

Micah 2011

OCTOBER 16TH 2011

On Sunday October 16th, churches around the world will be holding a focus event called Fast, Pray, Rebuild. This service, which will focus on Isaiah 58, is a chance to pray and take action about poverty and injustice in your local community and across the world. We would love it if you would join us!

We have chosen this date as it is the closest Sunday to International Anti-Poverty Day – October 17th. It would be great to stand together on this day, however do feel free to arrange your event to suit your needs.

We want to affirm God's call for us to live with integrity and justice. This is a message Isaiah proclaimed in his mighty call for righteous behaviour in Chapter 58, calling Israel to **fast, pray, and rebuild** a nation based on godly principles of honesty and justice – to care for the poor and to 'loose the chains of injustice.' (Is 58:6) This call encapsulates all areas of life: from our personal lives – our relationships with families and friends and the way we react to issues in our local communities – to big issues affecting us all in business and government. In a world racked with poverty, suffering and injustice, Christians are calling for ethical leadership (we call this 'good governance') and Micah 2011 gives us all a chance to pray and commit to building just communities.

Why not create a service based on these three themes? Fast, pray and rebuild...

Ways to fast at Micah 2011...

For Isaiah, fasting is an opportunity to create a just society. It is validated by acts of social justice and caring for others. Fasting is an act of humility before God; a way to create space for Him to bring revelation by the Holy Spirit of our true spiritual condition. A true fast will lead to brokenness, repentance, and importantly, change. Your church could fast in different ways...

- A fast from selfishness: Why don't you fast from a favourite pastime (watching TV, facebook, your favourite game).
- Perhaps there are situations in your life causing you bitterness, resentment, greed or jealousy. Why not take the time to check yourself against these emotions and "fast" from selfishness?
- A fast for those who hunger: In the run up to the event ask your congregation to fast for a day, or one meal of the day.

*Loose the chains
of injustice*

Ways to pray at Micah 2011...

The Micah Prayer – This global prayer echoes the themes of Nehemiah who fasted and prayed day and night before he embarked on the mighty task of

restoring Jerusalem. Millions prayed this prayer in 2010 and we want to build interest in the prayer again this year.

Here is a version of the Micah Prayer used by churches across Africa:

*O Lord, our great and awesome God,
loyal to your promise of love
and faithful to all who honour and obey you.
Hear our prayer.*

*We pray for those of us who live in poverty,
we cry out for those who are denied justice
and we weep for all who are suffering.*

*We pray for strength,
that we continue to care for each other,
and that we rise up to the challenge of
poverty and the evil of injustice.*

*We confess that we have not always obeyed you.
We have neglected your commands and have
ignored your call to justice.
We have not always spoken out for justice.
We have been guided by our interests
and divided by our differences.
Forgive us.*

*We remember your promises to fill the hungry with
good things, to redeem the land by your mighty hand
and to restore peace.*

*Father God, help us always to proclaim
your justice and mercy with humility,
so that, by the power of your Spirit,
we can rid the world of the sin of extreme poverty.
As part of your global church, we stand with
millions who praise and worship you.*

*May our words and deeds declare
your perfect goodness,
love and righteousness to both the
powerful and the powerless,
so that your Kingdom may come
on earth as it is in heaven.
Amen*



Here are some ways you can pray...

- Say the prayer aloud together. Put it up on powerpoint for everyone to join in, or read it out line by line for everyone to repeat.
- Ask children to lead a children's prayer for everyone. You can find the prayer at: www.micahchallenge.org/campaigns
- Set up a prayer wall in a prominent place and get people to add their prayers for the poor. You could write the prayers on paper cut out in the shape of hands to symbolize us using our hands to pray and rebuild.
- Pray about each of the Millennium Development Goals. (There are children's prayers based on the Millennium Development Goals to download from: www.micahchallenge.org/campaigns)
- Prayer stations – For those uncomfortable using a written prayer, your church only ever prays spontaneously or you just want to get creative... Set up 8 prayer stations around the room. These will help you pray about 8 different aspects of poverty. You can download these themes from: www.micahchallenge.org/about-us/mdgs

rebuild the ancient ruins

In groups, spend some time in the service praying for the following. (If it is not possible to pray in groups, you could ask people to prepare prayers on the topics below):

1. **God's justice.**

'Quiet corruption' such as tax dodging, bribery, poor regulations and failure to deliver services means we lose over US\$1 trillion every year worldwide – money which should be going towards the poor. Pray for God to intervene in the face of such injustice.

2. **Those living with injustice and poverty.**

- Pray for individuals and/or groups in your community who live below the poverty line. These may include people your church is already working with to help.
- Pray for a particular country or people group your church has connections with abroad.

3. **Greater transparency and accountability amongst businesses – for good governance!**

Pray for business people in your church, that they would be honest and fair in all their decisions and that people would honour their integrity.

4. **Our governments – for those leaders whose decisions have the power to make a difference.**

Pray for leaders to support strong anti-corruption measures.

5. **Us, to live with integrity, to stand up to issues of injustice and to have the courage to make a difference.**

Pray for any ideas and thoughts written on your ideas wall. (See 'ways to rebuild' below.)

Ways to rebuild at Micah 2011...

Isaiah speaks of nations and communities being rebuilt upon godly principles of justice, integrity and on behalf of the poor, the oppressed and the needy. In your prayer groups discuss how we can act justly in our communities – On an individual basis (e.g. being an honest person) or in business and government. What does it require of us?

- **Get Creative** – Write down these ideas/thoughts on an ideas wall. Ask groups to write down their ideas on card cut in the shape of hands, to symbolize hands that pray and rebuild. Display the hands or bring them to the front of the church as part of your offering.
- These ideas could be followed-up by your church afterwards e.g. you could present these ideas regarding government and business to your local councillor or governor.
- Activity for children: build a human pyramid in front of the congregation as a visual aid representing God's restoration and rebuilding.
- Take a photo and post on your church's website or send to your local newspaper.

set the oppressed free

spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry

- Invite your local councillor or political representative along to your service. This would be a great way of advocating on behalf of the poor to those who have the power to make a difference! Present your ideas on hands to him/her and ask for a commitment to act.
- Conduct a local survey of issues in your community. Take the results to your local politician. Ask your church leader to go with other local pastors to see the Mayor or state/provincial or national representative to ask about progress on meeting the MDGs.

Break the fast – have a party!

The fasting God calls us to involves standing up for, and helping the oppressed, the poor and the needy. In doing so, God promises to bring restoration and provision. (Is 58:9-12).

Our prayers and intercession on behalf of the poor is one way of standing up for those suffering today.

So, if your church has been fasting from food, have a party to represent and remember God's promise to rebuild and bring restoration! This could be a church lunch/picnic after the service.

If your congregation has been fasting in other ways, perhaps think of how this can be followed up and incorporated into your daily lives.

'A Break the fast' party reminds us that rebuilding justice has benefits for all of us – we are blessed when we "spend" ourselves for the poor (Is 58:10).

There are accompanying preaching and teaching notes, which can be used by your church leader alongside this event. Please follow this link:
www.micahchallenge.org/campaigns/micah-2011

*The Lord will guide you
always; he will satisfy
your needs*



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Micah 2011 – October 16th 2011

www.micahchallenge.org

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101 Newington Causeway, LONDON SE1 6BN

For more ideas to get your church involved in poverty action and advocacy, see www.micahchallenge.org/campaigns