clint Zlatnik

Lord, help us to see your influence in the events of our lives. Grant us peace to trust You with our well-being, even in the midst of storms. Teach us to be patient for your plans to come to fruition and lead us in your paths that we may be your hands and feet. Dear Lord, we thank you for your work in guiding your creation to your Plan.

7 Days of Devotions

- **Day 1: “God Is Holy”** ... John de Vos
- **Day 2: “God Is Omnipotent”** ... Wayne Seim
- **Day 3: “God Is Omnipresent”** ... Rob Brawn
- **Day 4: “God Is Love”** ... Phil Geisert
- **Day 5: God Is Omniscient”** ... Jon Bartlow
- **Day 6: “God Is Sovereign”** ... Clint Zlatnik
- **Day 7: “God Is Immutable”** ... Vern McDonald

“God Is Holy”

And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Isaiah 6:3

Day 1:

In Isaiah 6, Isaiah sees God on His throne in awesome glory and splendor. Isaiah sees seraphim flying and calling out "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory." The Hebrew word for Holy is "qodesh" and means "apartness, set-apartness, separateness, sacredness." This repeating description of God as "Holy, Holy, Holy" dramatically emphasizes that He is totally Other, set apart, sacred and above all created things. Isaiah is overwhelmed by God's holiness and also by his own lack of holiness. "Woe to me!," he cries. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." But God in holy graciousness provides atonement for Isaiah and commissions him to proclaim His Word.

Do we have an overwhelming view of God's Holiness? Are we acutely aware of our lack of holiness? Does this motivate us to cry out to God in repentance, fully grasping that we are ruined apart from His grace? I find I am too often complacent in my relationship with this Holy God who calls me to be holy, as He is Holy (1 Peter 1:16). I need to set Him apart as FIRST in my life, not just another competing priority (Matthew 6:33, Exodus 20:3). I also need to set myself apart from everything that easily entangles and dims the light that He desires to shine through me (Hebrews 12:1, Philippians 2:15). How to do this? I cannot do it myself. I only see progress in this when I regularly pray for God's help (Psalm 54:4, Hebrews 4:16). God loves to answer this type of prayer! This includes prayer that asks for help just to pray regularly. How about you? Will you ask God to help you make Him FIRST in everything, setting Him apart as Holy, and asking for His help to be Holy too?

John de Vos

Prayer Team Recommendations:

Slowly read Psalm 139:1-2 looking for words or phrases that stand out to you.

Read it again, asking God to highlight what he wants to show you. How is he calling you to respond?

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/devotional.

We are known and loved by you Lord. Help us to remember in good days and bad that we have a God that knows us inside and out. A God that made a perfect plan through Jesus, to wash us from unrighteousness, from fear and anxiety and to make a path of peace. Hallelujah! A God that knows my thoughts can also hear my praise!

“God Is Omniscient”

“You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.”
Psalm 139:1-2

Day 5:

This past Christmas I got to observe a communication game I have seen played out many times. It was nothing new to me, but to my nephew and his one year old daughter it was a big deal. While at a family gathering she began to cover her eyes and in response we all asked where she was. Little Macy was long entertained as she “hid herself” from our presence right in plain sight and we all responded with glee when she revealed herself. No one thought it a pitiful thing that she was not really hidden. Developmentally speaking she could not see us, so it was obvious we could not see her. Our meager understanding of God’s omniscience is not much different than that of Macy who believed she was essentially vanishing from sight by simply covering her eyes. But the unseen God really can see us, and according to scripture does search our inmost being. We cannot hide from him. Psalm 139:1-2 reads: “¹O Lord, You have searched me and known *me*. ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thoughts from afar.” Some translations use the word “perceive” instead of understand, meaning that God essentially observes and identifies our very thoughts even as he is hidden from our eyes. Knowing that God is aware of our most intimate thoughts, fears, and frustrations is intimidating. Yet at the same time it is freeing because we know He loves us. I am glad I don’t know what everyone else is thinking, and I am sure glad that they can’t read my innermost thoughts. But God sees all and he still loves us deeply. This knowledge alone should move us not away, but toward his loving arms. Who else knows us this intimately and still is pleased to be with us no matter where we find ourselves.

Jon Bartlow

Prayer Team Recommendations:

Read Hebrews 12:1-2 Slowly one time, jotting down words that grab your attention.

Read the passage a second time, focusing on phrases that capture your attention

In what way is God calling you to respond to this passage? Stop and **listen**.

Take a moment to write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/devotional.

