

A steward with wisdom and skill to provide,
With feelings and sympathies quick.
We crave such a leader our course to attend
As long as we sojourn on earth;
Dear Jesus, in love Thine ambassador send,
And teach us to value his worth. -F. Windridge

Prayer and Fasting

While calling for a day of prayer and fasting is very much considered a thing of the past in our day and, in many cases, often misunderstood and abused, and as with many other means that God has given us to use, our corruption tends to trust in the means instead of the Lord who has provided them. Yet, there is a right way to observe them, having a long Biblical and Reformed precedent based upon the Scriptures. In this short, very limited meditation, it is impossible to do justice to a topic preached to the faithful over the church's long history. Yet it would seem unprofitable to call the congregation together for such a day without some understanding of what it is and expose myths surrounding it. As all things are to be based upon the Scriptures, let us look at three examples from them and briefly apply this biblical practice.

In Ezra 8, Ezra proclaims a payer and fast to seek God in order to receive the protection needed for all who were making the long journey back to the land of Israel. Prior to this, Ezra had spoken highly of the Lord to the king and would have now been ashamed to ask the king for a band of horsemen and soldiers to protect them. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. (Ps 20)

In II Samuel 12, the Lord sends Nathan to expose David's sins of adultery and murder, of which he was guilty. Following the proclamation of the judgment against his house and David's confession of sin, Nathan tells David that the child shall surely die. David besought the Lord for the child and fasted. After seven days, the child died, David arose, anointed himself, went to the house of the Lord to worship, and then broke his fast.

In Acts 14, after ordaining men to Church office, Paul prayed with fasting and commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

In summary, we can see from the Scriptures that whether the prayer was answered in the manner as it was expressed, the opposite of the supplication, or commending the present action into the hands of the Lord for future blessing, the supplicants did not desire to turn the will of God to their own wills, quite the contrary. Knowing that the will of the Lord is supreme over all, let us entrust ourselves and the outcome of these means into the hand of the Lord, for we are in a great strait: let us fall now into the hands of the Lord; for his mercies are great.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CONGREGATION

Sioux Falls, SD



*For the LORD is our defence; and the
Holy One of Israel is our king.
Psalm 89:18*

Services at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.