



LOVE

40 DAYS
of PRAYER 2016

First Presbyterian Church
Greenville, SC

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HOW TO USE THIS 40-DAY PRAYER JOURNAL

We are excited to see what God has in store for you over these next 40 days. This Prayer Journal* includes a place for you to name specific prayer requests for yourself, your family, or others, and a place for you to list specific prayer requests for a prayer partner. Our Prayer Journal is loosely modeled after the Pittsburgh Experiment (pittsburghexperiment.org) to enable “people to open their lives to God so He can make Himself known. It also serves as a tool of discipline and focus in seeking God’s guidance and direction.”

Below you will find an explanation of the steps to follow, the significance of 40 days, and how to pray, along with several different types of fasting to follow over the next 40 days.

Steps to Follow

(Steps 1-5 contain, in part, material from the Pittsburgh Experiment)

1. Decide What to Pray For

As far as what you or your prayer partner should put down, consider the following:

- Right now, what is your relationship like with God, yourself, and others?
- Are there unresolved portions of your past, or do you seek answers for the future?
- What is the need in your life that concerns you the most right now? Be specific.
- Focus on just one need at a time.

2. Pray Every Day

- Commit yourself to praying consistently about your prayer requests every day for 40 days.
- Setting a regular time each day is not necessary, but it can be helpful. Pray wherever you are and as often as you can.
- Lift the situations up to God, and ask Him to meet you at the point of your need.
- Read the selected scriptures as a source of encouragement and guidance.

** The original Prayer Journal had specific prayer requests of First Presbyterian Church; this has been modified for you to use along with a prayer partner.*

3. Listen

- Take time to be quiet in God's presence. Silence is the language of the Holy Spirit (*John Main, "The Meaning of Silence," p.156, Spiritual Classics, Edited by Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, 2000*)
- There might be things God, through the Holy Spirit, wants to say to you.
- There might be things in the church or in you that need to change before our or your situation is changed.
- Any ideas, questions, convictions, or concerns that come to your mind during prayer could be part of the answer.
- Write them down each day in the spaces provided.

4. Have an Open Mind

- Let go of preconceived ideas about possible solutions. For example, if you aren't getting along with your boss, pray for that relationship rather than a transfer.
- Believe that God is at work, even if you cannot see a difference.

5. Review the Results

- At the end of the 40 days, see where you are.
- Look at where you started—the situation, your attitude, emotions, everything that went into making it a need or prayer request. Look at where you are now.
- What was the progress from Day 1 to Day 40?
- What has changed? Situation, attitude, relationships—have you changed?

Answers may come in a variety of ways: Common sense, intellectual conclusions, circumstances, emotions, a decision of the will, other people, Scripture, sermons, direct inspiration. Answers may be "yes," "no," or "wait."

6. Share What God is Doing in Your life

To share how you are being affected through this time of prayer, email us at prayer@firstpresgreenville.org, drop off a card in the prayer boxes located in the back of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, or turn the card in to Congregational Care. Prayer requests and stories of encouragement and praise are welcome.

Significance of 40 Days

(From New Psalmist Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland, "40-Day Stretch Prayer Journal", 2010)

A goal of the 40-Day Prayer Journal is for one day to lead to 40 days, and for 40 days to lead to a lifestyle of prayer. Here is the Biblical significance of 40 days:

- **Judgment:** 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God was removing evil (Genesis 7:4).
- **Preparation:** 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God was getting people ready for action (Matthew 4:2).
- **Restoration:** 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God wanted to win people to Himself (Jonah 3:4).

How to Pray

(Bill Hybels, Too Busy Not to Pray, 2008)

Bill Hybels reminds us that we are God's adopted children, Jesus' brothers and sisters. We are God's family and we matter to Him. God is interested in your prayers because He is interested in you. He's your Father and He wants to hear what you have to say (pp. 28-29).

Jesus taught us how we should pray in Matthew 6:9-13, "The Lord's Prayer." Hybels states, "No other passage in Scripture reveals in such straightforward fashion how to pray:

- **Pray regularly.** Jesus said, "When you pray...", not "If you pray..."
- **Pray privately.** God is not impressed by public displays of piety.
- **Pray sincerely.** God is not interested in formulas. He wants to hear what is on our hearts.
- **Pray specifically.** Take the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer as a model (pp. 50-51)."

We also suggest that you get in the habit of kneeling while you pray (Psalm 95:6).

Lastly, Hybels reminds us that "busyness" is the archenemy of spiritual authenticity. Therefore, make an effort to slow down, reflect, and listen to God over these 40 days (p.125).