Lord as a body of believers, we DO ask for help. We want to see your attribute of holiness more evident among us. Open our eyes to anything that has clouded our thinking or behaviors. Help us in our view of you to see you as Holy but still approachable because of what Jesus has done for us. Bring us all to the place where we can say, you are First in our lives. Lead us in repentance of any idols that we have placed ahead of you. Cleanse us from unrighteousness. Help us to fully receive your forgiveness

“God Is Omnipotent”

“How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.”
Psalm 104:24

Day 2:

We worship a mighty God. Scholars say he is omnipotent – we are more likely to say he is all-powerful and supreme above all. Scriptures celebrate the awesome majesty of his power. Psalms 104:4 leads us to recognize his mighty works of creation, and Psalms 150:2 calls for us to praise God“Praise him for his acts of power; his surpassing greatness!” And verse 6: “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Look up on a clear night at the multitude of bright stars, too many to count, and yet we only see a tiny fraction of this giant universe. Our mighty God created this, and his unlimited power sustains it. Nothing can match him!

Today as you meditate on the over-whelming power and majesty of our God, and his mighty deeds of the past—praise him for his mighty power in your life and all those he draws into fellowship with him today. His presence changes lives. His powerful works continue, and one day the peoples of the whole world will see our Lord coming “on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (Matt 24:30).

Wayne Seim

Father in Heaven, we celebrate your awesome majesty and power. You are supreme; nothing can match your invincible strength. Yet we praise you for your love and gentle kindness for us your children. You are our all-powerful Father; yet you reached down to lavish your love on us that we should be called your children. You are mighty in love!

I praise your name!

I offer this prayer in the name of Jesus

Prayer Team Recommendations:

Choose one of the passages from today’s devotional and respond by:

Reading it slowly, noticing words that stand out.

Read it again, asking God to highlight anything he wants to tell you. Take time to **listen**.

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/devotional.

Lord, help us to love the way you do. We really can't do it without you. People that walk in through our doors need the love of God to touch them. Fill us with your love! For each other, for strangers, for family, for the hard to love people in our world. A sacrificial love. Perfect, and without fear.

“God Is Love”

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

Day 4:

The Apostle John tells us in this well known scripture how much God loves us. He seemed to feel strongly that we take this to heart as he writes in *1 John 3:16* “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us, And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Here we are told that we know this love, is real love because of the cost, His life. These verses assure us of the nature of God’s love. A love that simply loves because of who He is rather than one that requires us to prove we are worthy of His love first.

John goes on in 1 John 4 to tell us that this perfect love casts out fear (vs. 18), and that we know love because He first loved us (vs. 19). Perfect love doesn’t doubt or fear that it’s real, instead it knows it can be counted on, regardless of who we are, or what we’ve done. When we trust that we have been accepted by this first love, His love, then, we will know what love really is. Once we do that we are able to extend that same love to those around us, even if they don’t deserve it. Remembering that first love, one that accepted us the way we are is to truly know and accept the love of the Father.

So as we go about our day, do we look at how others treat us before determining how we treat them?

I’m sure glad that our Father shows us what real love is a model for us to follow.

Phil Geisert

Prayer Team Recommendations:

Read through Psalms 104:1-6 and notice any words or phrases that stand out.

Read slowly through again, asking God to highlight anything he wants you to know.

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/ devotional.

“God Is Omnipresent”

“God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.”

Psalm 46:1

Day 3:

There is a cave about 12 miles south of Bend, OR called Lava River Tube. Perhaps you have been there. Upon entering, it is dark, damp and cold even on the hottest day. Without a flashlight it is difficult to find your way and if you are the only one in the cave there is an eerie silence. In this absence of light and sound, God is still present. Man orbited the earth and walked on the moon.

God was present. Futurist organizations such as Mars One or SpaceX plan to colonize Mars. When/if they arrive on Mars, God will be present there too.

Scientists estimate the edge of the observable universe is 46 billion light years from Earth and the universe is expanding at the rate of about 46 miles per second. Scripture says God is present across this vast expanse. “Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:23–24).

God has always been and always will be. Because we are accustomed to observing the beginning and ending of life, this is a difficult concept for us to grasp. Revelation 1:8 says “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was, and who is to come. The Almighty.” God is present in each of our lives. Psalm 139:13 says “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb”. Psalm 23:4 adds “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

God is present everywhere, all the time. Only sin separates us from God. “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” Isaiah 59:2 Does God feel distant? Is there anything separating you from God?

Rob Brawn

Prayer Team Recommendations:

Choose one of the scriptures in today’s devotional for further study then read it slowly through, noting words or phrases that capture your attention.

Read a second time asking God to highlight what He wants to show you.

How is he calling you to respond?

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your response to this passage/ devotional.

Oh Lord! How we love your presence! In your presence is the fullness of joy. As we move forward this year may we be aware of your loving hand guiding us, your eye upon us and your shield around us. We trust in you alone! You are the God who is always near. A loving and forgiving God, ready to comfort and restore.