

Unlocking Heaven's Storehouse: A Day of Fasting and Prayer  
Mentone January 2, 2021

**Three invitations**

Jesus' invitation to ask for Holy Spirit. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find, knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" Matthew 7:7-11.

Two things about this passage: "\_\_\_\_\_ asking, seeking, knocking." Secondly, in Luke's account, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the \_\_\_\_\_ to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:13.

Invitation from the pen of Ellen G. White. "The Lord did not \_\_\_\_\_ the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We, also, may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the \_\_\_\_\_ of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised." *Review and Herald*, June 4, 1889. "If \_\_\_\_\_ were willing, \_\_\_\_\_ would be filled with the Spirit." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

An invitation from the *Revival and Reformation Committee*

What is the purpose of fasting? Fasting is intended to \_\_\_\_\_ our spiritual focus, express our humility and sincerity. When it is done for the right reason and from the right motive, it brings us closer to God and enables Him to act in a more powerful way.

The English word "fast" comes from Old English *faestan*, which also meant "to make firm, establish, confirm, pledge," from Old Germanic *fastanan* to hold, guard, which was extended to mean "observe abstinence." The original meaning was "hold firmly," to "make fast," to "fasten," which evolved to "have firm control of oneself," to "hold oneself to observance." Around 1200 A.D. the idea merged in Old English from that of "firmly, strongly, vigorously" to "quick, swiftly, fast" in the sense of speed.

In Hebrew, the word *tsuwm* (21x O.T.) means derives from a word meaning "to cover over the mouth." The New Testament word (*nesteuo* 21x) simply means "to not eat."

**Fasting in Scripture**

What kinds of fasts are there? One can fast in many different ways. Total abstinence from food for a period of time, abstinence from certain foods (Daniel 9), from certain activities; Isaiah 58 discusses God's favorite fast. It is true that when fasting could be done for the wrong reason and became "formal." Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12;

Zechariah 7:5; Matthew 6:16; Luke 18:12. But when done for the right reason and in sincerity, it was effective. God \_\_\_\_\_ for His people when they fasted and prayed.

Israel fasted when defeating the rebellious Benjamites. Judges 20:26

In days of Samuel, Israel fasted and the Lord defeated Philistines. I Samuel 7:6

After tragic death of Saul and Jonathan, Israel fasted 7 days. I Samuel 31:13

David when son of Bathsheba was sick. II Samuel 12:21

Elijah was sent to wicked King Ahab, after murdering Naboth to acquire his vineyard.

Elijah gave a message of rebuke and doom. Ahab repented and fasted, the Lord delayed the punishment. I Kings 21:27.

Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast when Assyrians attacked II Chronicles 20:3

Daniel fasted and prayed for rebuilding Daniel 9:3

Nehemiah fasted when learned of the delays in rebuilding Nehemiah 1:4

Ezra proclaimed a fast when challenges arose in rebuilding Ezra 8:21

Esther proclaimed a fast when Jews threatened by Haman Esther 4:16

When scroll of Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch was read, a fast was proclaimed Jeremiah 38:9

When Jonah preached in Nineveh a fast was proclaimed Jonah 3:5

The Day of Atonement became known as "The Fast"

Jesus fasted 40 days as He began His ministry

At foot of Mt. Transfiguration, "This kind does not go out but by prayer and fasting."

Matthew 17:21

The Church fasted when they sent Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries Acts 13:2

Why a Day of Fasting and Prayer today? We are living near the end of time, indicated by fulfilled prophecy. Last week, "Do you hear what I hear?" I Kings 18:41. Elijah made that statement entirely by faith. It was after persistent, seven times, that the rain came.

### ***Words from the Lord***

"A revival of true \_\_\_\_\_ among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer, and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife" *Christian Service*, pp. 41, 42). "Just so long as the church is satisfied with \_\_\_\_\_ things will it fail of receiving the great things of God." *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904.

Ellen White writes: "The Lord can do more in one hour than we can do in a whole lifetime, and when He sees that His people are fully \_\_\_\_\_, let me tell you a great work will be done in a short time, and the message of truth will be carried into the dark places of the earth, where it has never been proclaimed" *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 307.

Fleeing from formalism. II Timothy 3:1-5. The promise of Joel 2:17-29. The encouragement of Jeremiah 29:13.

