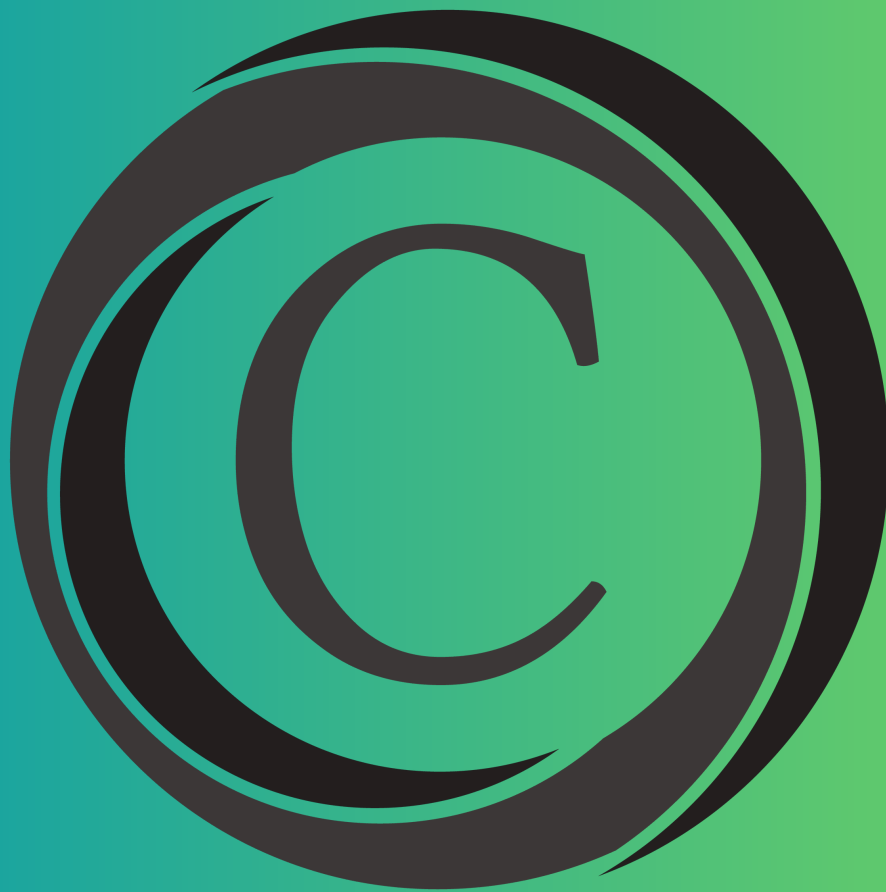


The Year of Consecration: Fall Fasting Guide



Dr. Demetrius McClendon

The Year of Consecration: Removing Anything that Could Hinder or Contaminate Your Growth in God

As we start transitioning from one season's business into the next and navigate through life's ongoing complexities, I believe it is necessary for One Church, in partnership with family and friends, to synchronize our clocks and hearts, even if it feels uncomfortable to encounter God together in a season of prayer and fasting.

Prayer is the partnering discipline that is necessary because it is the foundation, the freedom, and it releases the power to accomplish the other disciplines. When we pray, we are communicating with the God of the universe; we are having a long conversation with the Creator of our lives. Prayer allows us to foster a deeper relationship with God, providing the opportunity to center our hearts, minds, and spirits on God only. When we discipline ourselves in prayer and begin to practice other disciplines in partnership, our lives will be transformed through greater spiritual growth, and our influence will be trusted by those we serve, especially by the One we represent. In essence, our prayer life is the central discipline that ignites our passion to hear God more clearly, know Him more deeply, and worship Him more sincerely.

Jesus, as our divine Example, prayed; therefore, we should also pray in our quest to reflect Him. Throughout His three-year ministry journey, Jesus took time away to refresh and renew. I believe He demonstrates this behavior so that we can learn from Him, rather than Him needing to pray, because He is God. Recorded in the Gospels, Jesus leaves His disciples and/or the crowds to pray to His Father. Passages such as:

- Matthew 14:13
- Mark 1:35
- Mark 6:45-46
- Mark 14:32-34
- Luke 4:42
- Luke 5:16
- Luke 6:12
- Luke 9:18
- John 6:15

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The Apostle Paul continues the teachings regarding prayer, and specifically to the Church in Thessalonica. He states in I Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Edwin Keith stated, "Prayer is exhaling the spirit of man and inhaling the spirit of God." Jesus' statement recorded in Matthew 6:6 is spot-on in its caption on how we should be living out prayer. It says, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Our spiritual lives resemble a combination lock. Typically, unlocking a lock involves a sequence of numbers. Charles Swindoll says, "Prayer often involves other disciplines such as meditation, worship, silence, solitude, and surrender." However, prayer is present in all of these disciplines. Some people believe that every blessing is theirs just because they are faithful in paying their tithes. Others think that attending church every night and participating in every ministry earns them an honorable mention. I believe it is a sequence of things we must balance for our faith to grow and be released. Regardless of the sequence, our prayer life is the one element that must be presently active. The most significant deficiency in our lives and churches is a lack of power, and the power necessary for ministry can only come through prayer. Therefore, we must prioritize prayer in our personal lives and our church community. The old saying goes, "No prayer, no power; little prayer, little power; much prayer, much power."