Fasting

We are providing three different types of fasting for you to participate in over these next 40 days:

(1) a traditional food fast; (2) an Isaiah 58 "fast" by getting involved serving the poor, oppressed and hungry; and/or (3) a "fast" from any personality trait or habit that God is convicting you to change.

1. Food Fast

Following are guidelines for fasting from food for short periods of time, written by Pastor George Moore:

Presbyterians generally understand a call to prayer, but few Presbyterians have been urged to fast as an act of worship and humility. Why then are we now being urged to fast? Fasting is a spiritual discipline taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His disciples to fast, and He said our Heavenly Father rewards fasting. Matthew 6:16-18 states, "When you fast...", not "If you fast..."

- **Fasting gives you more time to pray.** Use the time normally spent eating as time to honor God as we are present with Him in humble prayer. (See Romans 12:1-2.) At such times God often reveals His will. (See Acts 13:2-4 and Ezra 8:23.)
- **Fasting and prayer become partners in demonstrating the depth of our desire when praying.** Fasting helps to put down our fleshly desires, including self-gratification and pride, while at the same time increases our spiritual strength and awareness. It shows we are serious enough about prayers to pay a personal price. (See Joel 1:14.)
- **Fasting releases God's supernatural power.** It is a discipline often used for empowerment from God. (See Acts 14:21-23.)
- **Fasting is a way God prepares us for major events in our lives,** such as an overwhelming victory or some astounding new enlightenment or an awe-inspiring answer to prayer. Through fasting, we humbly receive God's awesome blessings. Meditate on these scriptures: 2 Chronicles 20:2-3; Daniel 9; Nehemiah 1:4; Luke 4:2; Acts 13:2-3.

- **Fasting does not manipulate God to get His blessings of answered prayers.** God answers our prayers out of His grace. Fasting is a way He prepares us for His answers.

If you have any health issues, an eating disorder or are pregnant or nursing, you should not participate in a food fast.

Before deciding to go forward with a food fast, we strongly recommend a detailed review of scriptural fasting as contained in an article we have placed in the literature racks around the church. This article can also be accessed online by going to the following link: cru.org/train-and-grow/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting.html.

2. An Isaiah 58 “Fast”

Isaiah 58:6-11

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

We encourage you to participate in an Isaiah 58 “fast” during these 40 days and beyond by getting involved in ongoing First Pres ministries for the poor, oppressed, and hungry such as:

- **Hollis Academy Elementary School:** A local public school with approximately 650 students, kindergarten through 5th grade, 99 percent of whom live at or below poverty level; FPC ministers in multiple ways to the students, families, and faculty.
Contact: Beth Simmons 787-3159, simmonsfam@charter.net
- **Neighborhood Focus:** Neighborhood Focus is a free, faith-based out-of-school time program that provides year-round academic support, spiritual enrichment, character education, and life skills development for at-risk children and students in Greenville. Building hope one life at a time, our goal is to provide a solid foundation for future success.
Contact: Keith Groce, 704-7848, kgroce@neighborhoodfocus.org

To view all of the ministries First Pres supports, please go to our church website: FirstPresGreenville.org.

3. Fasting From a Personality Trait or Habit

(Catherine Marshall, “A Fasting on Criticalness”, Spiritual Classics, Edited by Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, 2000)

You may want to pray over a particular personality trait or habit of yours, one from which you would like to “fast.” Catherine Marshall teaches us about a way of fasting that is not from food, but from a critical spirit. One of the things we learn from fasting is how it reveals what controls us. Here, Catherine Marshall saw what was controlling her, and this released her to begin moving in a new direction, a direction free of a critical spirit.

Excerpts from Catherine Marshall's selection on fasting from criticalness follow. Is God convicting you of any personality trait or habit to "fast" from? If so, you can use Catherine Marshall's methodology as a template.

The Lord continues to deal with me about my critical spirit, convicting me that I have been wrong to judge any person or situation:

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matthew 7:1-2 NIV).

One morning last week, He gave me an assignment: for one day I was to go on a "fast" from criticism. I was not to criticize anybody about anything.

...For the first half of the day, I simply felt a void, almost as if I had been wiped out as a person... I listened to others and kept silent. Barbed comments on the tip of my tongue... were suppressed... Now it was apparent what the Lord wanted me to see. My critical nature had not corrected a single one of the multitudinous things I found fault with. What it had done was to stifle my own creativity—in prayer, in relationships, perhaps even in writing—ideas that He wanted to give me...

What He is showing me so far can be summed up as follows:

1. A critical spirit focuses us on ourselves and makes us unhappy. We lose perspective and humor.
2. A critical spirit blocks the positive creative thoughts God longs to give us.
3. A critical spirit can prevent good relationships between individuals and often produces retaliatory criticism.
4. Criticalness blocks the work of the Spirit of God: love, good will, mercy.
5. Whenever we see something genuinely wrong in another person's behavior, rather than criticize him or her directly, or—far worse—gripe about him behind his back, we should ask the Spirit of God to do the correction needed.

