



Module : Fasting

Session 5 : Apostolic-Prophetic Prayer and Fasting #1

Focus : Principles of Fasting from Anna and Hannah's life

This study continues directly on from the previous one, in which we highlighted the necessity to PRAY God's will to be done on earth with fasting. In our present session, we encourage you to shift your focus in prayer away from personal needs or solely local church-related concerns, to issues that concern God's desire to bring His will to bear upon His global church and/or aspects of His will that He intends to express for a specific environment in some sector of life. Generally, there is a requirement to enlarge the sometimes parochial mindset in prayer, to embrace a more corporate or Kingdom emphasis.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM:

We shall explore the Kingdom of God more fully in a separate module. The concepts of church and kingdom are not synonymous. The church is the family of God, constituted by spiritual fathers and sons in a specific jurisdiction. It is the medium through which God's purposes for the earth are transmitted.

The Kingdom of God is the rule of God, which emanates from the throne of God (Joseph Matterra). The church is the primary agency of the Kingdom. Thus the church is to be Kingdom-minded. The representation and the establishment of the Kingdom of God is the church's ultimate goal. To this end it exists. To this end, its nature, composition, constitution and function seeks to serve. God's 'Word' [His present speaking] and 'Will' [The execution of His purpose] for the entirety of His Kingdom in all of its multifaceted domains throughout all the earth will be expressed and facilitated in and through His family, the church¹.

In reference to our personal needs, the Scriptures teach that, if from the basis of an established identity of our sonship in reference to our Heavenly Father, we, convinced that He will supply every personal need, and in this same context prioritise and seek His Kingdom and righteousness, then all things we need (what we shall eat, drink and wear) will be multiplied to us. So we need not in prayer be too preoccupied by our personal needs being met – God will take care of us when His righteousness and Kingdom are given pre-eminence in our thinking, pursuit and activity.

With this as a background, we shall now explore how serious personal and corporate fasting with fervent prayer must be made for more broad kingdom-related or apostolic-related concerns. Essentially, the apostolic (the word 'apostle' means 'sent') concerns the restoration of belief and practice in the global church to what was originally in the mind of God before time began. It relates to bringing the Church of God back to the most authentic expression of its nature and function, which is rooted in Christ, the head of His Body. The design of this authenticity is contained in the Word of God. Thus, whenever an apostolic people perceive deviation from God's pattern for His church, they become burdened by intense desire to see reformation, repair, rebuilding and restoration of foundational principles that determine the shape and expression of God's nature and purpose. This nature and purpose must be accurately expressed and communicated through His Church as the agency of the Kingdom of God. Thus the church must of necessity be Kingdom-

¹ Extracted from the GATE Articles/Statement of Faith. Refer to 'ADDENDUM' at the end of this study for the complete article on the Kingdom of God

conscious and not serve a misguided objective that may be locked up within itself without serving God's will for its broader community.

Amazingly, people who fasted with strong prayer in the Bible, for the most part were focused not so much on their personal desires as much as they were burdened by a deep desire to see God's will triumph on a macro-scale, more corporately. For the modern church, fasting is overly focused on personal needs. When fasting and prayer has as its focus the re-alignment of attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and practises to God's eternal will on a corporate scale, then entire environments are brought into accuracy. Individuals living in this corrected sphere then automatically come into blessing and favour. Correction of principles governing a corporate environment brings peace and divine favour to individuals within that environment.

Daniel's fast was relative to issues pertaining to national Israel (Judah) and their release from Babylonian bondage. Nehemiah fasted for he was burdened by the state of Jerusalem (a representation of the church). Moses fasted twice for forty-day periods in receiving the law which was the means to regulate Israel's behaviour and their relationship with God. Elijah fasted forty days after the defeat of the 450 Baal prophets and Jezebel's threat on his life, and then positioned himself to continue an apostolic-prophetic mission in Israel. Jesus' fast was preparatory for His public ministry, which impacted millions of people. Cornelius' fast prepared his entire household to receive salvation and the baptism in the Holy Ghost and also probably many others, as he was a man of great influence. Anna served with fasting and prayer in the temple and witnessed the dedication of the Christ child and was able to provide further clarity concerning His redemptive role in Israel. Esther's fast resulted in salvation for her and a whole nation. Ezra's call to fast facilitated Divine protection over a whole nation too. Joel's summoning to fast prepared Israel to access the Spirit's outpouring, prophetically realised in Acts chapter 2. Hannah's fasting, although personally centred on breaking her barrenness, resulted in the birth of Samuel, who was ultimately given up to God to execute HIS will on a corporate scale, shutting down the era of the Judges and initiating the monarchy. These examples encourage us to seek God by fasting and prayer for the execution of His purposes which go beyond the immediacy of our personal needs. As we seek first the coming of His kingdom, our needs are provided. As we give pre-eminence to His agenda in fasting and prayer, God will give priority to the provision of our personal needs and satisfy our desire to experience His will for our private world.

