

HOLY SPIRIT

FUTURE



Allegheny Center Alliance Church

Prayer and Fasting for Expanded Influence

January 2018 Guide

DEVOTION

POWER

DISCIPLINE

A Call for Congregational Prayer and Fasting in January

2018 will be a **pivotal year** in ACAC's continuing journey. We'll literally be **sowing the seeds of God's desired future**. It will require courageous, forward-looking decisions, Spirit-birtherd unity, confident faith, and sacrificial commitments. Our responses will have impact beyond our own congregation. And they'll continue for generations to come. It's all part of God's vision for **Expanded Influence**. Now that the delays and uncertainties encountered in 2017 are behind us:

We'll be **presenting the plans for campus redesign in February**. Ample opportunity will be given for questions and feedback. Then we'll be **voting** on the approval of the plans **in March**.

We'll also be **launching regular weekend services in our Homestead church plant** and considering additional ways to **advance our Communications**.

All these steps will require Spirit-led discernment and God-given wisdom. And not just for our leadership! This will be a congregational adventure. Each of us will need to ask the Lord to help us discern His desires and follow Him boldly. Each of us will need to ask Him to inform our financial commitments - and enable us to fulfill them.

Toward these ends I'm asking each of you to join me this month in **fasting and praying for discernment and faith**. This guide provides prayer points and helpful tips on how to fast effectively. If you're new to the discipline of fasting, start small and don't be discouraged by the difficulties or challenges you'll encounter. They're normal! Stay the course and watch God work!

Pastor Rock



Prayer Points

Pray we will:

- Grow in our love for God and lost people
- Proclaim the Gospel without cultural compromise
- See many come to faith in Jesus during 2018
- Preserve the unity of the Spirit in an age of escalating division
- Value diversity as a path to knowing God better and pleasing Him
- Grow numerically so we can continue current ministries and launch new ones
- Keep our trust in God - not politics
- Discern the Spirit's leading in all things, and especially the campus redesign
- Open our hearts to increased vision, bolder faith, and joyful generosity
- Enjoy clarity and unity in decision making
- Be protected from every weapon formed against us, especially regarding our campus redesign and the parking garage
- Discover more effective ways to share what we've learned about diverse urban ministry
- Successfully launch the Homestead/Fellowship 412 church plant and faithfully support Pastor Sheldon and Faye as they lead that effort
- See a vibrant, self-supporting congregation in Homestead
- Find a permanent home for the Homestead church plant
- Grow our neighborhood outreaches, partnerships and witness
- Continue to offer help, hope and healing in Jesus' name

Some helpful suggestions for a positive fasting experience!

Know why you're fasting.

Fasting helps subject our bodies to our spirits. That, in turn, increases our sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 9:27)
Fasting disciplines the body, mind, and spirit. (Proverbs 25:28)
Fasting subordinates our flesh-desires to our spirit-desires. (Gal. 5:17)
Fasting helps us set godly priorities. (Matthew 6:33)

Plan your fast.

Before you begin, decide when you will fast, how long you will fast, what physical or social activities you will restrict, and how you can effectively use meal times for prayer and reading God's Word.

Prepare yourself spiritually.

Confess all known sin and accept God's forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)
Seek forgiveness from anyone you've offended, and forgive anyone who has hurt you. (Mark 11:25)
Begin your fast with an expectant heart. (Hebrews 11:6)
Don't underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan will intensify the natural battle between body and spirit. It happens to everyone! (Gal. 5:16,17)

Prepare yourself physically.

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment.
Don't rush into your fast. Prepare your body by eating smaller portions.
Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting.
Stay well hydrated! When your body lacks water, you will feel hunger.

End your fast gradually.

This only applies for those who fast for an entire day or longer. Those who fast for one meal can eat normally at the next meal, although the first sentence below is still applicable.

Don't eat a big meal immediately after your fast.

Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will have negative consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Expect Results!

God honors fasting! You'll experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). He'll give you new spiritual insights, increased confidence and strengthened faith. You'll feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. And your prayers will be answered.

Remember, it takes time to build your spiritual fasting *muscles*. If you fail to make it through your first fast, don't be discouraged. Undertake another fast until you succeed. God will honor your faithfulness.