

Church-Wide Day of Prayer and Fasting

Elliot Grudem | Senior Minister

Christ the King Presbyterian Church | www.ctkraleigh.org

October 22, 2009

This is a long document. Don't be intimidated or put off by it. There might seem to be a lot of information, but much of it is a basic guide to help you in your times of prayer.

In this document, you will find the following:

A Few Thoughts about God	Page 2
Prayer Guides	Pages 3-9
First Prayer: Confidence in God	Pages 3-4
Second Prayer: A Cry of Lament	Pages 5-6
Third Prayer: A Prayer for Peace	Pages 7-9
Prayer and Fasting: Why and How	Pages 10-11

The prayer guides will help you write out prayers based on Psalm 125. You can hear the sermon from this Sunday on Psalm 125 at <http://www.ctkraleigh.org/sermon/god-is-the-ruler-yet/>. If you follow the guides, you will find yourself spending more time thinking about your prayer and writing out your prayer than you do actually praying it. That's not a bad thing. You are approaching Almighty God, the King of Universe, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. Thoughtful prayer is often appropriate.

The prayer guides are just that, guides. They are meant to help you as you think about what to pray. If you use them, spend time thinking about Psalm 125. Write down your thoughts as directed. Once your prayer is written out, get on your knees (a posture of humility) and read your prayer to God. Allow all that God has made you to be to be part of the prayer. (For example, think about the prayer and allow your emotions to enter into your prayer.)

When you get to the prayer for peace, don't be afraid ask God for big things. Use that as a time to "eavesdrop on eternity." Let his promised future build faith as you pray to him.

Prior to your time of prayer, read through the Scriptures on the next page. Let what God has said about himself and the way we are to relate to him encourage your prayers.

The prayer guides are based on guides created by Richard Pratt in *Pray with Your Eyes Open*. The fasting and prayer information at the end of this document are reprinted from posts on The City.

As you fast and pray, enjoy the grace that is yours in Jesus Christ, your Savior and Lord.

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT GOD

Luke 12:32

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Psalms 50:15

and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me.

Psalms 33:20

Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.

Lamentations 3:25

The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.

Isaiah 64:4

From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need.

EXPRESSING OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Psalm 125:1-2

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds his people,
from this time forth and forevermore.

Almighty God, you deserve all of our praise and adoration. For those who trust in you are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

As I think about Mount Zion,

I see,

(as you think about Mount Zion, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about Mount Zion, write down a couple of things you hear)

Almighty God, you deserve all of our praise and adoration. For you surround your people like the mountains surround Jerusalem.

As I think about the mountains surrounding Jerusalem,

I see,

(as you think about the mountains surrounding Jerusalem, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the mountains surrounding Jerusalem, write down a couple of things you hear)

When I think about these things,

I feel,

(as you think about those two images, write down a couple of things you feel)

And when I remember that this is “from this time forth and forevermore,”

I feel,

_____ (as you think about this, write down a couple of things you feel)

As I think on this wonderful promise, I think of ways you have shown them to be true...

In my life,

_____ (write down one way God has shown his promise in Ps. 125.1-2 to be true in your life)

Through others,

_____ (write down one way God has shown his promise in Ps. 125.1-2 to be true through others)

Through CTK,

_____ (write down one way God has shown his promise in Ps. 125.1-2 to be true through CTK)

In the World,

_____ (write down one way God has shown his promise in Ps. 125.1-2 to be true in the world)

I worship you Almighty God, for your promises are true. Those who trust in you *are* like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, *so* you surround your people, from this time forth and forevermore. Amen.

A CRY OF LAMENT

Psalm 125:3

For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
on the land allotted to the righteous,
lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.

O Lord of Mercy, you are enthroned on high in glory. You deserve all of my worship and adoration. All your promises are true. Because I trust in you, I am like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so you surround me, from this time forth and forevermore.

But when I think about the scepter of wickedness resting on the land allotted to the righteous,

I feel

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong, write down a couple of things you feel)

As I think about the ways the scepter of wickedness resting on the land allotted to the righteous is seen in my life,

I see,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in your life, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in your life, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in your life, write down a couple of things you feel)

O Lord, have mercy! How long will you allow me to struggle like this?

As I think about the ways the scepter of wickedness resting on the land allotted to the righteous is seen in the way others treat me,

I see,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in the ways others treat you, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in the ways others treat you, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in the ways others treat you, write down a couple of things you feel)

O Lord, have mercy! How long will you allow me to suffer like this?

As I think about the ways the scepter of wickedness resting on the land allotted to the righteous is seen at CTK,

I see,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong at CTK, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong at CTK, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong at CTK, write down a couple of things you feel)

O Lord, have mercy! How long will you allow your church suffer like this?

As I think about the way the scepter of wickedness resting on the land allotted to the righteous is seen in the world,

I see,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in the world, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in the world, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong in the world, write down a couple of things you feel)

O Lord, have mercy! How long will you allow your creation to suffer like this?

As I think about these things, I confess that I am tempted to do wrong.

I am tempted to

(as you think about the ways the wrong seems oft so strong, write down some of the ways you are tempted to sin)

O Lord, have mercy! How long will you allow your people to suffer like this?