Let us explore some case studies and extract principles from the example of men, women and nations that prayed with fasting, whose focus was more Kingdom-centred and whose effect and impact was felt corporately.

CASE STUDY 1 : JESUS

Refer to Session 3 in this series.

CASE STUDY 2 : DANIEL

Refer to Session 4 in this series (example 6 on page 7).

CASE STUDY 3 : ANNA, THE PROPHETESS

Luke 2:36-38 (Nasb)

- 36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty- four.
- 37 She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

38 **At that very moment** she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

FASTING - AN EXPRESSION OF WORSHIP

Worship is a lifestyle of sincere love and devotion to God expressed in acts of obedience to Him. Fasting is a vital part of worship. Anna, the prophetess, 'worshipped God with prayers and fasting' (Luke 2:37 - ESV).

FASTING HEIGHTENS PROPHETIC-APOSTOLIC REALITY

Anna was a prophetess who obviously spoke the Word or intent of God to men. I firmly believe that fasting helped fine-tune her capacity to hear God accurately and communicate His Word with precision to her audience. She lived in an hour in which prophetic fulfillment occurred in that Jesus, the Christ, was born. As a prophetess, she thus not only spoke prophetically, but was apostolic in that she was also able to continue to speak and add clarity and understanding to the nature and purpose of that which was prophetically coming to pass, viz. Christ (see v.38). Fasting will sharpen any Prophet's or son of God's capacity to access the voice of the Lord, and also position him/her to provide further elucidation to prophecy that has come or is coming to pass.

Early church leaders at Antioch also ‘ministered unto the Lord, and fasted...’.

Acts 13:1-3

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had **fasted and prayed**, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away

Ministry unto the Lord would include any devotional posture before the Lord like thanksgiving, praise, worship, prayer, etc. The church leaders at Antioch ministered unto the Lord AND FASTED. It is rare today to find a church leadership team in worship and fasting unto the Lord. Most times a church leadership gathers, it is usually to discuss issues pertaining to the church they lead. Leaders must demonstrate to their people the discipline of corporate fasting. If the leaders cannot pray, worship and fast together, how can they expect those they lead to do the same.

The prophetic was activated within the context of leaders ministering unto the Lord and fasting. God's speaking activated Barnabas and Saul, who at this stage were either teachers or prophets, into an apostolic call to the nations of the earth (See Acts 14:4,14). Fasting is key to apostolic-prophetic reality and effective function.

In Isaiah 58, REFORMATION, REBUILDING, RESTORATION and REPAIR are key apostolically-related terms that are listed as part of the outcome, that the one who fasts, as reflective of his fasted lifestyle of total obedience to God, will experience.

Isaiah 58:13 “Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age- old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

FASTING WITH PRAYER SYNCs HUMAN LIFE, ALIGNING IT WITH PRECISION, TO DIVINE TIMING

Anna’s total devotion of service to God in continual prayer and fasting positioned her to witness the dedication of the Christ child by Simeon, the priest. It is interesting that it happened to be Simeon’s turn in doing this task in the temple that day. This fulfilled prophecy, for it was promised to him that before he died he would see the Christ (Luke 2:26). Another seeming coincidence is that whilst Simeon presented Jesus, blessing HIM and his parents and also making various prophetic pronouncements concerning HIM, that Anna entered the temple at that precise time. Note the language used in the following versions of the Scripture:

Luke 2:38a **NASB:** At that very moment she came up ...
 KJV: And she coming in that instant ...
 YLT: And she, at that hour, having come in ...
 MSG: At the very time Simeon was praying, she showed up, ...

A life immersed in much fasting and prayer makes one more ideally positioned to be in sync with God’s predetermined will for your life. It prepares you to timeously capture and experience ‘moments’ in which critical facets of God’s purpose/will can be subjectively experienced. There are no co-incidences with God. Our human lives are ordered of the Lord. Align the calendar of your Life with God’s timing through prayer and fasting.

