

SOWING FOR THE HARVEST—PRAYER AND FASTING

Prayer is the connection between believers and the one true God. We have few higher callings than to bend the ear of our Lord in prayer. Fasting accompanies prayer in the Scriptures at crucial or decisive points when God's people seek His face in earnest, asking for specific guidance. "Fasting expresses the cry of the heart that nothing on earth can satisfy our souls besides God."¹

We are seeking God's guidance in this Stewardship Campaign. We all recognize that the stresses brought on by misunderstandings, miscommunications, and misconstrued comments (we are, after all, still fallen, though redeemed) have the potential for adverse effects on congregations who undertake large efforts such as this. With sober sincerity, seek God's grace and clear direction, so that we continue to be "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel"² throughout the entire Campaign.

You may ask about the different kinds of fasting. Not all acts of fasting involve skipping meals, which may be difficult when your job calls for meeting people over lunch, or proscribed because of your doctor's concern about your health. "God promises strength not only from restful evenings alone, but from fasting from things like television in order to take a meal to the family overwhelmed with medical crises."³

The point is to give up something you enjoy so you may spend the time saved alone with God in prayer, or serve Him in some capacity that answers the call in Isaiah 58:

"Is not this the fast that I choose ... Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? ... Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.'"

What should we pray for? Begin by asking the Lord for patience, forbearance, understanding, and a discerning of His will (see Romans 12:2). This is a God-exalting, Kingdom-advancing kind of prayer that doesn't seek to change God's mind but rather deepens our own walk. Then ask God to reveal other specific things for you to pray for. We are providing prayer cards so that you can share these "Sowing for the Harvest" prayer requests with others at church.

David Brainerd wrote in his diary: "I set apart this day for fasting and prayer to God for his grace, especially to prepare me for the work of the ministry, *to give me divine aid and direction in my preparations for that great work*, and in his own time to 'send me to his harvest.'"⁴

¹ [A Hunger for God](#), John Piper, Crossway, p.181.

² Philippians 1:27, English Standard Version.

³ [A Hunger for God](#), p.149.

⁴ [Ibid](#), p.118 – 119.