

Pastor's Corner: 2-29-2020 – A Call to Fasting

At our last Dakota Conference pastor's meetings we spent some time talking about fasting and how it is one of the tools that God gives us to connect with him. All through the Bible we see men and women of faith fasting during times of crisis, need, and sorrow. During our meetings we talked about several pressing challenges that the Conference is facing and, as a group, we thought it would be a good idea to ask our Dakota members to take a week for fasting and prayer. March 1-7 is the week that was selected and I want to invite you to join me in fasting and praying this week.

What exactly is fasting and how can you do it? Biblically, fasting consists of denying oneself of food (and in some cases water) for a specified period and devoting that time to God and prayer. Esther fasted from food and drink for 3 days before approaching the king. Daniel fasted from choice foods while praying about the future of his people. Jesus fasted from food for 40 days as he prepared for his ministry. These examples show us that fasting isn't "one size fits all." You'll have to pick a fasting approach that works for you.

If you choose to fast from food there are couple of things to keep in mind. First, it IS possible to go extended periods of time without eating. It can be a bit of a challenge, but it's not going to kill you. Second, if you are on medication for blood pressure or for blood sugar control, you might want to check with your doctor if you plan to go without eating for more than say, 24 hours.

If you don't think you can fast from food there are other options. You could fast from social media for the week, or from television. You could skip one meal each day that you would normally eat and devote that time to prayer. Any kind of self-denial that frees up time for you to pray could become part of your fast. One really practical solution might be to join us at the church each evening at 6pm for a thirty-minute prayer session. Skip dinner the nights you come out and make it an intentional fast.

What should we be praying about? As I mentioned, there are several needs that our Conference would like us to lift up to God. One is the financial status of farmers throughout the Conference. We've had a couple lousy years because of bad weather, and it has taken a toll on our farmers. A secondary effect is that tithe is down, and the Conference is having to do some financial belt-tightening (and there aren't very many belt holes left). Pray for good weather, bountiful harvests, and financial blessings so our Conference can continue to fund ministry.

Another area for concentrated prayer is for Dakota Adventist Academy. We've got a great school out there, but let's face it, people have smaller families today and parents are less likely than they once were to send their kids to a boarding school. As a result, we have this huge facility and fewer students than we would like. Adventist Christian education is a real blessing and we need to pray that it remains available for those who want it. So please pray for DAA and for the families considering sending their kids there for school.

We can also be praying for the upcoming prophecy seminar that we'll be holding here at our own Bismarck church. From April 17-May 16 Pastor Donovan Kack will be presenting a series on Bible prophecy and God's plan for our life. This is an evangelistic effort designed to help people understand the basic truths of the Bible and make a decision for Jesus. Pray that our church would be full of guests for these meetings and that God's kingdom would grow.

Of course, there are many things that we could add to the prayer list and it's really up to you. Fasting is an opportunity for us to reset. By denying ourselves and changing our patterns we can become more aware of what is truly important. We can make time for God. And we can create an opportunity for God to do the kinds of things that only God can do.

Join me in this time of fasting and prayer March 1-7. We will be having a nightly prayer session at the church each evening at 6pm. Our evening prayer sessions are scheduled for thirty minutes, though you can stay longer if you so choose.

Happy Sabbath
Pastor Tyler