FASTING, PRAYER AND GRACE

The name, ‘Anna’ means ‘grace’. She was the embodiment of grace, as her name suggests. Strong prayer with fasting is one of the many ways of accessing greater grace in God.

We all need to access and find grace to overcome our weakness and human limitations. Hebrews sets forth the premise of ‘FINDING’ grace to help in times of need.

Hebrews 4:15,16

- 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.
- 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In times of need, the thing you will need the most is GRACE from God who operates sympathetically from a Throne of Grace. The context of the verses above is human weakness (v.15) and the propensity to fail especially within the time of severe need (16). At such times we are exhorted to have confidence or boldness to ‘draw near’ and find closer proximity to God in our approach of Him to His throne, which is described as ‘a throne of grace’. The word ‘throne’ depicts the rulership, governance and authority of God. This is further characterised as ‘GRACE’. The place and premise from which God rules is one of mercy and GRACE, which is afforded to us to ‘help in times of need’.

The phrase 'time of need' does not refer to the fact that from time to time we may have specific needs. Rather, it relates to a season or length of time where the sense of 'need' is intense. This is usually a protracted or prolonged period of time.

The 'throne', symbolic of royal authority, highlights the issue of dominion. God's throne is a 'throne of grace'. His dominion is through grace. Dominion, rulership and grace are linked:

Romans 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

We are more than conquerors through Christ (Rom.8). Our rulership and overcoming capacity is largely due to the deposit of grace in our lives. 'Help' from God in times of need and human weakness causes us to successfully surmount or journey through every 'time' of need. A 'time of need' does not have to be a negative experience or season. This is the most 'opportune time' or well-timed' period, as the Greek word 'eukairos' suggests, for one to access a greater grace download from the God of 'all grace' (2 Cor.9:8). Note that in the context of Hebrews 4:15,16, this grace is described and expressed as 'HELP', which implies succour, aid or assistance given to someone. 'Help' is not just something God gives, it is who God is. Our help comes from the Lord, who is 'help'.

Most often, the word translated 'grace' in the Old Testament is 'chen', but there is another word translated grace, viz. 'techinnah'.

Techinnah = a supplication for grace, a request for favour

E.g. Ezra 9:8 But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage.

This word predominates in the prayers of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. Solomon consistently makes prayer and supplication (a request for grace) – see (1 Kings 8:28, 30, 38, 45, 49, 52, 54; 2 Chr. 6:14–42). At the end of his prayer the glory of God fills the temple.

Psalms 119:58 I sought Your favor with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your word.

May the Spirit of grace and supplication be poured forth upon your life and ministry.

Zech.12:10a I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication ...

FASTING WITH PRAYER FOR THE REALISATION OF CHRIST, THE HEAD, APPEARING IN HIS TEMPLE, THE CITY CHURCH

The temple has reference to the corporate expression of God's church in a city. It is beyond a local church mentality. Anna served in the temple. Like Simeon, her entire life was committed to and living in expectation of the coming forth of the Christ in the temple. She expressed her desire through prayers and fasting. If we

are to see the manifestation of Christ in our cities in a significant manner, it will demand that we consciously shift our prayer and fasting away from personal private issues, and focus more upon issues pertaining to His church in the city. This reality, viz. one church in every city, is an issue we should spend much time praying and fasting after. Like Anna, if we SEEK after it, we will SEE it.

CASE STUDY 4 : HANNAH BROKE BARRENNESS WITH FASTING AND PRAYER

There are some similarities between Anna's fasting and Hannah's fasting. Both their names mean 'grace'. Both had dimensions of the prophetic operative in their lives. Anna was a prophetess; Hannah gave birth to the prophetic dimension in the person of Samuel. Both prayed fervently with fasting. Both woman's fasting had a corporate focus – not so much personal.

Read Samuel chapter one before proceeding.

