

## Prayer & Fasting Guide Yom Kippur to Sukkot

Leviticus 23:27–29 (ESV)

*27 “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the Lord. 28 And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. 29 For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people.*

Here we see a command of the Lord to the people of Israel is 2-fold. They shall afflict themselves and they shall present a food/burnt offering to the Lord.

So here we have the foundation of the fasting habits of Yom Kippur. It was meant to be a full day. Evening to evening. So Sunset to sunset. This “affliction” can mean many things. But it also speaks to the personal aspect of fasting. Each came before the Lord with their own affliction. Now this was widely translated to no eating or drinking for 24 hours as we see in orthodox tradition today where they abstain from everything for 25 hours. Here we see the legalistic tradition of the 25<sup>th</sup> hour to be extra sure not to violate the command and the total abstinence to avoid the chance of not afflicting oneself enough or being viewed as not afflicted.

Then secondly there was the burnt offering. It was giving away the food one would be craving and desiring and giving it to God. Burning it make its irredeemable. We cannot go back and eat it. it also ends as a temptation. So we putting temptations to the fire.

But why is relevant for our fasting week? Well it lays down the foundation of what are we doing and why. We have a moment of fasting where we are choosing a personal affliction. Affliction is something uncomfortable. We are choosing to abstain from things to put ourselves in a uncomfortable position. But at the same time we are taking those temptations and habits which we usually crave and desire and live from on the altar to God and saying I make you more important than them all. You are above and worth more than all of them. They get put into the fire and purified. Refined. A good example is in our January fasting after Christmas we all have eaten too much and fasting resets our eating habits and refines them to bring indulgence back in line. Fasting here is meant to do that with all our habits, Netflix YouTube, eating, drinking, you name it.

This week of abstinence is not total. Its personal. God is sustaining us but we also go at the pace and limit we are at. If that’s just no meat or no sweets that’s equally fine as no food. The point is being at a place of discomfort. Embracing it. This habit and practise makes us more like Christ. But also putting all habits and distractions on the altar and letting God purify them.

# Day 1

## PRAYER POINT: POSTURE OF THE HEART

As we begin this 7 day journey of setting aside the things of this world that can become daily distractions, it is important that we posture our hearts to receive what God has for us over the next week. Our attitude can set the tone for what we are ready and willing to receive, whether we realize it or not. Today we are focusing on asking God to check our hearts and reveal anything that does not reflect Him.

This is a great moment to reflect on ourselves and get ourselves in order. Ensuring our hearts in the right place to fast. Being willing to set the right boundaries and habits in place to sustain us for the next 2 weeks. Ultimately knowing the goal of this time isn't not eating, its hearing from the Lord and clearing out anything that stands in the way of that.

Psalm 51 verse 10 speaks to this idea as the famous words spoken by David when he was caught by the prophet David in his adultery. *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."*

This is asking God to refresh our heart and view on things. To help us distance ourselves from sin and as Psalm 32:5 says: *"I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah"*

The Lord is faithful to work in us and on us when we bring these things to him openly. We deceive ourselves when we think we can hide our sin to God. This process helps us undo the find freedom with God.

Lets pray together: Heavenly Father, today I ask that you search my heart. Forgive me and rid me of everything that does not reflect You. Help me to set aside every distraction that does not point me back to You. My heart and my hands are open and ready to receive what you will speak to me over the next three weeks. I pray that as I keep my heart and mind focused on You, that my relationship with You would grow exponentially.

IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN

# Day 2

## PRAYER POINT: FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness can be one of the hardest things we will ever have to do, especially if we do not receive an apology for an offense or wrongdoing against us. However, we cannot walk in full wholeness if we are carrying around bitterness or unforgiveness within us, even if it is justifiable by the world's standards. When we carry unforgiveness within us, we are hurting ourselves more than we are ever hurting anyone else. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-15, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." This may seem like a rather bold statement, that our forgiveness is tied to how we forgive, but the truth of the matter is, we were forgiven before Jesus ever received an apology. Romans 5:8 tells us that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." In comparison, the way we forgive others is minimal compared to how we have been forgiven. Today, make the bold decision to release those who have offended and wronged you, whether or not they ever have or ever will apologize. Forgiveness does not deny consequences, but it means we give our right for justice to God. But this does mean you get to walk a little lighter today! When we forgive, the enemy loses!

God, I thank You that You forgave me for everything I have ever done or will ever do long before I ever even thought to apologize and repent. Today I choose to reflect Your love by releasing and forgiving [name person or people]. I set them free as an act of my will from any unresolved issues or bitterness, and I choose to show them an abundance of grace as I have been shown an abundance of grace by You. I choose to bless them and ask that Your hand would cover them everywhere they go. I ask for discernment when it comes to the future of our relationship with one another. I thank You that this weight of unforgiveness has been lifted off my life. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN

# Day 3

## PRAYER POINT: YOUR LOCAL CHURCH/CITY

Today our prayer focus is on your local church and city! The local church has the unique opportunity to impact your city in a powerful way. There's a beautiful saying "The local church is the hope for the nation". It is by the local church that the world is changed. Let's set aside some time today to pray for favor, guidance, protection, and blessing for your local church and the city in which God has placed it today. Let's believe together for an abundance of fruit from the seeds that are sown in cities throughout the world through local churches! The church is united through the people. We pray for each other. We need your prayers when it comes to the church!

