

2012 DEEPER

The pastors and leadership of MAG invite you to join us in a twenty-one day fast and meditation through the *Gospel of John*. On the pages below you will find a devotional schedule for these twenty-one days. The Daniel Fast will be our model (*Daniel 10:2-3*). The Daniel Fast is a partial fast, which means that we will eliminate some common things from our daily diet, but will have generous options available. We will focus on eating fruits and vegetables that are pure and simple. We have included a list of foods to eat and foods to avoid.

If you have concerns about any condition that would prohibit you from being a part of the Daniel Fast, there are other options. Choose something from your daily routine (i.e., specific foods or beverages, television, other technology, etc.) and fast in relation to these items for the next twenty-one days. Remember, the specifics are not as important as the spirit in which you participate. **If you have any known medical conditions or suspect such conditions that might prohibit your involvement, please consult your doctor before beginning the fast.**

Fasting is a spiritual discipline designed to better connect us with God. Why fast? In *Matthew 6* Jesus outlines three duties of every Christian: *when you give (1-4)*, *when you pray (6-14)*, and *when you fast (16-18)*. Whenever a fast is recorded in Scripture, it is typically followed by a season of growth and blessing. As you will discover over the next few weeks, your commitment to fast will usher in some of the greatest moments of spiritual reflection you have ever had in the presence of God and opportunities to take hold of the blessings of God. That is what we are most excited about. Fasting deepens our relationship with God by enhancing our sense of God's presence, power, and purpose for our lives. And we look forward with anticipation to all of the great things God is going to do in the life of our church and in your life as well.

So as we join together as a church family, let's take the next twenty-one days to prepare ourselves for what God has prepared for all of us in 2012! We are asking God to move mightily among us through this ancient spiritual discipline of fasting and feasting on God's Word!

There are many resources related to a Daniel Fast. I have listed those that have provided inspiration and information on the last page of this booklet. Please use the guide below to encourage your devotional study over the course of your fast.

Daniel Fast FACTS

Any fast can be challenging. Our journey during this Daniel Fast will also be challenging. But we look forward to seeing what God does in our lives, our families, and our church during the twenty-one days of the fast.

Who:

We are asking all of our leadership, and everyone at MAG who would like to see a move of God in our church, our families, and our community, and anyone who would be willing to participate in the fast and even entire families to join us as we seek God for these twenty-one days.

When:

Sunday, January 8th @ 6 pm: Begin the "Daniel Fast"

Monday, January 9th: Begin devotional guide

Sunday, January 29th @ 6 pm: Break the Fast!

What:

The Daniel Fast is a partial fast, which means that we will eliminate some common things from our daily diet, but will have generous options available. We will focus on eating fruits and vegetables that are pure and simple. We have included a list of foods to eat and foods to avoid in the back of this booklet.

How:

There are multiple online resources available on the Daniel Fast. You will immediately notice the tremendous variety of resources related to the Daniel Fast:

www.danielfast.wordpress.com

www.hacres.com/recipes/recipes.asp

www.christ-web.com/missions/farho/daniel-fast

2012 **DEEPER** ...in prayer

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God (Philippians 4:6).

Prayer Request _____

Date God Answered _____

Prayer Result _____

Prayer Request _____

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2012 **DEEPER** ...in meditation

My Journal ...

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2012 **DEEPER** ...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 **DEEPER** ...in the Word

Day 7/January 15th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

**Read John 7
Observations**

Interestingly, Jesus compares our spiritual life to the never-ending physical desire that we experience when we are thirsty. Are you thirsty? In prayer, spend time talking with God about your deepest areas of thirst. Ask Jesus the living water to refresh your soul and quench your thirst.

2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 9/January 17th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 9 Observations

In her book "Just Give Me Jesus" Anne Graham Lotz tells of a night when Robert Louis Stevenson was a small boy. His nanny had called him to come to bed. He was oblivious to her call because he was staring at something outside his nursery window. The nanny walked over and asked, "Robert, what are you looking at?" Without taking his eyes away from the window he pointed to the lamplighter who was lighting the streetlamps, "Look, Nanny! That man is putting holes in the darkness!" That is what Jesus did long ago and what He is still able to do today. When Jesus said, *I am the light of the world (9:5)* He was saying that if we keep our eyes on Him, no matter how dark it may be around us, He is able to bring light into the darkness we experience. Reflect on the significance of Christ's own claim to not just be light but to be the light of the world!

