

Whenever a fast is recorded in Scripture, it is followed by a season of growth and blessing. And as you will discover over the next few weeks, your commitment to fast will usher in some of the greatest opportunities to take hold of the blessings of God. That is what we are most excited about. And we look forward with anticipation to all of the great things God is going to do in the life of our church and in your life as well.

So as we join together as a church family, let's take the next 21 days to prepare ourselves for what God has prepared for all of us in 2012!

Fast Focus

Fasting is a spiritual discipline designed to better connect us with God. It's all about aligning ourselves with God and what He really wants to do. As a church, we are fasting together in order to deepen our relationship with God as well as get in step with His plan and purpose for us during this coming year.

Over a 21-day period beginning January 9th, we will substitute our regular food intake with those disciplines that help us better connect with God – reading the Bible, praying and journaling. The overall goal is to experience a genuine hunger for spending time with God.

Remember, the idea is to be realistic, not legalistic. Focus more on the details of connecting with God than the details of the menu, and you will discover the blessings of fasting.

Fast Framework

January 1-9, 2012 - It is very important to prepare your body ahead of time before beginning the fast. Take this week to transition into your fast; otherwise, you could get sick. For example, start eliminating meat, white grains and refined sugars from your diet. Also cut back quite a bit on dairy products and wean yourself from caffeine.

Monday, January 9 – Begin the “Daniel Fast” and continue the fast through Sunday, January 29th.

Monday, January 30 – Break the Fast. The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that.

Fast Foods

The Daniel Fast is a partial fast, which means that we will eliminate some common things from our daily diet, but will have generous options available. We will focus on eating fruits and vegetables that are pure and simple. We have included a list of foods to eat and foods to avoid.

If you have any condition that would prohibit you from being a part of the Daniel Fast, there are other options. Choose something from your daily routine (i.e. specific foods or beverages, television, other technology, etc.) and fast in that manner for the next 21 days. Remember, the details are not as important as the spirit in which you participate.

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

Fast Forward

Over the 21-day fasting period you will undoubtedly discover some amazing benefits of fasting. As God blesses your life, we encourage you to write down your prayers and experiences. Praise God for the renewed relationship you have with Him and for the works He is doing in your life. And prepare to experience the power of a refreshed perspective for the things He has in store for your life in 2012!

Prayer

As you prepare for the 21-day fast, it can be tempting to start thinking of a laundry list of prayers you'd love to see answered. But we really want to encourage you to keep this simple. Think about the top two or three things most pressing on your heart and focus on those with God. Write them down and be open to hearing what God wants to show you in those areas. The breakthroughs, miracles, and answers to your prayers will be by-products of drawing closer to Jesus.

When praying, make your primary goal to know Jesus more and experience Him. Pray prayers of total surrender, and aim to glorify God with your life. Focus first on what's right about Him, such as his goodness and His greatness, and see everything else through that filter. And, most simply, make time to pray daily. Don't overcomplicate this! Just talk to God. Have that place and time where you can seek Him every day. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. If you find it a challenge to disconnect from the busyness of your day, engaging in worship music is a great way to prepare your heart for prayer.

Foods to Eat

All Whole Grains

Including (but not limited to) Whole Wheat, Brown Rice, Millet, Quinoa, Oats, Barley, Grits, Whole Wheat Pasta, Whole Wheat Tortillas, Rice Cakes, Popcorn

Legumes

Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black-Eyed Peas

Fruits

Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon

Vegetables

Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Ginger Root, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Liquids

Water, Unsweetened Soy Milk, Herbal Tea, Honey, Natural Fruit Juice (no added sugar)

Foods to Avoid

Meat*
Poultry*
Fish*
White Rice
Fried Foods
Carbonated Beverages
Foods Containing Preservatives
(or Additives)
Refined Sugar or Sugar
Substitutes
White Flour
Margarine
Shortening
High Fat Products
All Leavened Breads
Dairy (Milk, Butter, Cheese,
Yogurt, etc.)

*If you have young children or students, consider adding turkey, chicken and fish to the approved list of foods.

Visit newhorizonchurch.tv/fast for recipes and daily encouragement.