

# Prayer and Fasting

When Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church, they "prayed with fasting." (**Acts 14:23**) In **2 Corinthians 6:4-f**, Paul wrote of those who were approved as ministers of God in "patience...labors...fastings..." etc. The King James version has "fasting" in **1 Corinthians 7:5**, saying husband and wife should not stay apart "except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence."

By Robert Turner

"Fasting" literally means abstinence from food, not eating; but it also has a religious significance, as seen above. There is no evidence that the ceremonial fasting of Judaism is bound upon the church, but we can see that fasting was practiced by early New Testament Christians. It seems the reference is to time set apart for spiritual matters, probably including the abstinence from food in this context, so that undivided attention might be focused upon eternal rather than upon temporal things.

The repeated association of fasting with prayer, both in the Old and New Testament is not without significance. When one takes "time out" to think of God

and eternity, what could be more natural than this quiet intimate communication. And conversely, as sincere personal prayer is neglected, fasting would be abandoned.

Some religions have made a mockery of fasting by their "Mardi Gras" (fat Tuesday) -- a day of uninhibited debauchery in preparation (?) for the fast of "Lent". And we suppose there will always be those who "fast to be seen of men." We can only pity such, and pray that our avoidance of such extremes will not be considered valid excuse for doing nothing whatsoever.

Do we fear to be alone with God? Or is it our conscience we dare not face, in quiet meditation? Is this world so important to us that we cannot shut it out, even for an hour of Bible reading and introspection?

Public worship, valid and proper, cannot take the place of private communion with God. "Enter thy closet" (**Mt 6:6**) "and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."



Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Wanda Price (Ada Owen's sister)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Joy Powell (Tori Luther's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	<b>William Herd</b>	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Ray Humphrey (Seth's dad)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Esther Biddle

### December Birthdays

- 2-Katelyn Sullivanne
- 5-Rusty Weldon
- 5-Charlie Johnson
- 5-Allie Hosey
- 8-Macy Johnson
- 9-Anna Acuff
- 11-Alex Nguyen
- 13-Dave Hosey
- 13-Will Bruce Harris
- 14-Beth Lingerfelt
- 17-Joseph Miller
- 18-Tin-Yau Tam
- 19-Matt Loggins
- 20-Chris Zeanah
- 20-Brandon Walker
- 20-Meredith Reid
- 20-Micah Waters
- 21-Holly Johnson
- 21-Andrew Dunaway
- 22-William Herd
- 22-Carter Burns
- 24-Jessica Yates
- 27-Jacob Neeley
- 28-Turner Stephens
- 28-Gabby Borden
- 29-Christian McGee

### News and Notes

- ☒ - Please remember the Tam's in your prayers as they are away in China until mid-January.
- ☒ - Please remember in your prayers those who are travelling during the holidays.
- ☒ - Jessica Shaver had successful knee surgery on wed.
- ☒ - Pray for Betty Bradford as she suffers from a wound in her foot.
- ☒ - Cards for the upcoming student study and weekend meeting with Doy Moyer are in the foyer.
- ☒ - Please pray for Lisa Carter (Luke's mom) as (colon) cancer has spread to her lungs. She has been accepted to go to M D Anderson and will be admitted on Jan 13th.
- ☒ - Charles herd, William's father, remains in serious condition in CA.
- ☒ - Gerald White continues to recover at home.
- ☒ - Teachers and hosts are needed for the upcoming monthly kids class.

# The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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## The Christian and His Responsibility to the Government

By Les Maydell



### Thoughts to Ponder

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. (**Romans 13:1**)

Man has always had a problem in fulfilling his responsibilities to the government, especially when he disagrees with its policies. Many Christians in South Africa were upset with the last government because they were treated unfairly. Lately I have noticed that many Christians are upset with our present government because of its corruption, failure to keep promises, and inability to reduce crime. The government has also passed many ungodly laws such as the removing of the death penalty, the legalizing of gambling, and abortion on demand. I believe that South Africa was also the first country in the world to legalize homosexual marriages. Just about every Christian I know has been affected by crime in some way. This has led to feelings of anger and bitterness towards our government and towards our fellow men. What must we Christians do in this situation?

First of all I think we should not expect our government to be a good government. Our government was elected by majority rule. Are the majority of people in this country true Christians? **Matthew 7:13-14** says that few go down the narrow way that leads to life.

The government that ruled in the days of Jesus was also not a good government. The Jews lived under the military rule of a corrupt foreign government, Rome. They had the same attitude problems as we do. They asked Jesus if they should pay taxes to Rome. Jesus' reply was simple and clear,

After Christianity began to grow and spread, Christians were persecuted and even killed by both the local Jewish leaders and the Roman government. Yet Paul wrote, "Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due ..." (**Rom. 13:7**)

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (**Matt. 22:21**).

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He also wrote to Titus, "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived. . ." (**Tit. 3:1-3**). The only time we must not be subject to

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**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**  
Sunday  
Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM  
**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM  
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rulers, is if a ruler tries to force us to disobey God (**Acts 5:27-29**).

Even should we have the most corrupt government in the world, we are not excused from fulfilling our responsibilities to it. If we fail to heed God's commands, we stand guilty before him. "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."

Brethren, what can we do so that we do not bring judgment on ourselves? How do we handle our feelings? Is there anything we can do that will make this country a better place?

First, we need to have a godly attitude towards our failures and the failures of our fellow countrymen. We must hear the teaching of Jesus, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (**Matt. 5:4**). Jesus promises in **Matthew 11:28**, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We must not be like those in the world around us, filled with hate and fear; we must rather mourn for our sins and for theirs. Our godly actions, based on the attitude of mourning, will give us the promised comfort and rest. "Godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted" (**2 Cor. 7:10**). What are some things we ourselves need to repent of?

**1. Pay the government what you owe.** If you are earning money that the government does not know about, it is your duty to report that income to the government and pay tax on it. If you have not been doing this, you need to repent (**Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:6**). You need to phone or go to the tax office and ask for forms to report your income.

**2. Repent of materialism.** Many who fail to do the above, do so because they rather want to spend the money on their own personal needs a fridge, new clothes, or a car, etc. Such people are guilty of the sin of materialism. Many of our brethren, even those who are poor, are guilty of this sin. This is evident by the poor collections I see taken up in congregations around the country. I know of brethren who spend more on TVs, sweets, cool drinks, and other unnecessary items, than they spend on the Lord. When I see only small change and no notes going into the collection plate I know this is so. Then we wonder why God withholds his blessings from us and why we lack joy in our lives (**2 Cor. 8:2; 9:6**).

3. Other attitudes we need to repent of are anger, hate, and bitterness. Sometimes our anger is also rooted in materialism. I have been hijacked at knife-point and also had two other cars stolen. I was very upset, but it made me think: Are my possessions really so important to me? (**Matt. 6:19-21**). We also need to remember that, unless it was for the grace of God, we would also be condemned to hell. Therefore, we need to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us (**Matt. 5:44**). Above all, we must not be guilty of being angry with a whole group or race of people because a few persons of that group or race did evil to us. "Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (**Matt. 5:22**).

**4. If the crime in this country is causing me to worry unduly, I must repent** (**Matt. 6:44**). Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." If we spent more time making sure we are pleasing to God, we would not have so much time to spend in worry. **Philippians 4:6-9** tells us that instead of worrying, we should pray to God, let our minds dwell on good things, and do those things that are right.

There are also some positive things that we can work on that will generally improve things in our country, no matter what kind of government we have.

**1. We must work harder at fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20.** We must teach people the plan of salvation and the way of Christ. The more people who become Christians, the less crime and evil there will be.

**2. We must be like leaven** (**Matt. 13:33**). We must always be a good example. Whenever possible, we must influence those in authority to make wise decisions and we must influence those around us to do the right things. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (**Rom. 12:21**).

**3. We must pray for all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence** (**2 Tim. 2:1-2**).

Brethren, let us concentrate on obeying all the laws of God both laws governing our deeds and laws governing our attitudes. Let us also be certain to obey the laws of the land lest we find ourselves spending eternity with Satan and the same evil men who are presently trying to work us harm. Let us concentrate on spending eternity in the land where God himself is the light, where all is peace and joy.



## Repentance: What Is It?

By Dee Bowman

His name was Jackson. He was a fine old gentleman. He wore a Hoss Cartright hat, sat on the second seat on the right hand side at the services, and was almost always there. He was a fine Bible student, even able to argue for the truth with his friends at the "spit and whittle club" downtown. But he was not a Christian.

He had heard some of the best preachers on the Plains. He always listened attentively, with great interest, and was appreciative of the speaker's efforts. Actually he knew more Bible than many people who had been Christians for many years. But he was not a Christian.

Once, after we had just concluded a fine gospel meeting, I asked my Dad, "Dad, why do you think old Mr. Jackson does not obey the gospel? He knows enough truth to save the world and yet he has never done anything about it. Why do you suppose that is?" With that special glint in his eye that made you know he knew the answer, he said, "Well, he just never has repented."

Dad was right. Again. Mr. Jackson knew. He understood. He could even stand for truth. But he just never had repented.

Repentance is a misunderstood concept. Many people think of it as turning from sin. And it does have to do that, but it is the predicate for it, not the turning itself. In **Acts 3:19** (ASV), Peter says, "Repent, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out." The turning follows the repentance. That's why Brother Jackson had not turned, he had not repented in order that he might turn.

Repentance, then, is neither just sorrow for sin nor is it the turning from sin. It lies between the two. Repentance is the change of a man's will with regard to sin.

Repentance, then, is neither just sorrow for sin nor is it the turning from sin. It lies between the two. Repentance is the change of a man's will with regard to sin. Prompted by godly sorrow, it results in a reformation of life. While it is true that there is no repentance in the absence of godly sorrow and while it is equally true that there is no real repentance if there is not a resultant change of conduct, repentance is actually neither of these. It is the decision to do better.

Repentance is the predicate for all manner of good changes. It will cause one to obey the gospel (**Acts 2:38**). It brings about a clearing of oneself; encourages righteous indignation toward ungodliness; promotes a fear of judgment; demands a desire to do good; directs a zeal for right, a spirit of revenge against evil (**see 2 Cor. 7:11**).

Repentance is the forgotten command in this age. We do not hear enough about it. It deserves better treatment, a greater exposure than it presently receives. Repentance is necessary to reformation. Perhaps if we taught more about it, maybe if we spoke more often in a way so as to convict men of sin so as to show them the need of it, we would see more people obey the gospel, more wayward members decide to do better, more daily devotion to right living. We sometimes forget that repentance is a constant need for each of us.

My little story has a happy ending. Before he died, Mr. Jackson finally repented, was baptized, and spent his last days as a faithful and dedicated child of God. And all because he finally repented.

