

THE MESSENGER

Weekly Publication of First Baptist Church, Clanton, Alabama (205) 755-3840
"Leading others to know Jesus Christ"

Rev. Matthew DeBord, Pastor

March 14, 2019

Treasuring His Word From the Pastor's Heart:

"So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty" (Ezra 8:23).

As we have entered into our 40 Days of Prayer, let me encourage you to include fasting in your prayer focus. Fasting is the act of refraining from food, so as to direct more focused attention on the need for the closeness of God.

Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12b). When we want to draw close to God for some specific reason (seeking an answer; a need to be met; sorrow over our sin; direction in making a decision; a desire to grow in our faith; help with a problem; etc.), we "fast" to show our sincerity and to hold ourselves accountable to see our need for God in Christ more than we need even physical necessities. The following are some scriptural references on fasting: 1 Samuel 7:6; Ezra 8:23, 10:6; Esther 4:13-17; Joel 2:12-13; Acts 13:2-3.

You already know this, but prayer and fasting is not a way to "manipulate" God to get Him to do what you want Him to do (James 4:3; Zechariah 7:4-6). Often, for us individually, this should be done privately to insure our motives stay pure (Matthew 6:16-18). There is no set way or time to fast. Just do as the Lord leads you. Some fast for 24 hours, some for 3 days, and some for longer periods time. Some fast from food, but still drink water. Some may even refrain from water for the shorter fasting times. I always caution people with certain health conditions to take those into consideration.

I love drawing near to God in prayer through His Word. He has changed my life and the direction of it over and over through these times. I would insist that fasting would be a further "push" to focus on God and His Word during a time where we have purposefully removed the distraction of food so that we may be diligent about listening to Him through His Word, pouring out our hearts before Him, and waiting for His Spirit to move in our lives. Again, certainly, fasting would have little value if it is done with selfish motives, as a religious ritual, or just to make one feel like a "spiritual" person. But done in sincerity to draw near to God, He will certainly draw near to you (James 4:7-8).

If you have health conditions that prevent you from fasting, you can "fast" in regard to something other than food. You may choose to refrain from the television, the phone, the internet, or anything else that would insure your focus on the Lord remains consistent. You may choose to fast from one of these types of things rather than food anyway, it being a better "redirecting of the heart" in your personal case. Let me encourage you to try fasting from something for 24 hours at least 2 different times during our 40 Days of Prayer.

The first 14 days of assignments for our 40 Days are available on the FBC website (click on "Bulletin Board"), our Facebook page, and hard copies are available at the church. We have reserved two specific days that our sanctuary will be open for Prayer, March 16 and April 13. The sanctuary will be open from 8AM until 4PM each of those days. You may or may not choose to do your fasting on those days, but come and spend at least an hour in prayer. Thanks for praying that the Name of Jesus will be exalted in our lives and in our church.



GIDEON BIBLES Praise the Lord for the great testimony from Bro. Kurt Wallace Sunday evening on behalf of the Gideons. The church gave over \$900 to purchase Bibles. If you would like to give, you can designate that on your check, or use the special envelopes to give in recognition or in honor of someone.

DEACONS OF THE WEEK: 3-17-19
RONNIE PORTER, GERALD CARTER

CHURCH SECURITY:
JUDSON AKIN'S TEAM

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2019

8:15 A.M. - ORCHESTRA PRACTICE
9:15 A.M. - SUNDAY SCHOOL
10:30 A.M. - MORNING WORSHIP
6:00 P.M. - PRAISEMAKERZ CHOIR
6:00 P.M. - NOISEMAKERZ CHOIR
6:00 P.M. - EVENING SERVICE
7:00 P.M. - YOUTH SNAC

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2019

4:30 P.M. - HANDBELLS (CAMPBELL BLDG)
5:00 P.M. - FAMILY SUPPER
5:30 P.M. - AWANA
5:45 P.M. - PRAYER MEETING
6:30 P.M. - CHOIR PRACTICE
6:30 P.M. - E3 STUDENT MINISTRIES

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019

6:30 P.M. - STITCH 'N PRAY
9:00 A.M. - LADIES' BIBLE STUDY
(FOR 6WKS IN RM 303)

Peace by Piece meet every 1st and 3rd Friday @ 9:00 a.m. in the Campbell Bldg.

Fellowship
Dinner

March 13th Lasagna, BBQ Bread, Corn on the Cob, Salad, Tea and Dessert

March 20th Chicken Fingers, Macaroni & Cheese, Limas, Salad, Tea and Dessert