

## more information on fasting

What does fasting do? Fasting tells God and our own spirits that we really are desperate for God to meet some need or hope that we have. If you participate in this year's Leap of Faith, you're hoping for God to move in profound ways for yourself, your friends, and our church. Though fasting is, by definition, hard, it's actually meant to be a joyous opportunity. During this time, we're really serious about something with God; we're really expecting him to come through. God seems to honor prayers during this time of Lent.

**how to approach fasting.** Fasting usually involves abstinence from food in some way. In shorter fasts, that can be a total abstinence from food. These are usually called "water fasts," because water is the only thing going into us. For the most part, we don't recommend these at any length beyond a week's time, because after that, health problems can ensue.<sup>1</sup>

Other food-abstinence fasts involve imposing some sort of conditions on our eating over a period of time. This can involve anything from giving up some beloved food item for a time (desserts or sugar or caffeine or alcohol being popular favorites) to something more challenging, like the so-called "Daniel fast," which involves abstaining from everything but vegetables. People often pursue "juice fasts." It's just like a water fast, except you're allowed to drink juice, which will keep your blood sugar up and actually allow you to function at near-normal capacity.

**are there any non-food-related options?** You bet! Fasting from television is a popular choice for folks who aren't fasting from food. Or computer games, catalogs, social media, etc. These can really involve, under God's direction, doing without anything that feels costly to give up for a season. Try fasting from criticism! That sounds fantastic. The point of fasting is that, under God's direction, we're feeling desperate for something and we direct that desperation towards God.

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1. If you feel called to water fast for more than a week, please work with a doctor.

BRV does not recommend water fasts if you've ever suffered from an eating disorder. Those in our midst who've suffered from eating disorders historically have a difficult time separating this sort of fasting from the motivation that drove them to the disorder, and thereby risk serious health problems. There are other great fasts that will do you a lot of good. If you've been in this situation, can we ask you to pursue those?



# LEAP OF FAITH

*the Lord's prayer*

Lent is the season between Ash Wednesday to Easter and it's traditionally a time to prepare our hearts for the most significant celebration in the church calendar—Resurrection Sunday. Each year, we try a Leap of Faith during Lent (Leap of Faith will be from Feb. 29--April 12) and, together as a church family, we try to lean into our spiritual lives in a special way.

## THIS YEAR'S THEME: THE LORD'S PRAYER

Over the next 6 weeks our church will work together to learn how the Lord's Prayer works to align communities in relationship to God and in faithfulness to the things he's given us to do. We are learning to know God better personally and engage in the audacious invitation to pray offered by Jesus. We will seek God for the big things on our hearts, asking that he would be glorified in answering our prayers.

<sup>9</sup> *"This, then, is how you should pray:*

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,*

<sup>10</sup> *your kingdom come,  
your will be done,*

*on earth as it is in heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *Give us today our daily bread.*

<sup>12</sup> *And forgive us our debts,*

*as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

<sup>13</sup> *And lead us not into temptation,*

*but deliver us from the evil one." Matthew 6:9-13*



## HOW WILL THIS WORK?

There are five components to this year's Leap of Faith. Try all five EVERYDAY:

### 1. Pray the Lord's Prayer.

### 2. Pray for your five.

Every day, pray for 5 people who you know and who would benefit from knowing Jesus better. This might take 5 minutes in prayer every day. Pray big! Set high expectations and pray with all your heart as if God will answer your prayers for sure. At the same time, hold it loosely, and promise beforehand that you will not turn bitter and give up on praying if God's answer is "no." In that tension, we continue to pray with faith and perseverance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Pray for yourself.

Pick an exciting opportunity or challenging area of your life that only God can address for you. Every day, ask God to answer your prayer in an amazing way. Jesus wants us to come to him with the things we want and need; he also knows that if we don't, we will go elsewhere. The Bible encourages us to go to God for what we need: "You do not have, because you do not ask." (James 4:2) God is honored whenever we ask him for the things closest to our hearts. So, what do you want Jesus to do for you that you cannot do for yourself, during these next 40 Days? Write it down.

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Then, tell someone else what you wrote down and ask them to pray for you about those things, too. The ideal place to share is a small group where you can receive encouragement and perspective while you engage in Leap of Faith.

### 4. Review your day with the prayer of Examen.

Use the Leap of Faith Weekly Guide printed inside your bulletin, to meditate on the daily Scripture and end your day with the prayer of examen. The Examen is a series of simple questions that helps us to see the Spirit's work in the day we just completed and to expect the Spirit's work in the day ahead. We examine our souls before God and then turn our heart to gratefulness, joy, repentance, hope, and trust for tomorrow.

- Stillness. become aware of God's presence. Quiet your heart and pray, "Come, Holy Spirit." Listen. In this moment, become present to Jesus.
- Gratitude. Review your day, looking for God's gifts in each event or interaction. Appreciate and give thanks for each part of your day that you can.
- Reflection. Become aware of your emotions. Review your positive and negative feelings. Did you choose Jesus' way in each situation?
- Joy and sorrow. Choose one feature of the day and pray. Rejoice in a success or ask for forgiveness for sin. If necessary, plan to make amends.
- Hope. Look toward tomorrow. Move toward expectation. Ask God to shine light on tomorrow's path. Resolve to grow.

### 5. Fast.

Consider fasting in some way. During Lent, millions of Christians are fasting from something. Why not join in at some level? When people really wanted something from God in the Bible, they almost always fasted. The point of fasting is that, under God's direction, we're feeling desperate for something and we direct that desperation towards God. Note: fasting does NOT make you more holy and acceptable before God. That has been completely accomplished by Jesus on the cross. (see more on back) List what you're fasting from here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### THIS WORKS BEST IF WE DO IT TOGETHER

An effort like this works best if we do it together. Join a group (listed in brochures at church and at [www.blueroutevineyard.com](http://www.blueroutevineyard.com)). Tell someone what you're trying to do and encourage them in their efforts. And come to worship together each weekend. The whole service will be shaped to help you get the most out of this project.