

# 40 Days of Distinction

Ivy Baptist Church  
"40 Days of Distinction"  
Corporate Prayer/Spiritual Development/Fasting  
February 14-March 30, 2018  
Dr. Kevin G. Swann, Pastor

**Ephesians 2:10:** "10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (New Living Translation)

Being God's masterpiece is a finished work AND a work in progress at the same time. While God sees us today by POSITION as a masterpiece, with God's strength and power, we must still make daily choices to become what God already sees in us. For us to become this masterpiece we must learn to develop spiritual disciplines. Prayer, fasting and spiritual development are three disciplines that we will focus on during our "40 Days of Distinction."

**The 40 day consecration will involve scripture reading, prayer, meditation, fasting and spiritual activity. In many cases during this time of year, people primarily focus on the fasting (i.e. what they have to "give up"). This year the focus will be on PRAYER THEN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT THEN FASTING (in that order).**

**PRAYER FOCUS:** Here are our corporate prayer targets you should pray for everyday during the "40 Days of Distinction" (NOTE: You may have your own requests as well).

1. Our church's leadership. That we lead with integrity, passion, humility and service.
2. Our Resurrection Sunday service. Capacity crowd at the Hampton Roads Convention Center. A great number saved. Many others to join. A true spirit filled worship experience!
3. For God's love to fill our hearts as our membership grows closer to God and each other.
4. Our Core Values will continue to be displayed with greater clarity: Love, hospitality, service and excellence.
5. We have a passion for reaching the lost and helping the poor all over the world. From local to foreign missions, Ivy will respond in a great way to support while helping us to lead someone to Christ.
6. Increased trust in the Holy Spirit leading and guiding us, even when at times it may be uncomfortable.
7. For our families to be closer to God and each other. To overcome any previous hurts or disagreements within our families. No more drama!
8. For our finances, for us to be more mindful of our spending, our debt and we have a greater heart for giving to the kingdom.
9. For our personal spiritual growth. That we experience God's love, power and grace in new and meaningful ways during our 40 days of Distinction.
10. For our elected officials from our President to our local leaders. That they make decisions with the best interest of the people in mind, not by partisan politics.

**SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:** In addition to praying and fasting, here are some spiritual development items to work on during our 40 Days of Distinction. (NOTE: These do NOT replace our food fasts, but are also a part of our 40 day journey).

1. Heal a broken relationship with a loved one/family/member(s)
2. Start the process that God has been speaking into your life that has left you wondering if you can do it (i.e. go back to school, begin a business plan, write the first chapter of your book, etc.)
3. Identify and grow in the spiritual gifts that God has given to you. Your purpose is connected to your gifts!
4. Demonstrate the love of God in an unusual way each day during the 40 Days of Distinction. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you on who and how to bless them.
5. Transform your mind by reducing/eliminating all forms of negativity. Focus on God and not negative people, places or things, or even past personal experiences.
6. Ask God and trust the Holy Spirit to help deliver you from a bad habit.

### **FASTING: Information for our “40 Days Distinction”:**

1. For this year’s “40 Days of Distinction” there will be **ONE communal fast day**, which are **Wednesdays (6am-6pm)**. **YOU** get to choose the **TYPE** of fast for that day; *normal (no food, only water)*, *absolute (no food or water)* or *partial (i.e. Daniel; no meat, bread or sweets)*. **Additional fasting days are encouraged for individuals who are seeking greater breakthroughs during the 40 days using the options and times listed above.**
2. **Every Friday at 12 noon (EST)** will be a time of corporate prayer via teleconference. (712) 775-7031, Pin: 944-995-007.
3. In addition to fasting, participate in our 10/10/10 program (10 minutes a day to read/memorize scripture, pray and work on a spiritual discipline. Visit our website [www.ivybaptistchurch.org](http://www.ivybaptistchurch.org) to download a 10/10/10 worksheet or visit our church office). Throughout the 40 day period, focus on the Lord strengthening you. Or you can create your own bible reading plan during the 40 day consecration. We recommend using the YouVersion bible app on your electronic device. They have hundreds of bible reading plans to choose from.
4. **Please follow your Doctor’s orders. If you must eat to take your medication, PLEASE DO SO.**

**ADDITIONAL FASTS:** Some additional unique “fasting” items to prayerfully consider during the “40 Days of Distinction” (these do NOT take the place of our food fasts but are in addition to):

1. **A “Financial” Fast:** This type of fast does not involve food but our finances. For the financial fast we commit to not spending money on personal “wants” (i.e. shopping) but only on our needs. Creating a spending list is helpful to know are your priorities (tithes, offerings, bills, etc.) A financial fast is a great way to better understanding your spending habits and what is “wasteful” spending. Being a wise and faithful steward is VERY important to God. During this time you can bless others or support the Capital Stewardship Campaign or pay off a debt, etc. **Use the time you normally spend shopping to pray and read God’s Word. There are NO Sunday grace days with this type of fast.**

2. A “Media” Fast: This type of fast involves abstaining from television shows and all forms of social media during the consecration period. Watching important television items (i.e. the news, etc.) is allowed. To take this fast to the next level, include abstaining from personal text messaging and/or emails along with the other items. This type of fast will help us to “unplug” from the busyness and amount of imagery of the world that floods our minds on a daily basis to focus on God, His Word, ourselves and our families. **Use the time you normally spend online and watching TV to pray and read God’s Word. Sundays are grace days with this type of fast.**

**NOTE: It is expected that no matter the fast you choose that a personal commitment to sexual purity (fornication, adultery, pornography, etc.) during the consecration period will be honored. Married couples should discuss what that looks like for your relationship. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)**

**Please note:**

1. Choose the fast that is most needed and personal to your situation. For example, if finances are a struggle, then the financial fast maybe the best choice. If there are several areas that you need God’s help an absolute or Daniel fast would be best.
2. Regardless of the type of fast you choose, time spent with God reading and praying is essential to an effective 40 day consecration period.
3. Find a prayer partner for the 40 day period. Having someone told hold you accountable will help you on the days where you may struggle (have distractions) during the fast.
4. And Remember “*There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*” Romans 8:1 (NKJV) If you fall short get back up and don’t feel defeated, We are VICTORIOUS in Christ Jesus.

**Meditation Scriptures to read during the 40 days...***Know that God sustains us, not food or things (distractions). Fasting and praying help us to begin to digest God’s love and His word so that our spirit man can be fed and grow in Him. During this time of PRAYER and FASTING, we want to develop a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with God. Our prayer is to...Renew a right spirit within me Lord!*

**Prayer**

**Psalm 91:14**  
**Daniel 9:1-5**  
**Joel 1:14**  
**Matthew 6:1-18 (5-15)**  
**Mark 1:35**  
**Colossians 4:2**

**Fasting Corporately**

**1 Samuel 7:5-6**  
**Ezra 8:21**  
**Ester 4:15-17**  
**Isaiah 58:6-14 (key 6-8)**  
**Jonah 3:3-10 Matthew**  
**9:15**