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2012 **DEEPER** ...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 10/January 18th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 10 Observations

James commands believers in *James 1:19* to be *quick to hear*. Here in *John 10* Jesus is reminding us of the value not only of hearing, but hearing Him! God calls us to listen for His voice so that we may follow Him. How tragic it would be to miss out on something from the Lord because we were not good listeners. The best way in which to learn, recognize, and hear God's voice is through reading the Bible. In your prayer time, ask God to keep speaking in your life through His Word. Ask Him to teach you how to listen well.

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2012 **DEEPER** ...in meditation

My Journal ...

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2012 DEEPER...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 **DEEPER** ...in the Word

Day 12/January 20th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 12

Observations

Mary poured out expensive perfume on Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. This was such a shocking demonstration of love toward Christ that those standing nearby misunderstood her intentions. As you pray, reflect on this truth; that your intentions in your relationship with God are more important than always being understood correctly by others. If your motives are right in the demonstration of your love for Christ, don't worry about what others say or think. When the time is right, Jesus will come to your defense! As you pray and go throughout your day today, ask God to search your heart and motives and then live freely and boldly before an audience of One!

2012 DEEPER ...in prayer

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2012 DEEPER ...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 **DEEPER**...in the Word

Day 13/January 21st

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 13
Observations

In this chapter, Jesus demonstrates incredible humility. It is difficult to imagine the Son of God leaving heaven and washing the dusty and dirty feet of His disciples. But after He does so, He informs them that they should do the same for each other (13:15). As you go throughout your day today think about the example Jesus set while watching for opportunities to serve those around you.

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2012 **DEEPER** ...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 14/January 22nd

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 14 Observations

Jesus says, *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6)*. When we feel lost and seem confused about the direction we are supposed to travel in life remember Jesus is the way. When we are confused about reality remember Jesus is the truth. And when we are confused about our own mortality remember Jesus is the life! In the midst of confusing times and tough decisions we are tempted to run to every other means of finding direction, truth, and abundant life. However, the Bible says Jesus is the ultimate way. In prayer today, talk to the Lord about those areas in which you need direction, truth, and life.

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2012 **DEEPER**...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 **DEEPER** ...in the Word

Day 15/January 23rd

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 15
Observations

Jesus said: *I am the vine; you are the branches . . . apart from me you can do nothing (15:5)*. We *abide* in Christ so that His life and fruit may be seen in us. Today, ask God to enable you to be a fruitful branch, bearing, not only *fruit, more fruit, but much fruit (15:2, 8)*.

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2012 **DEEPER**...in meditation

My Journal . . .

2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 16/January 24th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 16 Observations

Jesus says: *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world...(16:33)*. We all have endured with the pain of losing someone we love, or the loneliness we feel when our family rejects our faith, or the betrayal we feel when others let us down. Keep in mind that these things, painful as they may be, *are of this world*. The beautiful reminder today is that we serve a God who has *overcome the world!* This is why we always have hope! Take some of your prayer time today and share with your loving, heavenly, Father those areas of life in which you are experiencing pain, grief, and loneliness. Be sure to ask him to release His overcoming power in your life.

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2012 **DEEPER** ...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 17/January 25th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 17 Observations

Jesus described the Father in 17:3 as the only true God. He is knowable only through Jesus Christ whom He sent (1:18; Matt. 11:27). We sometimes say that it is a blessing and an inspiration to know certain people. This is all the more true when we know God. Knowing Him changes us and introduces us into a different quality of living.

The length of this section of the prayer suggests that Jesus had greater concern for His disciples' welfare than for His own. *Jesus prayed for His disciples before He chose them (Luke 6:12), during His ministry (John 6:15), at the end of His ministry (Luke 22:32), here (John 17:6-19), and later in heaven (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).* Reflect on how, in view of their weaknesses, they were in great need of God's grace to sustain them in the future. It was God's keeping power rather than their strength that made Jesus' confident as He prayed for them. Thank Him that He still prays for His followers!

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2012 **DEEPER**...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 DEEPER ...in the Word

Day 18/January 26th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 18

Observations

I have always felt a little embarrassed for Peter. He denies Jesus three times in this chapter (18:17, 25, 27). We have all denied Jesus at one time or another. When this happens, not only should we feel sorrow and confess our sins, but we should also be encouraged. Just like Jesus had a plan for Peter's restoration, God has a plan for ours. If you have denied Him at times, or in certain areas of your life, humble yourself and return to Him today so He can restore you into His plan for your life. In prayer, confess those times or areas in which you have denied or betrayed Jesus. Now get ready – He is ready to forgive and restore you for full participation in the Kingdom of God!

2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 19/January 27th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 19

Observations

We have already learned that Jesus came near to us and that He is the way, truth, and life! Through Him, we become sons and daughters of God. In order for that to happen Jesus had to endure suffering and conquer death in our place. In *Chapter 19*, we are not only reading about the details of Jesus suffering - *a crown of thorns (19:2), being struck in the face (19:3), carrying His own cross (19:17), and ultimately crucifixion (19:23)* - we are also reading about the zenith of God's plan for our salvation. In prayer, thank God for His willingness to suffer and die for you. Thank Him for His triumph and victory over death so that we might have abundant life (*John 10:10*).

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2012 **DEEPER**...in meditation

My Journal ...

2012 DEEPER ...in the Word

Day 20/January 28th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 20 Observations

Of all the things Jesus could have said when He entered the room with His disciples after he rose from the dead, He said: *As the father sent me, I am sending you (20:21)*. Jesus' ultimate desire in coming to planet Earth was that we would receive Him and His mission to go to others in His name. Just as the Father sent Jesus, now Jesus sends us! Are you allowing God to send you? Have you developed spiritual eyes to see that you are a part of His divine plan and that you are sent to those around you? To whom are you being sent? In whom are you investing the gospel?

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2012 DEEPER...in the Word

Day 21/January 29th

Take a moment and ask God to speak to you as you study His Word.

Read John 21 Observations

Just like Peter who went back to fishing (21:3) we are often tempted to go back to something familiar when we perceive a spiritual season has come to a close. This is particularly risky after a time of seeking God through fasting and prayer. We must resist this temptation. Following Christ is never a predictable and boring return to the familiar, but always involves risk and adventure. Jesus had already told Peter that He was the rock upon which He would build the Church (16:18). But at the end of the *gospel of John* Peter's gone back to fishing.

As we prepare to break our fast remember that God is not done with us and that the best is yet to come! Whatever we do, let's not fall back into the familiar and comfortable just because this fasting and prayer journey has come to a close. Reflect on the potential of this season of fasting, prayer, and Bible study to be the starting point for the next great season into which God is calling. Keep stepping forward in the journey God has for you!

Daniel Fast FOODS

Foods to include in your diet during Daniel Fast:

- All fruits: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch for added sugar).

Apples	Figs	Oranges
Apricots	Grapefruit	Papayas
Avocados	Grapes	Peaches
Bananas	Grenadine	Pears
Berries	Guava	Pineapples
Blackberries	Honeydew melons	Plums
Blueberries	Kiwi	Prunes
Boysenberries	Lemons/Limes	Raisins
Breadfruit	Mangoes	Raspberries
Cantaloupe	Melons	Strawberries
Cherries	Mulberry	Tangelos
Coconuts	Nectarines	Tangerines
Cranberries	Oats	Watermelon
Dates	Olives	

- Vegetables: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch salt content).

Artichokes	Egg Plant	Radishes
Asparagus	Garlic	Rudabagas
Beets	Ginger root	Scallions
Broccoli	Kale	Spinach
Brussel sprouts	Leeks	Sprouts
Cabbage	Lettuce	Squashes
Carrots	Mushrooms	Sweet potatoes
Cauliflower	Mustard greens	Tomatoes
Celery	Okra	Turnips
Chili peppers	Onions	Watercress
Collard greens	Parsley	Yams
Corn	Peppers	Zucchini
Cucumbers	Potatoes	

- Legumes:

Dried beans	Black eyed peas	Lupines
Black beans	Green beans	White peas
Cannellini	Green peas	
Pinto beans	Kidney beans	
Split peas	Peanuts (includes natural peanut butter)	
Lentils	Beans	

- Seeds:

All nuts (raw, unsalted)	Walnuts	Almonds
Sprouts	Sunflower	Natural almond butter
Ground flax	Rolled oats	
Cashews	Sesame	

- Whole Grains:

Whole wheat	Rolled oats	Whole wheat tortillas
Brown rice	Barley	Grits (no butter)
Millet	Plain rice cakes	
Quinoa Oats	Popcorn (see recipe in Common Questions below)	
Oats	Whole wheat pasta	

- Liquids:

Water (spring, distilled, filtered)
Unsweetened Soy Milk
Herbal (caffeine free) Tea
100% Fruit/Vegetable Juice (no added sugar)

- Other:

Tofu
Soy products
Herbs
Small amounts of Honey
Small amounts of Sea Salt
Small amounts of Ezekiel Bread
Small amounts of Olive Oil
Spices (read the label to be sure there are no preservatives)

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast...

- All animal products including all meat, poultry, fish...
- White rice
- White bread
- All deep fried foods
- Caffeine
- Coffee (including decaf b/c contains small amount of caffeine)
- Carbonated beverages
- Energy drinks
- Foods containing preservatives, additives
- Refined foods
- Processed foods
- Food additives
- Refined sugar
- Sugar substitutes
- Raw sugar
- Syrups
- Molasses
- Cane juice
- White flour
- Margarine
- Shortening
- High fat products
- Butter
- All leavened breads
- Baked goods
- All dairy
- Milk
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Cream
- Eggs
- Alcohol
- Mayonnaise

- **What about prepared foods?** Read the labels of all prepared foods. Remember the Daniel Fast is sugar-free and chemical-free. So, if you use any canned fruits, vegetables, packaged foods, or prepared sauces you must read the label to be aware about just what is in there.
- **What about pasta?** Make sure the label says whole grain pasta with no additives (watch for sugar). Whole grain pasta offers 7 grams of protein per serving (3/4 cup of dried pasta).
- **I know it says raw, unsalted nuts, but what about roasted nuts?** The goal would be to stick to raw, unsalted nuts. But these are harder to find so in a pinch just make sure you get plain roasted, unsalted nuts with no preservatives.
- **How do I get enough protein in my diet while on the fast?** The following are protein-rich foods that are allowed on the Daniel Fast... almonds, sunflower seeds, lentils, quinoa, brown rice, split peas, whole grains, and tofu.
- **What kind of peanut butter is allowed?** A natural peanut butter with no additives...watch for sugars including molasses. Smucker's creamy natural peanut butter has nothing but peanuts in it.
- **What about popcorn?** Corn is listed in the vegetables to eat list. You can use a pot on the stove...here is a recipe.
 - 1) Put two tbsp. of olive oil in the bottom of a large pot.
 - 2) Add enough popcorn to cover the bottom of the pan.
 - 3) Turn heat to medium high. Look for the first popcorn kernel to pop.
 - 4) Put the lid on the pot. Using potholders shake the pot over the burner.

5) Continue shaking until you no longer hear kernels popping. Remove from heat.

- **How can I identify whole grain foods?** Typically if the ingredient lists "whole wheat", "rolled oats", or "whole corn" as the first ingredient, the product is a whole grain food item. Another way to identify whole grains in the foods you eat is to look in the nutritional facts information and check if the food item contains dietary fiber. If it contains a significant amount, it most likely contains whole grains. "Wheat flour" is not a whole grain and therefore does not indicate a whole grain product.
- **What about salad dressing?** Olive oil and lemon or lime are an option.
- **Do I need to eat organic foods while on the fast?** No, but it is suggested because organic foods are produced without the use of feed or fertilizer of plant or animal origin and without employment of chemically formulated fertilizers, growth stimulants, antibiotics, or pesticides.
- **What about bread?** We are recommending the Ezekiel bread found in the freezer section of your grocery/health food store.
- **How much can I eat?** As long as they are the appropriate foods, we are recommending eating until satisfied with no limits.

Resources:

www.StonecreekChurch.org

www.awake21.org

<http://www.fellowshipchurch.com/fast>

<http://danielfast.elevationchurch.org>

Suggested Reading:

“A Beginner’s Guide to Fasting,” Elmer L. Towns

“A Hunger for God,” John Piper

“God’s Chosen Fast,” Arthur Wallis

“Fasting,” Jentezen Franklin