This personal devotion to prayer must exist so that there will be a heightened corporate commitment to prayer. The success of the body is for all of the body to be in harmony with itself. When we, as the Church, can come together without pretense under the umbrella of the power in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there are no limits as to what we will accomplish.

***"A concentrated mind and a sitting body make for better prayer.
than a kneeling body and a mind half asleep."***

-C.S. Lewis

Due to your passion for prayer, now position that with the outward discipline of moving even the necessary things away, such as food, with the specific intention of spending the time you would have spent eating physical food now in conversation with God. As I mentioned in the sermon from Mark 2:18-22, titled "Are You Willing to Let It Go? (Sermon #8, July 22nd; go back and listen)," remember the passage mentioned, "Some People?" These were those who questioned Jesus, allowing the religious snobs to listen and attempt to catch Him in the act. If we are not careful, we will become snobbish in our spiritual practices, doing things out of tradition rather than for the sake of honoring God and His word.

Remember, Biblical Fasting Is:

- Not a Christian dieting plan
- Not a ritual to show you are spiritual
- Not intended to "punish your flesh"
- Not required
- Encouraged and will be rewarded

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be evident to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen Father; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

-Matthew 6:16-18

Isaiah 58 is a beautiful passage from the Old Testament that instructs us on the kind of fasting God appreciates. Verses 3-9 state:

"Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?" Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? "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."

Isaiah promotes proper fasting, which involves both abstaining from food and actively engaging in acts of kindness and justice. You may not be able to see the difference, but everyone around you should be able to share the testimony that your life is different.

As we embark on this journey, I look forward to this time of consecration, during which we will take the opportunity to encounter our Father together.

Balanced Living,
Dr. Demetrius D. McClendon Sr.

Fall Season of Renewal
21 Days of Prayer and Fasting
(August 21st-September 7th)

We are committing to 21 days of personal and corporate prayer and fasting. In our time, we renew our dedication to God, our spiritual lives, marriage and family, ministry, the Church, and community.

Renewal, as a biblical discipline, is a transformative process that Christians undertake to revive their spiritual lives. It involves a conscious effort to deepen their relationship with God, shedding old habits and adopting a renewed mindset in harmony with His will. Throughout the Bible, God encourages His people to participate in the process of renewal, assuring them of His spiritual transformative power and grace.

Spiritual renewal is the ongoing process of growth and transformation. In this season of Renewal, raise your level of discipline. Do this through the Holy Spirit's guidance, partnered prayer and fasting, and other private and public disciplines. As this is happening, you will draw closer to God and look like our Holy Example while experiencing life in its abundance.

Prayer Times:

Weekdays:

- 6a (Church Sanctuary)
- Noon (anywhere)
- 6:30 p.m. (anywhere)

Saturdays:

- 9a (Church Sanctuary)

Prayer and Reading Guide for Pursuing Renewal

Here are some items to pray for to encourage spiritual renewal, each accompanied by a corresponding Bible verse from the English Standard Version (ESV):

1. Pray for a Renewed Heart: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10)
2. Pray for Repentance and Forgiveness: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
3. Pray for Wisdom and Discernment: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5).
4. Pray for a Hunger for God's Word: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6).
5. Pray for a Spirit of Worship: "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." - John 4:24
6. Pray for Self-Denial and Surrender: "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'" - Luke 9:23
7. Pray for the Filling of the Holy Spirit: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).
8. Pray for Spiritual Fruitfulness: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23)
9. Pray for a Heart of Gratitude: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
10. Pray for Spiritual Strength and Endurance: "But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31)

Prayer Items:

- Campus expansion
- Capital campaign
- Bonner Construction and Associates
- Spiritual health of our church
- Dr. Mac and Lady Alexis (their health and marriage)
- Deeper Biblical understanding for our church
- Deeper hearts of celebration for God's goodness toward us
- Healthy family relationships and godly marriages
- A church membership that actively serves one another
- A church membership that actively serves our communities
- One Church's influence in Midlothian and Ellis County.
- Our church's entrepreneurs.
- Our Staff Pastors/Directors/Leaders
 - Dr. McClendon: Senior Pastor
 - Danny Young: Church Administration Pastor (CAP)
 - Larry Pool: Senior Ministry & Justice League
 - Brian Nelson: OC Onederful Kids & IMPACT Youth Ministry
 - David Roberson: Alive (Discipleship & Spiritual Formation)
 - Alexis McClendon: Ministry Director
 - Dr. Erica Sanders: Young Adult Leader
 - Marie O'Neal: Assimilation/First Impressions
 - Michaela McClendon: Announcements/Media
 - Mackenzie McClendon: Praise Team/Choir
 - Cara Rosmon: Pastor's Executive Assistant
 - Randall Weatherspoon – Security
- Ministry Teams
- Our Elders' Team and Their Wives
 - Dr. Mac & Lady Alexis
 - Pastor Danny Young & Raulisa Young
 - Pastor Larry Pool & Cherry Pool
 - Ricky Thompson & Shalonda Thompson
- Our Deacons & Their Wives
 - Kelsey Green & Karina Green
 - Ricky Thompson & Shalonda Thompson
 - Eddie DeCoste & Janet DeCoste
 - Stanley Wilson & Jocelyn Wilson
 - Larry Daniel & Vickie Daniel
 - Dannie Tisdale & Charlene Tisdale
 - Bernard Walls & Barbara Walls