

# FASTING FAMILY GUIDE



**a family of consecration  
in a world of compromise**



**Passion Creek**  
CHURCH

# WHAT IS FASTING?

In the Bible, God's people worship in many ways. They worship by singing songs, praying together, and reading His Word. But sometimes, God's people choose to give up eating and instead use their time to direct their focus on God.

**Fasting is a helpful way to show God that we need him, and it can be a profound way to make us more aware of how God is moving and what He wants to do in our lives.**

Jesus Himself fasted before He started teaching and healing others. In Matthew 6:16-18, He even teaches us how to fast: when we choose to give up food, we don't make a big deal about it. Instead, we focus on God and learn to rely on Him.

There are many reasons for fasting, but this month we're just going to focus on four: to help us focus on Jesus, to develop our friendship with Jesus, to show that we need Jesus, and to help us pray for our friends.

## HOW TO USE THIS FAMILY GUIDE

**We all know that kids learn by watching and by participating. At Passion Creek, we want to be a community of disciples who reorient their lives to be formed by Jesus, and this starts in the home with our children.**

As we begin the practice of fasting as a church, we invite you to set aside one day per week to complete this guide with your children. Each week you'll find an introduction, Scripture reading, discussion, practice, and a prayer. All of this is designed to take about 15-20 minutes total to complete.

You can do this on one day each week, or split each week up into different parts (one day on Scripture, another day on discussion, another day on the practice, etc.).

**Here's one rhythm we suggest to make the most of this guide:**

1. Set aside 15-20 minutes where everyone in your family can participate.
2. Read the overview out loud together as a family.
3. Read the passages of Scripture together, individually, or split up the passages and have multiple people read.
4. Discuss the questions following the Scripture as a family.
5. Commit to trying out the practice for the week, and talk about which part of the practice you want to try together.
6. End your time in prayer.

# HOW TO PRACTICE WITH YOUR KIDS

While we do not recommend that children skip meals or drastically alter their eating habits, we still encourage you to find creative ways to help your children engage in this practice alongside you and the rest of our church family. Here are some suggestions we believe will help teach kids the benefits of fasting:

## **For All Ages:**

**Digital Fast:** In order for kids to understand the benefits of fasting, they should practice giving up something alongside their parents. This is a great time to implement a screen fast. You can implement this once a day or throughout the entirety of the practice. It can include any screens like tablets, the TV, computers, phones, or all screens. Regardless of what you choose, the point is to help children momentarily redirect their attention away from their screens and instead toward God.

## **For Older Kids (10 and up):**

**Different Food Choices:** If kids want to participate in the food aspect of the fast with their parents without giving up entire meals, they can eliminate certain food groups like candy, sodas, cereal, bread, or snacks instead. If this is the best option for your child, make sure they understand why they are abstaining from these foods. Again, do not make any drastic food/health changes without consulting with your child's healthcare provider.

## **Memorizing Scripture:**

We are going to memorize John 15: 5-8 as a church and we want to encourage you to memorize it as a family. Consider choosing one verse to work on every week and try to work on it for 5-10 minutes each day. If those verses are too long for younger children to memorize, consider focusing only on John 15:7.

*I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.*

*John 15:5-8*

# WEEK 1: KEEPING YOUR FOCUS ON JESUS

All of us have a hard time staying focused. There are a lot of things competing for our attention every day. Whether it's our friends, favorite TV shows, our video games, school, or our families, our focus is often pulled in many different directions. And some of these things are good things that we should pay attention to. But it's also too easy to give our attention to bad things that God tells us to avoid.

**Whether it's something sinful, or just something distracting like TV or media, what we give our attention to shapes who we become.**

As followers of Jesus, we want to learn how to focus more on Jesus so we can become like Him. One reason we fast is to help us learn how to focus our minds, hearts, and bodies on Jesus.

By learning to say "no" to food, we learn how to say "no" to other things like sin, distractions, or anything else God wants us to turn away from.

READ: HEBREWS 12:1-2 &  
COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

**DISCUSS:**

1. What do you think it means to “fix your eyes on Jesus”?
2. What are some things that we can do every day to focus on Jesus?
3. What are some things that often take your attention away from God, or from what God might be asking you to do?

**PRACTICE:**

- Fast at least one time this week. If you’re giving up screens or a type of food, just practice saying “no” to something this week as a way to practice focusing on Jesus rather than on yourself.
- Memorize John 15:5-8. This week, focus on memorizing John 15:5.

**PRAY:**

Spend some time praying together as a family. You could have one person pray or encourage all members of your family to take turns praying. If you or your family are uncomfortable praying on your own, feel free to use this prayer:

*God, thank you for creating us, and for loving us enough to save us from our sins. Please help us focus on You more, and teach us the things we shouldn't give our attention to. Help us to look, think, and act more like You. Help us learn to say “no” to the right things so we can say “yes” to You.  
In Jesus' name, amen.*

## **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED PRACTICES:**

- Invite your child to write or draw what they have learned.
- Make a list of things that often take our focus away from Jesus. Explain that these things might not always be bad, but if we spend more time focusing on these things instead of on Jesus, it can be unhealthy.
- Talk about ways you can refocus on Jesus. For example, instead of listening to your favorite music every night, encourage your child to listen to a worship song. Or instead of watching a TV show as a family, learn about a missionary. Keep in mind, we are not teaching our kids that fun things (like music and TV) are bad, but that if we let anything take priority over Jesus in our lives it can become unhealthy, just like drinking all juice and no water is not a healthy balance for our bodies.