Lord, I thank You for the your church and I want to pray for the church home that You have placed me in. I thank You for all of the lives that have been changed and all of the lives that will be changed through your church. I ask today that You would give all churches favor in this city. I declare this place holy ground, set apart for You and Your purposes. I pray that You would stir the hearts of the people in Antwerp and draw them into the doors of a church.

I pray that we would continue to be a catalyst for change in Antwerp and Flanders. I pray that as we seek You first as a church, Jesus, that an overflow of Your Spirit would spill out in our city. I ask that You give us new opportunities to be the hands and feet outside the four walls of our church. I ask for your favor with our city, and for Your guidance, protection, and blessings to cover our church. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN

# Day 4

## PRAYER POINT: OUR NATION/GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

If you have watched the news or scrolled through social media lately, it probably didn't take you very long to hear or see something about the divided our societies are in almost every part of the world. No matter which "side of the fence" on which you may fall on any given issue, we can all agree that division is never a comfortable state to be in, and it was never God's intent for His people. As believers, we have the power and authority to impact the world around us, regardless of who holds the power in government. It is important that we pray for our nation and our leaders, whether we agree with what is going on or not. Our prayers hold more power and ability to change something than we often give them credit for. Today, we are setting aside time to pray intentionally for our nation and our government officials (national, regional, and local). As We can read in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV: *"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."*

God, today I lift up my country before You. There is not a single thing that goes unseen by You. I ask right now that Your hand would be over my country, that you would bring peace and unify us together as brothers and sisters. Heal our land, God.

I pray for our nation's government officials, as well. I may not agree with every choice that is made, but Lord, You called me to pray for those in positions of high power, so I choose to faithfully cover them in prayer. I pray that You would soften all of their hearts to You, and that You would change every heart that is in leadership that is not for You. I pray that you would guide each of them to make big decisions that You are leading them to make. I ask that You would give them wisdom, and that they would be sensitive to Your voice, Lord. Cover them and protect them. I thank You that Your hand is in the details of our nation. In Jesus Name AMEN!

# Day 5

## PRAYER POINT: MIRACLES & BREAKTHROUGH

We serve a God who is in the business of working miracles in the most desolate of situations. Where our strength ends, His miracle working power begins. Maybe today you or someone you know is in need of a miracle, whether that is in the area of health, finances, marriages, kids, work, infertility, or any other area that seems to be out of our own control. No matter the need for the miracle, it is never a comfortable place to be in when we do not know the outcome. God is a god who moves things forward. There is a season for all things. But he has a plan for each season. And what wasn't possible in one can be in another. So I encourage you to seek the Lord and see what he has for you and if there is anything holding you back from the new season and things he has for you and being willing to letting our shopping list of requirements, but rather let him determine them. But bringing those things in which we need miracles for to the foot of the cross saying let your will be done.

You can rest in the peace of Jesus' words today, "For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). Let's have some mustard seed faith today, for ourselves or someone else, that this mountain in front of us will be moved.

God, I thank You that You delight in working miracles on our behalf. There is nothing that You can't do, Father. So today, I lay this need of [list the miracle needs] at Your feet. I need a miracle, Jesus, and I believe with my whole heart that You are enough to meet this need. I pray that You would do what only You can do in this situation. I plead the blood of Jesus over this situation, and speak life into it. I pray for peace in abundance over [myself or name person specifically]. I worship You in the waiting IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN

# Day 6

## PRAYER POINT: PURPOSE

We were all created with a divine purpose. God made each and every one of us for great things, but it can be easy to get discouraged, distracted, and even confused about what God is calling us to do. Each one of us is a priest of the King. We all have the capacity to represent God and to be part of his body. Knowing our role helps give us purpose and meaning to our lives and builds us and other up.

Ephesians 2:10 is a great reminder, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ultimately, the core of each of our purposes is to do one thing: to glorify Jesus in all that we do. Today, our prayer is that each of us would have greater clarity, vision, and Jesus-centered motives about our purpose. God is going to do great things in and through you!

God, I thank You that even before You formed me in my mother’s womb, You created me with a purpose. I pray today that You would give me greater vision and greater clarity about what my purpose is and where you are leading me. I pray that in everything I do in this life You have given me. Your name would be glorified above all, and that others would see you shining through me. Help me to align to your will and plans and I pray you will reveal your purpose and place for me in your kingdom. In Jesus Name Amen!

# Day 7

## PRAYER POINT: CONTINUED SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As we enter into our last day of prayer and fasting, our focus is on the days ahead of us. Our spiritual growth and deeper intimacy with God does not have to end here! He is calling us to a deeper level of relationship with Him beyond our time of fasting. Don't let your momentum for pursuing the Lord in a deeper way stop because the 21 days of fasting has come to an end. Keep growing from glory to glory!

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

(2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 ESV)

Heavenly Father, I thank You today for tearing the veil in two, and giving me full access to a close, personal relationship with You; one that You have desired to have with me from the beginning. I praise You for refreshing me over these past 21 days. I pray today that I would only continue to fall more in love with You, Jesus. I ask that You would give me clear ears to hear and clear eyes to see all that You are doing even beyond this time of fasting. I pray that You would silence the voice of the enemy from bringing up any distractions that would pull me away from You. I thank You for Your unfailing love and Your constant faithfulness.

I pray that I would continue to grow closer to you and to learn to hear and know you better. Please help me to not fall back into the unhealthy habits of the past.

IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN