

# A Thanksgiving Fast and Feast

## Fast from Gossip—Feast on Kindness

Gossip is one of our most widely shared—and often, most unconscious—addictions. (Gossip allegedly comprises 80 per cent of our daily conversations.) If you were to spend a day noticing how you talk about other people, you might begin to recognize a slightly compulsive quality in your desire to share their news.

As Christians, we often hide our habit of gossiping under the guise of seeking intercessory prayer. There's a real danger in the gossip we spread about others, no more so than when we pretend it's not gossip simply because we end our sharing with, "We should pray for them."

How do we know whether we're simply having a conversation over coffee or sharing gossip?

- Do we have permission to share that person's story and ask for prayer on their behalf?
- Would we be embarrassed to repeat what we say in front of that person?
- Is what we're sharing going to diminish the reputation of the person about whom we are sharing?

### Some definitions of gossip

- conversation or reports about other people's private lives that might be unkind, disapproving or not true. (*Cambridge English Dictionary*)
- rumour or report of an intimate nature | a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others | a chatty talk (*Merriam-Webster*)

As we prepare to thank God for all that He's done for us on Thanksgiving Weekend, join us from **Monday, October 7 until Friday, October 11** for five days of fasting from gossip and feasting on kindness. Not gossiping means we create the space to have positive conversations. And perhaps . . . to pray.

### Why fasting and feasting at the same time?

When we fast we move away from food (or whatever we've chosen to give up) and we move toward God. Fasting grows us in grace. Feasting is Christian life at its best—an embracing of God's loving presence every second of our lives. In fact, with the Spirit's help, we can combine fasting and feasting with great results . . .

- fast from negative talk and feast on kind words
- fast from holding grudges and feast on forgiveness
- fast from self-righteousness and feast on helping those who are struggling.

### Do you fast?

Let the ears fast by not listening to evil talk and gossip. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers and sisters? (St. John Chrysostom).



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### PRAYER PROMPTS

#### THE PLAN

**Pray.** Does God want you to join this fast? Ask other women at church if they'd like to join.

**Mark your calendar.** Monday, October 7 until Friday, October 12

**Fast.** Do not share any details that another may have shared with you whether in confidence or not, with another person. Reflect and pray using the fast prayer prompt.

**Feast.** When you feel the urge to share, pray for that person instead. Use the feast prayer prompt.

#### MONDAY

**Fast:** "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye?"  
(Matthew 7:3-5, *NLT*)

**Feast:** Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self . . . Doesn't keep score of the sins of others . . . Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything.  
(1 Corinthians 13:4-7, *MSG*)

#### TUESDAY

**Fast:** A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28, *NIV*)

**Feast:** LORD, guard my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3, *NIRV*)

#### WEDNESDAY

**Fast:** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it

may benefit those who listen.  
(Ephesians 4:29, *NIV*)

**Feast:** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (Colossians 4:6, *NIV*)

#### THURSDAY

**Fast:** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.  
(1 Peter 2:1, *ESV*)

**Feast:** LORD, who dares to dwell with you? Who presumes the privilege of being close to you, living next to you in your shining place of glory? Who are those who daily dwell in the life of the Holy Spirit? They are passionate and wholehearted, always sincere and always speaking the truth—for their hearts are trustworthy. They refuse to slander or insult others; they'll never listen to gossip or rumors, nor would they ever harm another with their words. (Psalm 15:1-3, *TPT*)

#### FRIDAY

**Fast:** Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.  
(James 1:26, *NIV*)

**Feast:** Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.  
(Romans 12:11-12, *MSG*)

*Some material sourced from [flowingfaith.com](http://flowingfaith.com), [www.jellytelly.com](http://www.jellytelly.com), [khanya.wordpress.com](http://khanya.wordpress.com)*