Convicted of the true destructiveness of a critical mindset, on my knees I am repeating this prayer: "Lord I repent of this sin of judgment. I am deeply sorry for having committed so gross an offense against You and against myself so continually. I claim Your promise of forgiveness and seek a new beginning." (pp. 57-61)

Upon completion of your fast from whatever personality trait or habit you select, summarize what God is showing you and what steps you can take to change.

God's Love, Peace, Hope, and Blessings,

First Presbyterian Church Session Prayer Committee, 2016

Please use the lines below on the left to write in what God is speaking to you about your prayer request and on the right what God is speaking to you about your prayer partner's request.

My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 1

Deuteronomy 6:5-6: Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

Day 2

Deuteronomy 10:12: And now... what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...

Day 3

Deuteronomy 11:13-14, 16: So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil... Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

Day 4

1 Chronicles 16:34: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 5

Psalm 59:16: ...I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.

Day 6

Psalm 91:14: "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."

Day 7

Proverbs 3:3: Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

Day 8

Deuteronomy 10:18: He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you,
giving them food and clothing.

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 9

Hosea 12:6: But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.

Day 10

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Day 11

Matthew 22:36-40: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Day 12

John 13:34-35: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 13

Matthew 5:43-44: You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy."
But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

Day 14

Luke 6:27-31: But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.
If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you,
and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Day 15

Luke: 32-33: If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.
And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

Day 16

John 14:15: If you love me, keep my commands.

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 17

John 21:17: Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?"

Day 18

John 14:21: Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

Day 19

1 John 2:10: Anyone who loves his brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.

Day 20

1 John 3:17: If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in that person?

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 21

1 John 3:18: Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Day 22

1 Corinthians 13:1: If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love,
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

Day 23

1 Corinthians 13:2: If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

Day 24

1 Corinthians 13:3: If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,
but do not have love, I gain nothing.

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 25

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love is patient...

Day 26

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love is kind.

Day 27

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love... does not envy...

Day 28

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love... does not boast...

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 29

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love... is not proud.

Day 30

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... does not dishonor others...

Day 31

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... is not self-seeking...

Day 32

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... is not easily angered...

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 33

1 Corinthians 13:5: Love... keeps no record of wrongs.

Day 34

1 Corinthians 13:6: Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

Day 35

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always protects...

Day 36

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always trusts...

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My Prayer Request:

My Prayer Partner's Request:

Day 37

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always hopes...

Day 38

1 Corinthians 13:7: Love... always perseveres.

Day 39

1 Corinthians 13:13: And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Day 40

Colossians 3:12, 14: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Please use the lines below on the left to write in what God revealed to you about your prayer requests and on the right what God revealed to you about your prayer partner's requests.

Please share how you were affected through this time of prayer. Email us at prayer@firstpresgreenville.org, drop off a card in the prayer boxes located in the back of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, or turn in the card to Congregational Care. Prayer requests and stories of encouragement and praise are welcome.

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For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

My Prayer Partner's Requests:

[illegible]



*First Presbyterian is
a House of Prayer for
our members, visitors, and
the downtown community.*

OPPORTUNITIES TO RECEIVE PRAYER

Prayer Room

Intercessors on the Prayer Room Team spend one to two hours a week praying for our congregation, our staff, and our missionaries. All requests are kept confidential.

Prayer Cards

Prayer cards are mailed to the congregation throughout the year to let them know that they are being prayed for and to give them an opportunity to write down any requests and mail them back to the church to be prayed for by the Prayer Room Team.

Elder Prayer

First Presbyterian's Elders and Deacons are available to pray with anyone following Sunday morning services and in Harper Prayer Chapel.

Tuesday Night Prayer

This service, held every Tuesday evening at 7:00pm in Harper Chapel, includes praise and worship, ministry by the Prayer Team, and expanded opportunities for prayer.

Prayer Requests

Prayer requests may be made using the cards found in the pews or by calling the following prayer lines.

- Call 672.1838 to leave a message for the Prayer Team.
- Call 672.1848 to schedule a Prayer Appointment.
- Call Tammy Burkhalter at 672.0327 to place a name on the Prayer List.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN THE PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer Card Team

Contact Dody Cunningham (325.2934, dixon4@charter.net)

Prayer Room Team

Contact Marion Austell (270.5779, mimi.austell@gmail.com)

Tuesday Evening Prayer Service Team

Contact Wendy Gaillard (982.6716, emgail@aol.com)

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Church