



21 DAYS  
PRAYER & FASTING





# PARTICIPATION GUIDE

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As we begin 2023, our church family will take 21 days to seek God afresh through prayer and fasting.

## **Why prayer and fasting?**

Jesus modeled a life of prayer and fasting for His disciples to follow. When we fast we lay aside something we normally consume, like food or media, to rely more fully on God. Our church has experienced God do amazing things in and through us each year we've committed to 21 days of prayer and fasting.

## **Why 21 days?**

We have found 3 weeks to be a good amount of time for people to turn down the noise in their inner and outer lives so God can do a deeper work in them. It also allows for us to pray and fast together in Lifegroups and on Sundays in a meaningful way.

## **What about 2023?**

We believe God's leading us into a time of fresh Surrender To Jesus in 2023. During the 21 days of prayer and fasting we will be surrendering aspects of our lives where we don't just ask for God's help, but ask Him to come and take over. Practically, the 21 days will begin on Monday, January 16th, and go through Sunday, February 5th.

We pray this participation guide will be a blessing to you and our church family as we joyfully surrender our lives afresh to Jesus and His purposes in 2023!

Love,

*Joe Paolino, on behalf of the church overseer team and staff*





## DROP YOUR OARS

A metaphor for surrendering afresh our whole lives to the Lord has to do with rowing a boat with OARS. When a boat is powered and steered with oars it represents what people can do on their own strength and wisdom. When we “drop our oars” we are surrendering control to the Lord, the Captain of the ship.

Isaiah 33:20-22 gives us a picture of this.

Here we see the Lord, the majestic One, promising to be with and for His people. As God’s people trust in Him, the Lord will lead them as if they were on a river or wide canal “on which no boat with oars will go”.

### ISAIAH 33:20-22

*Look at Zion, the city of our appointed feasts;  
Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an undisturbed settlement,  
A tent which will not be folded;  
Its stakes will never be pulled up,  
Nor any of its ropes be torn apart.*

***21 But there the majestic One, the Lord, will be for us  
A place of rivers and wide canals  
On which no boat with oars will go,  
And on which no mighty ship will pass—  
22 For the Lord is our judge,  
The Lord is our lawgiver,  
The Lord is our king;  
He will save us—***

We believe the Lord is inviting us to complete surrender; to fully rely on Him. He will lead us to places as individuals and as a church we cannot go on our own strength or wisdom.



# DROP YOUR OARS

**What could it look like for us?** Examples could be dropping the oars of our own efforts to control a specific situation or relationship. It could be dropping the oars of striving to bring about desired life plans or relational statuses. It could be dropping the oar of pride and selfish ambition. The beautiful thing is the Holy Spirit will speak different things to each person as they need it.

We are not dropping our call as disciples to love God, love others, pursue holiness, or work unto the Lord. Instead we are dropping our oars of self-reliance to fully rely on God as our power source and navigator– the Captain of the ship.

Practically, we will be asking the Lord daily to show us what are the oars in our lives He's asking us to let go of and entrust to Him.

“Jesus, help me to surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today.”





## HOW ARE WE FASTING?

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We are fasting in these three ways: media, food, and time.

**Week 1: Media** // We are encouraging everyone to fast from the non-essential media (TV, social media, etc.) during week 1 of prayer and fasting.

**Week 2: Food** // We are encouraging everyone to fast from food in some way during week 2.

**Week 3: Time** // This will be a fast of your time as you devote an hour (or more) to prayer. We are encouraging everyone to sign up for a prayer slot during week 3 of the fast as our goal is to pray 24-7! You can sign-up at [antiochdallas.org/events](http://antiochdallas.org/events).

**NOTE:** *We realize that shutting off all media or fasting from food may not be possible for everyone depending on the needs of health, work, school, family, etc. That being said, we want to challenge everyone to jump in as much as possible. In week 1, don't ignore that email from your boss or teacher, but turn your phone off from that evening scroll and put aside your favorite show or sports team. In week 2, take a step of faith to fast a meal, a day, multiple days, or the whole week as you feel led by the Lord.*

## HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

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To help guide our prayers in this season we've organized a few practical action steps and tools for you and your family. We encourage everyone to:

### **ENGAGE PERSONALLY.**

- Daily pray "Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you."
- Sign-up for a prayer slot during week 3 of the fast.

### **ENGAGE COMMUNALLY.**

- Each week in Lifegroups pray for one another to trust the Lord and surrender your "oars" to Him.
- Pray with our church family on Sundays and during the 24-7 prayer time during week 3.

### **ENGAGE WITH YOUR FAMILY.**

**Week 1: Media** // **Invite the kids in.** Tell them we are fasting from watching shows and screen time this week as a church to focus on God and trust Him more.



## HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

*(continued)*

- Lead them to participate at the level they can engage (full week, most of the week, etc.).
- Ask them to pray for you! Mom or Dad are praying for God to help us trust Him more in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Pray for them! Ask, how can I be praying for you?

**Week 2: Food** // While we don't recommend that your growing children participate in a fast from food, below are a couple of ideas to engage as a family:

- Invite them in. Tell them why you are fasting from food.
- Ask them to pray for you! Mom or Dad are praying for God to help us trust Him more in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Pray for them! Ask, how can I be praying for you?
- Make homeless care bags to distribute or donate at Austin Street Center.

**Week 3: Time** // Pick a prayer slot as a family, or with your LG, to do together.

## "DROP YOUR OARS" EXERCISE

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

On this page, you will find a few reflection questions to help you identify "oars" God is calling you to surrender to Him. "Oars" represent places where we are relying on our power and wisdom to guide the boat, and not trusting God fully.

### STEP 1: Ask God

What are the "oars" God's calling you to drop to trust in him? Some examples could include:

- Worry over a particular person or relationship
- Anxiety about finances and the future
- Trying to control things God is in control of
- Pressure to have all the answers
- Fear of sickness and death

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## “DROP YOUR OARS” EXERCISE

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**STEP 2: Pick One** Holy Spirit, what are the main “oars” you’re calling me to drop?

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### **STEP 3: Share with someone in Lifegroup**

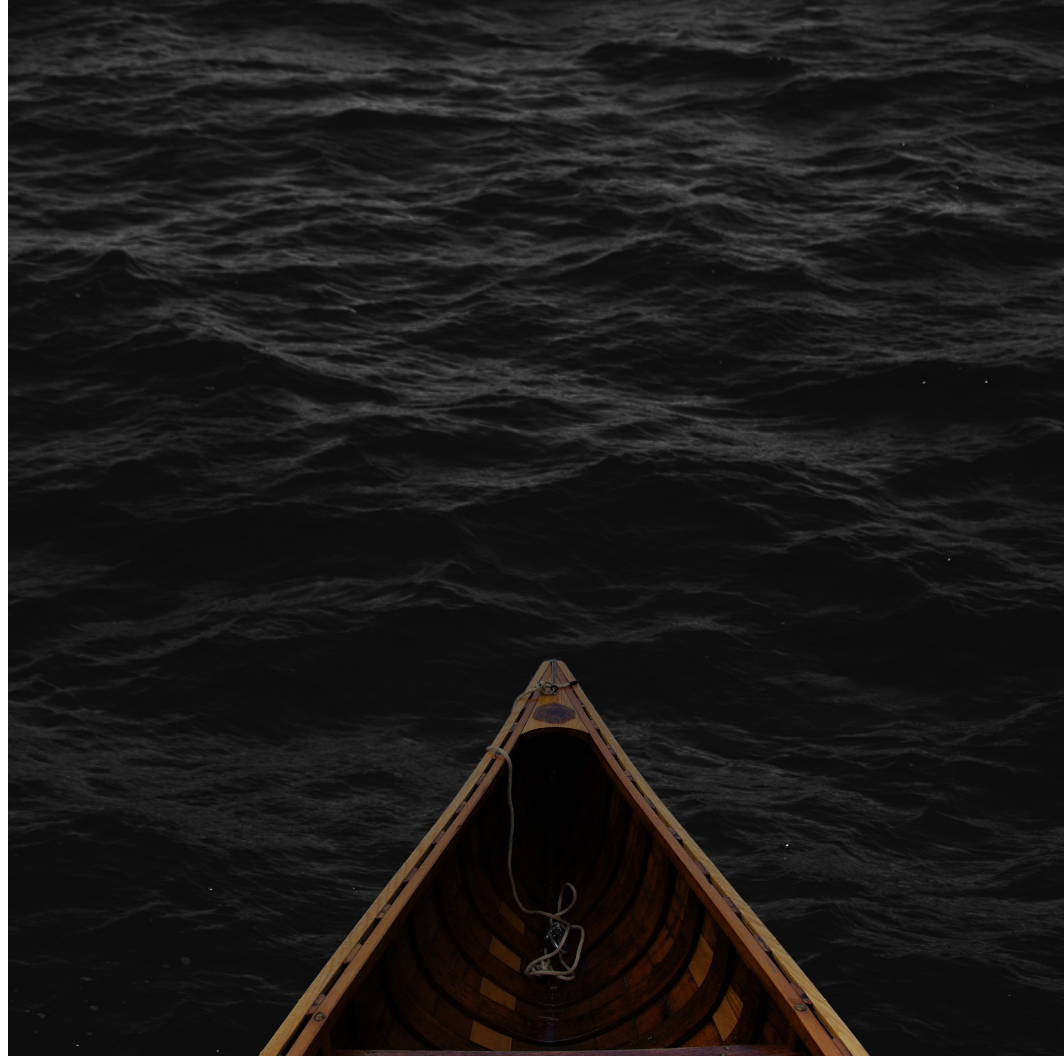
**Share:** Who could I ask to be praying alongside me during the next 21 days?

**Partner:** Who are friends in your Lifegroup you can be praying for?

*Note: If something is very personal, we understand and respect that. At the same time, it’s in places of vulnerability and humility where we see God’s grace poured out.*

### **STEP 4: Plan**

What time of the day will I pray? Where will I pray? Is there a Scripture to go along with this prayer? Write out a plan and a prayer asking God for help in these 21 days of prayer and fasting.





## PRAYING AS A CHURCH FAMILY

There are many ways to pray and engage with Scripture, but in this season we are going to be using the P.R.A.Y. acronym. This is a helpful structure to use both in your personal prayer time and in your 24-7 prayer slot.

**P = Pause.** As you start your time of prayer, begin by pausing and being still before the Lord.

**R = Read.** Read the passage of the day slowly and be sensitive to the words or phrases that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to you.

**A = Ask.** Ask God to come and speak to you. Open up your heart to Him as your heavenly Father.

**Y = Yield.** We want to yield our lives to the words we have prayed and commit to follow Jesus's way.

Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.





## DAY ONE

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Matthew 6:9-10 This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

**Ask:** Father in heaven, thank you for being a good Father. Show me more of who you are. Let your kingdom come and will be done in my life. What are you calling me to surrender to you today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY TWO

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Philippians 3:7–8 Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

**Ask:** Lord, help me to see the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus today. What are you calling me to surrender to you today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY THREE

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Matthew 13:44 The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

**Ask:** Lord, help me to see the treasure hidden in the field. Is there anything I'm valuing more than you and your kingdom?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY FOUR

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Psalm 139: 23-24 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

**Ask:** Search me God and know my heart. Test my anxious thoughts. Lead me in the way everlasting. Is there anything you're calling me to surrender to you today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY FIVE

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** John 10:10-11 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**Ask:** Thank you for laying your life down for me. Thank you for coming to give me abundant life. What are you saying to me today, Good Shepherd?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY SIX

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

**Ask:** I fix my eyes on you, Jesus! Is there anything I need to surrender so I may run unhindered with you today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY SEVEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Mark 6:48-51 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them...Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed.

**Ask:** Show me today where you are walking on the water towards me in the storms of my life. Help me to take courage, drop my oars, and trust you completely.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY EIGHT

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Exodus 20:1-3 And God spoke all these words: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”

**Ask:** You are my Deliverer. Is there any person or thing I’m putting my trust in more than you?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY NINE

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

**Ask:** Lord, come in. I invite you into my life— every room, every closet, every corner. Come in and dine with me and me with you.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.

## DAY TEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Isaiah 33:21-22 But there the majestic One, the Lord, will be for us. A place of rivers and wide canals on which no boat with oars will go, and on which no mighty ship will pass— For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us.

**Ask:** Thank you for being the majestic One, the Lord, who is for us. I surrender my oars to you today.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.





## DAY ELEVEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Psalm 37:3-5 Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.

**Ask:** Lord, make your desires my desires too as I delight in You. How can I commit my way to you today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY TWELVE

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Ask:** Holy Spirit, what are you highlighting to me in this Scripture?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY THIRTEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Luke 9:23-25 Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

**Ask:** Holy Spirit, what are you highlighting to me from this passage?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY FOURTEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Revelation 1:17-18 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

**Ask:** Holy Spirit, where do I need these words of Jesus to bring comfort and strength to my heart?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.

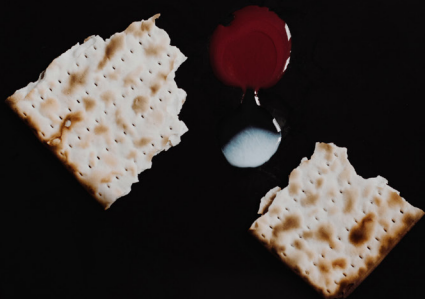
## DAY FIFTEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Isaiah 55:1-2 Come, all who are thirsty, come to the waters; you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine & milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and labor on what doesn't satisfy? Listen, listen to me, eat what is good...you will delight in the richest of fare.

**Ask:** I come to you today to listen to you and delight in you. Work in my heart today to show me what things I value which will not satisfy me.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY SIXTEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

**Ask:** My best efforts, apart from Christ, are like filthy rags. Thank you for taking my sin Jesus and giving me your righteousness in exchange. I receive your righteousness today and drop my oars of religious performance.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.







## DAY SEVENTEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** John 6:67-69 “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

**Ask:** In the hardships and pain, you are still good. Who else can I go to? You alone have the words of eternal life. Draw near to me today as I draw near to you.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY EIGHTEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** James 4:7-8 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

**Ask:** I submit myself to you today and draw near to you. Holy Spirit, what are you highlighting to me from this passage today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY NINETEEN

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** 1 Peter 5:5-7 God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**Ask:** I humble myself and cast all my anxieties on you today. Thank you for caring for me.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY TWENTY

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Isaiah 26:3-4 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.

**Ask:** Lord, thank you for this promise to keep me in perfect peace as I trust in you. Keep my mind steadfast today.

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.



## DAY TWENTY-ONE

**Pause.** Slow down and be still before the Lord.

**Read.** Matthew 4:18-20 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

**Ask:** You transform me as I follow you so I can be a fisher of men. Is there anything you’re calling me to surrender to be on mission with you today?

**Yield:** Jesus, I surrender \_\_\_\_\_ to you today and trust in you.

## 24-7 PRAYER GUIDE

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**Why 24-7 Prayer in week 3?** By linking arms to pray together around the clock for the last week of the fast, we are believing God to unify us, speak to us, and bring breakthrough as we collectively surrender all to Jesus.

**What do we pray for?** Here is a shared prayer for our church to pray. Use this as a start and pray as the Spirit leads.

*Jesus, we joyfully surrender all to you.*

*You are the Majestic One, our King, our Shepherd, our Savior;*

*We drop our “oars” to trust in you as the Captain of the ship.*

*Make us one as a church family, as you and the Father are one, so that the world will know who you are (Jo. 17.21).*

*Let your Kingdom come and will be done in our homes, our church, and our city—as it is in heaven.*

**New to prayer?** Go to [encounterjesus.life/resources](http://encounterjesus.life/resources) for a “How To Have A Quiet Time” guide

**Where do I sign up?** Go to [antiochdallas.org/events](http://antiochdallas.org/events) to sign-up for a prayer slot!



