

A. INTRODUCTION

- **Acts 1:8**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

- **Acts 1:14**

“All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”

- Prayer is everywhere in the book of Acts.

e.g.	Choosing Leaders	(Acts 1:24, 14:23)
	Caring for widows	(Acts 6:6)
	Raising the dead	(Acts 9:40)
	Facing persecution with courage	(Acts 4:24)
	Sending out new church planters	(Acts 13:3)
	Seeking God’s direction and help	(Acts 20:36, 22:17, 27:29)

B. DEVOTED TO PRAYER

- Devotion that expressed their dependence upon God.
- The result of their devoted praying was that the Holy Spirit came in an unprecedented way to empower Jesus’ disciples for the mission.
- Ordinary people doing great things for Jesus Christ, who empowers us through his Holy Spirit.
- The same powerful activity of the Holy Spirit is intended to mark our church community at Grace Church.

John Stott:

“Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the life-giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlikeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead.”

C. EARNEST IN PRAYER

- Fervent, faith-filled, real, desperate, deep prayers.
- An eagerness and expectancy to see God respond, and a longing for God to move and powerfully answers those prayers.
- A humility that acknowledge our utter unworthiness, weakness, sin and helplessness in, and of ourselves.

John Murray:

“If Pentecost is not repeatable, neither is it retractable. This is the era of the Spirit. Joel’s prophecy was not exhausted on the day of Pentecost. Christ still pours out his Spirit. Christ is still filling and flooding his people with his Holy Spirit, his power and his presence. This is the richest treasure a man can wish or God can send.”

D. UNITED IN PRAYER

- The prayers recorded in the book of Acts are primarily individual prayers (though certainly they did), but instead corporate prayers, where God’s people were together, joining hearts and voices to cry out to God.

C.H. Spurgeon:

“I never feel that I can pray as well as when I am in the midst of my own dear friends and, oftentimes, when things are flagging within the soul, to get together with brighter spirits, in whom the life of God is more vigorous, is a great help to me.”

E. APPLICATION

- The truth of the sovereignty of God is an excuse for us to lazily wait around or neglect prayer.
- We are called, saved and commissioned to fully partner and participate in the mission and we are responsible to engage energetically by taking full advantage of whatever grace God has already given us.

Graeme Goldsworthy:

“Prayer is not trying to persuade God to do something he otherwise would not do. It is our being caught up in the purposes of God and the expression of this privilege as his dear children who know him as Father. It comes down to this: having revealed his purpose, God graciously allows us to be involved in the carrying out of his will. He gives us the privilege of identifying with his will by asking him to do what he has already determined to do. God loves us to ask for the things he has revealed that he wants to give us.”

- At Grace Church we want to posture ourselves as dependent upon God, and want our activities and ministries to reflect the priority of our pursuit of God and his Holy Spirit.

- **First Friday Fast**
- **Sunday Morning Prayer**
- **Monthly Corporate Prayer Meeting**
- **Twice yearly “WEEK OF PRAYER”**
- **Group Equipping and Prayer**
 - Proclaim Course
 - GO-2
- **Freestyle**

Appendix 1

A Brief Guide to Corporate Fasting¹

Grace Church is dependent on God. He creates. He sustains. He saves and He empowers us. Everything we are and do depends on Him and (amazingly) He stands ready to do more than we can ask or imagine. This is sheer grace.

As a church, we want to posture ourselves as dependent. We want our activities and ministries to reflect our pursuit of God's help. It should show up on our calendars and in our meetings. It should influence how we make plans and how your pastors lead. Asking God for help should be our first impulse.

Fasting is one way we can do this. As a church (corporately) we can fast as a way of expressing our "hunger" for God. We can say "God, we want more of you." We can literally ache for God's work and grace. When we fast we are doing without something we love for the sake of expressing a greater love for God.

Where do we find fasting in the New Testament?

- 1. Jesus fasted.** (Matthew 4:1-2)
Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
- 2. Jesus assumed we would fast.** (Matthew 6:26-18)
And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
- 3. The early church fasted.** (Acts 13:3)
Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

How do I fast?

1. The normal fast would include abstaining or limiting your consumption of food and drink. You can skip a meal, do without your cup of coffee in the morning, or do without food for the entire day (or longer). If you are unable to do this, consider abstaining from some other activity that will make you "ache" (e.g. Wake up an hour or more earlier than usual, fast from facebook or the TV).
2. Use your new found free time (like your lunch break) to pray. You might even want to do this with others you know are participating in the corporate fast.
3. Use every hunger pain as a reminder to pray. Thank God for the ache and pray continuously.

¹ Borrowed and adapted with permission from Sovereign Grace Church Orange County, California.