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

Psalm 125:4-5

Do good, O Lord, to those who are good,
 and to those who are upright in their hearts!
 But those who turn aside to their crooked ways
 the Lord will lead away with evildoers!
 Peace be upon Israel!

King Jesus, I look to you with amazement because of your wonderful promise of justice and peace.

As I think about you making *everything* right in my life,

I see,

(as you think about the God making everything right in your life, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the God making everything right in your life, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the God making everything right in your life, write down a couple of things you feel)

How good you are to me!

As I think about you making *everything* right in the lives of others,

I see,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the lives of others, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the lives of others, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the lives of others, write down a couple of things you feel)

How good you are to your people!

As I think about you making *everything* right in your Church,

I see,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the Church, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the Church, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the Church, write down a couple of things you feel)

How good you are to your Church!

As I think about you making *everything* right in your world,

I see,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the world, write down a couple of things you see)

and I hear,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the world, write down a couple of things you hear)

and I feel,

(as you think about the God making everything right in the world, write down a couple of things you feel)

How good you are to your world!

I praise you King Jesus, image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation. All things were created by you, through you, and for you. You are before all things, and in you all things hold together. You are head of your body, the church. You are the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, you are preeminent in *everything*. I praise you, for in you the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through you to reconcile to yourself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace through the blood of your cross (Col. 2.15-20).

O King Jesus, how great you are!

King Jesus, I look to you for understanding because,

Your peace is not always evident in my life. _____

(write down a couple of ways God's peace is not evident in your life)

Your peace is not always evident in others. _____

(write down a couple of ways God's peace is not evident in others)

Your peace is not always evident at CTK. _____
(write down a couple of ways God's peace is not evident in the Church)

Your peace is not always evident in the world. _____
(write down a couple of ways God's peace is not evident in the world)

O King Jesus, when I think about these things,

I feel _____
(write down how you feel when you think of how things are not right)

King Jesus, I need your peace. Others need your peace. CTK needs your peace. The world needs you peace.

Let your eternal peace reign, King Jesus. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus come! Speed the day of your return.

FASTING AND PRAYER: WHY AND HOW

One Reason to Pray

“If we are to be delivered from attempting only what is predictably achievable, we must return to a proper regard for prayer.”

The first time I read that statement written by Richard Lovelace (in *Renewal as a Way of Life*), I skimmed over it. That was a number of years ago.

I read it again a couple of days ago. And it made me sit straight up and wonder if CTK is dangerously close to “attempting only what is predictable achievable.”

“If we are to be delivered from attempting only what is predictably achievable, we must return to a proper regard for prayer.”

Jesus gave the Apostles one thing to do: Advance the kingdom of God, through the church, to the entire world. That is not anything predictably achievable. It is not something that you would really expect the Apostles to accomplish.

The first step the Apostles took in fulfilling Jesus’ great commission was to gather together and pray. God answered their prayers and sent the Holy Spirit to equip them for a very successful ministry. Nevertheless, as Lovelace points out, they faced numerous difficulties in ministry. They faced many reasons to give up. They met each challenge with a renewed time of corporate prayer. New ministry ventures followed those seasons of prayer.

At the end of Acts, Luke makes an interesting observation. Though Paul is in prison, he still is “proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:31).

That last verse is of great encouragement to us at CTK today. For the Apostle’s mission—advance the kingdom of God, through the church, to the world—is our mission as well. The encouragement is, as Paul wrote, “The word of God is not bound” (2 Timothy 2:9). Jesus is still king. The Church is still thriving. God’s kingdom is advancing.

Even so, we face numerous challenges. We come across many reasons to give up. We are tempted to give into complacency. It often seems easier to be passive. So, “if we are to be delivered from attempting only what is predictably achievable, we must return to a proper regard for prayer.”

At CTK, we aren’t interested in only attempting what is predictably achievable. But if we are to succeed at something predictably unachievable, we need to pray for the Lord’s help.

So, the Elders have asked you to join them in a day of prayer and fasting on Thursday, October 22, 2009.

Why We Fast

Much of what follows is from an email from Scott Thomas, director of the Acts 29 Network (www.a29.org).

Fasting, joined with fervent prayer and reading of Scriptures, is a spiritual discipline of humbling ourselves in abstinence before God to turn away some tragedy, or for obtaining of some special blessing. Fasting is traditionally the act of willingly abstaining from some or all food, drink, or both, for a limited time.

We fast because Jesus told us to do so (Matt. 6:16, Mark 2:20). We fast because we continue to see the pattern of fasting practiced in the Church (Acts 13, for example). We fast because it is one of the means God uses to break the power of sin in our lives, prepare us well for prayer, and humble us before him (for unlike God, we need food to live).

How You Can Fast

Your fasting can be practiced in one of five different ways, depending on your preferences and physical ability:

- Fast for 24-hours, from midnight Thursday to midnight Friday morning and only drink water the entire day.
- Fast for 24-hours, starting post-dinner Wednesday evening, and only drink water the entire day.
- Follow one of the above and fast from food only (drink liquids).
- Fast for one or two meals on Thursday.
- If you are unable to fast from food due to health issues, fast from television, your computer and all email, or something else.