1 Sam. 1:8-11

- 8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"
- 9 Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord.
- 10 She, greatly distressed, prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.
- 11 She made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head

Hannah's fasting and prayer highlights at least four motivations/reasons to fast OR four results that fasting with prayer can bring:

1. PRAYERFUL FASTING BREAKS BARRENNESS:

Hannah could not bear children. Her womb was barren. She longed for children. She expressed her deep grief over this issue, and poured forth her supplication to the Lord. **Fervent prayer and sustained fasting broke the barrenness as she was heard of the Lord.** Whilst this was a personal desire and private need, it's realisation and fulfillment had a far reaching and vast corporate effect. **Samuel, the child given to her, was offered to the Lord for His purposes. The famine in Hannah's private womb was broken and brought purpose to be fulfilled in a whole nation. She fasted with prayer as an individual to bring an end to longstanding barrenness and the result of this brought great blessing, not just to her but to her entire corporate environment.**

2. PRAYERFUL FASTING RESULTS IN A FIRSTFRUIT OFFERING THAT WILL POSITION YOU FOR GREATER GRACE TO ATTAIN A GREATER HARVEST.

Samuel was a first fruit offering. Hannah would have five more children. Five is the number of grace. As she offered Samuel as her firstfruit, God multiplied grace in her life by giving her a harvest of five more children. In the area in which her barrenness was broken through prayer and fasting, she offered the first indication of fruitfulness to the Lord, and great grace continued to flow in her life. **I personally maintain that God may lead you to pray with fasting in order break longstanding barrenness in some area of your life. This could be financial, relational, ministry, etc. May I encourage you that when the famine in this area is broken, that you honour the Lord by offering a**

firstfruit offering in some respect as indicative of your acknowledgement of Him as the source of provision. If you do, greater grace will be conferred upon you. Hannah, like Anna, was the embodiment of the grace of God. Here is the complete meaning of her name: **Hannah = Gratuitous gift; i.e., grace, mercy; gracious; graciousness; favour; bestowed; she was gracious.**

3. **PRAYERFUL FASTING ACTIVATES AND ENHANCES THE PROPHETIC:**

Samuel also represents a new priesthood and the prophetic dimension. He was one of Israel's greatest prophets. His birth came at a time when there was a notable absence or rarity of the speaking of the Lord. God broke the famine of the hearing of the word of the Lord in that era by the positioning of Samuel as a prophet who was compatible and compliant to the reception and release of God's Word to the people of his day. Hannah's prayer and fasting gave birth to a heightened and accurate prophetic stream in her day. I believe **fasting with prayer can accentuate the prophetic dimension in our lives. The prophetic is far more than having the capacity to prophesy, it relates to discerning and understanding the purposes of God for a people or environment and then to accurately communicate this.**

4. **PRAYERFUL FASTING CAN CORRECT YEARS OF ERROR IN A FAMILY OR NATION:**

Samuel also represents the last judge of Israel. He concluded the era of the 'Judges', which was marked by everyone doing what was right in their own eyes, as no one subscribed to the unalterable, absolute standard of God's law. This was because of an absence of credible spiritual leadership – "there was no king" (Judges 21:25). Samuel was used to initiate the monarchy in Israel – he anointed Saul as the first king and also King David who replaced Saul. Samuel represents the end of the period of lawlessness and a dysfunctional priesthood (as represented by Eli and his sons). He brings the nation back to God, who through his life and ministry conferred immunity upon the whole nation, who enjoyed peace and rest – as the Philistines did not attack them all the days of Samuel's life. Thus Hannah's fasting represents **the power of fasting and prayer to put an end to historic lawlessness and inaccuracy and the installation of principles of righteousness and obedience that brings immunity and preservation. He bridged a huge breach of decades of inaccuracy and brought realignment of the nation to the ways of God. Prayerful fasting can position you to be used by God to do the same.**

CONCLUSION:

May I encourage us to enlarge and expand the focus of our prayer and fasting. Start with praying and fasting for larger issues effecting your local church – the place where you fellowship. Fast with prayer for issues pertaining to your extended family, community, city, nations, other nations, and the world. Usually God will burden you with a particular emphasis. Often for matters pertaining to cities and nations, your spiritual leadership will usually give lead to this.

Stay in Touch with us via Social Networks and my Website

Visit and 'like' the 'GATE MINISTRIES Durban Central' Facebook page OR 'follow' Gate Ministries Durban Central on Twitter and keep informed as to themes that will be taught each week. To regularly receive our free bible study notes, ensure you are on our email distribution list – send a request to info@gatedc.co.za.

Connect with and 'follow' Randolph Barnwell personally via Facebook or Twitter to receive regular inspirational and encouraging short posts and tweets highlighting key life principles from God's Word.

You may also freely download notes and audio files of each session from www.randolphbarnwell.com. Additional materials on various topics are also available for download here. [Enquiries: randolph@gatedc.co.za](mailto:Enquiries:randolph@gatedc.co.za) or info@gatedc.co.za

ADDENDUM: EXTRACT FROM GATE MINISTRIES ARTICLES OF FAITH REGARDING THE 'KINGDOM OF GOD'

Here below is an extract on the Kingdom of God as one of the articles covered in the Articles of Faith Document of Gate Ministries.

KINGDOM OF GOD

- The Kingdom of God is God's royal rule, authority and dominion over Heaven and Earth and all created things (Genesis 1; 2:1-4).
- When we refer to the Kingdom of Heaven, we refer specifically to the rule of God in Heaven that we seek to bring to Earth (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2).
- When reference is made to the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, we interpret this as those inherited domains placed under the rule of Christ and all who are in Him, functioning as the exact regency of the Godhead in creation (Ephesians 5:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 1:7; 11:15; 12:10; Colossians 1:13).
- The use of the term 'Kingdom of the Father' denotes the unique and intimate familial relationship that God engages with those who, in Christ, have become His sons and thereby are heirs in His Kingdom (Matthew 13:34).
- - Because God is Spirit, His rule is spiritual and wherever His everlasting, unshakeable Kingdom comes, its presence becomes visible and unmistakable (Hebrews 12; Daniel 2:44; Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:9; Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:33) and its effect is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (John 18:16-17; Romans 14:17).
- - The Kingdom of God is not of this world and is therefore not a social, political, economical or any other kingdom; it is not analogous to any earthly kingdom (John 18:36).
- - Since God's kingdom is spiritual and not political, economical or social, it must be administered spiritually; the kingdom is within our hearts (Luke 17:20,21).
- - By spiritual we mean that the rules which govern the Kingdom of Heaven must be planted (Like a seed - Matthew 13:19,31) and systemically permeate, influence and preserve the righteous culture and nature of God (Like light - permeate - Matthew 5:14-16, John 8:12; Like yeast - influence - Luke 13:20-21; Like salt - preserve - Matthew 5:13; Colossians 4:6).
- The unrighteous, those who do the deeds of the flesh, the immoral or covetous, and flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 15:50; John 3:3-5).
- To live in the Kingdom of God is to live under God's rule. The Kingdom of God is ruled in righteousness (Isaiah 32:1; 16:5; Hebrews 1:8). Matthew 5,6 and 7 describes the core values and ethics that those in the Kingdom should live by.
- The Kingdom of God superimposes itself and supplants the kingdoms of this world (Daniel 2:34-35). The will of God in Heaven must become the will of man on earth (Matthew 6:10).
- The church was established and given the authority (keys) to the Kingdom of Heaven and the establishment of its purposes on the earth (Matthew 16:19). The church, by functioning as the son of God and the regent of Heaven, is mandated to preach the Good News/Gospel of the Kingdom of God in all the world (Matthew 24:14), inviting all men to enjoy the benefits of the Kingdom (Wedding Feast - Matthew 22:2; Pearl of Great Price - Matthew 13:45; Debts Cancelled - Matthew 18:23).
- The kingdoms of this world are under the rule of the devil. The primary objective of God's Kingdom is to establish God's dominion over Satan and his realm of darkness (Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 11:20).
- Access or entry into the Kingdom of God takes place through repentance and being born again from above by the Spirit and by being cleansed by the washing of water which is the Word of God (Mark 1:15; John 3:3-5; Ephesians 5:26; James 1:18; 2 Peter 1:23). All those who come into the Kingdom of God must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness for effective living (Matthew 6:33; 1 Thessalonians 2:12).
- The Kingdom is, was and is to come. (Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 11:15). The Kingdom of God came at the point of Divine recognition of Jesus as the Son of God at the river Jordan; thereafter Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God has come and our reading of the Scriptures indicates that while the kingdom has come, it continues to progressively increase and will reach its fullness at the end of the aeons of time (Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 11:1-10; 32:1; Daniel 2:44; 7:18,27; Micah 4:7; Matthew 4:17; Luke 1:32,33). Refer to parables of the mustard seed - Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-21; Mark 4:30-32). Therefore, we embrace the prayer of Jesus which teaches us to daily pray that His Kingdom come (Luke 11:2).
- The saints will rule and reign with Christ as kings and priests (Matthew 25:21,23; Revelation 5:9,10; 20:4-6). The Kingdom is part of the inheritance of the sons of God. It is the Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom (Luke 12:32; Ephesians 1:5-9; Philippians 2:13).
- Sons of God are translated out of the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13).