**DRAW OR WRITE SOMETHING  
THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU**

# WEEK 2: DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

There are a lot of ways that the people of God are talked about in the Bible. Sometimes we're called God's children (John 1:12), other times we're called heirs (Romans 8:17). We're even called works of art, or God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10).

**But one of the most intimate ways Jesus talks about us is by calling us His friends (John 15:15).**

As friends of God, we can talk to Him and spend time with Him to learn more about Him just like we would with any of our other friends. But this means we have to make time for Him. Fasting helps us learn to become friends with Jesus because it helps us take distractions out of our lives.

**When we fast, we choose to do something else instead of eating.**

By pairing prayer and fasting together, we can learn to develop and deepen our friendship with Jesus simply by talking to Him more.

READ: DEUTERONOMY 6:1-5  
& JOHN 15:12-15

## **DISCUSS:**

1. What does it mean to have a friendship with Jesus?
2. What are some ways that you spend time with your friends?
3. What would it look like to spend more time with Jesus as a friend?

## **PRACTICE:**

- Fast at least one time this week, and instead of eating, watching TV, or playing a video game, spend a few minutes praying.
- Memorize John 15:6 this week.

## **PRAY:**

Spend some time praying together as a family. You could have one person pray or encourage all members of your family to take turns praying. If you or your family are uncomfortable praying on your own, feel free to use this prayer:

*God, thank You for calling us Your friends. Thank you for being close enough to us that we can spend time with you whenever we want to. Help us to say “no” to the right things so we can say “yes” to being Your friend. We love You, thank You for loving us. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

## **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED PRACTICES:**

- Invite your child to write or draw what they have learned.
- Create a prayer topic for each day of the week. Have your children think about the topic each day and they pray about it as a family each night.

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# WEEK 3: NEEDING JESUS

It's really hard to say "no" to things. Learning to say "no" to simple things like TV or video games can get easier over time, but if we go too long without our basic necessities like food, water, or air, our bodies shut down. We need these things to survive because our bodies rely on them.

**And just like we need food to live, we also need Jesus to live.**

Acts 17:28 tells us that God is the one who helps us live and move and breathe, and Colossians 1:17 tells us that Jesus holds all things together. Without God, we can't live.

**One of the most important reasons we can fast is to show Jesus how much we need Him, especially when it comes to fighting sin.**

The more we learn to say "no" to simple things like food or media, the more we're able to rely on Jesus to help us in our times of need.

READ: HEBREWS 4:14-16,  
PSALM 42:1-2 & 1 JOHN 1:9

## **DISCUSS:**

1. Why do you think Psalm 42:1-2 uses the example of a deer thirsting for water to explain how we thirst for God?
2. Why is it important to confess our sins and our needs to God?
3. If we're already saved, why do we still need to confess our sins?

## **PRACTICE:**

- This week, continue to fast just like you have been. But while you do, ask God to show you where you need Him more. It might be a prayer you need answered or a temptation you need help fighting against.
- When you think of something you need help with, try praying this: "God, just like I need food to live, I need You."
- Memorize John 15:7.

## **PRAY:**

Spend some time praying together as a family. You could have one person pray or encourage all members of your family to take turns praying. If you or your family are uncomfortable praying on your own, feel free to use this prayer:

*God, thank You for always being there when we need You. Just like we need food to live, we need You. Help us to rely on you instead of our own power. Forgive us for our sins, and help us fight temptation. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen.*

**ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED PRACTICES:**

- Invite your child to write or draw what they have learned.
- Teach your child how to confess their sins to God and ask for forgiveness. Encourage them to confess their sin to God knowing that He has forgiven them fully, still loves them deeply, and remains near to them intimately.

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# WEEK 4: PRAYING FOR OTHERS

When we decide to follow Jesus, we're given a mission: share God's love with others. It's the same mission that all of God's people have been given, all the way back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But sometimes we're not so good at this. It's easy to surround ourselves with other people who follow Jesus and ignore those who don't know Him yet.

**But one of the best ways we can show love for those who don't know God yet is by praying for them.**

When we fast, we have an opportunity to turn our attention to others by saying "no" to ourselves and saying "yes" to the mission God has given us.

READ: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4 &  
JOHN 13:34-35

## **DISCUSS:**

1. Why do we need to pray for others?
2. What are some ways you like others to show that they love you?
3. Who are some people in your life who don't know Jesus, and what are some ways you can show them love?

## **PRACTICE:**

- Continue fasting just like you have been. But this week, instead of eating, watching TV, or playing video games, use this time to pray for people who don't know Jesus yet. You could pray for people you know, like a friend or a family member, or you could pray for everyone in the world who doesn't know God.
- Memorize John 15:8

## **PRAY:**

Spend some time praying together as a family. You could have one person pray or encourage all members of your family to take turns praying. If you or your family are uncomfortable praying on your own, feel free to use this prayer:

*God, thank You for saving us from our sins. Thank you that you want to save other people too and that you've asked us to help others know You. Help us to love other people the way You love them. Remind us of the people who don't know You yet. Let us show them Your love so they can be saved too. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED PRACTICES:**

- Invite your child to write or draw what they have learned.
- Take a family prayer walk around your neighborhood. Take turns praying for your neighbors as you walk past their homes. If you do not know your neighbors, pray that God will help you get to know them to share the love of Jesus with them.

- Encourage your children to get to know other kids in school or at other places they frequent who might not know Jesus yet, and become friends with them.
- At dinner or other family times, pray specifically for people you know who are far from God by name.

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THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU**