

Guide to Fasting

We fast in response to God's call (Joel 1:14)

- To please the Lord (Zech 7:5)
- To humble ourselves (1 Kings 21:27)
- To seek God's face (Mk 12:30)
- To be heard in Heaven (Ezra 8:23)
- To break spiritual & physical bondages (Mk 9:29)
- To receive revelation from God (Dan. 9:3ff)

Purposes for Fasting

Fasting is a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes. Primarily the purpose of fasting, when practiced with the right motives, is self-humbling (we are totally reliant on God). David said 'I...humble myself with fasting' (Ps 35:13).

Fasting does not change God's hearing so much as it changes our praying. One of the most important aspects of the discipline of fasting is its influence on prayer.

There are times when we struggle with temptation. Commitment to fasting and seeking God provides the spiritual strength to resist the onslaughts of Satan.

Fasting is a physical expression of humility before God. There is no way to measure the power released by prayer and fasting when practiced with the right motives and in accordance with the principles of Scripture.

The power released can change not only individuals or families, but cities, nations, or even entire civilizations. (Jonah 3:1-10)

Seven basic conditions for having prayer answered:

1. Pray to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus

2. Come to God with praise and thanksgiving

(The means of access into his presence) Psalm 100:4

3. Come without condemnation (boldly)

Romans 8:1, Hebrews 4:16

4. Come with right motives

(The great primary motive for prayer is God's glory)

5. Come with right relationships

(Any bitterness or resentment we lay it aside – deal with it before God; and forgive or seek forgiveness) Matthew 6:9-13

6. Accept the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer

(Our prayers are effective according to the power that works in us) Ephesians 3:20

7. Pray in line with the revealed will of God given to us by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Spiritual Preparation

In preparation for a special time with God, examine your heart to detect any un-confessed sin. Scripture records that God always requires His people to repent of their sins before He will hear their prayers.

Physical Preparation

In preparing to fast for several days, it is helpful to begin by eating smaller meals before total abstinence. Reducing the size of meals a few days before beginning the fast will signal to the mind, stomach, and appetite that less food is acceptable. Simultaneously reduce caffeine and sugar intake.

Maintaining Nutritional Balance

For an extended fast, water, fruit and vegetable juices are recommended. The natural sugars in juices provide energy, taste and strength to motivate us to continue the fast. Try to drink fresh juices if possible. Off-the-shelf juice products are acceptable, as long as they are 100% juice with no additional sugar or other additives. Try to avoid milk and any product containing protein or fat. True spiritual fasting focuses on God. Centre your attitudes, your actions, your motives, desires, and words, your total being on Him. There is something about fasting that sharpens the edge of our intercession and gives passion to our requests.

The Normal Fast

Abstaining from all food and drinking only water and juice (Luke 4:1,2)

The Partial Fast

The restriction of diet, such as Daniel eating only grains, fruits and vegetables and drinking only water (Daniel 1:12,15 KJV).

The Absolute Fast

Abstaining from both food and water. This type of fast should not exceed three days.

Specific Fast

Abstaining from something that brings pleasure such as media, a favorite food, beverage or recreation. This is good if medical reasons prohibit fasting from food. God honors the intent of the heart.

Congregational Fast

Joining together with other believers or a small group to “tag team” on an extended fast (i.e. one person fasts one day, the next the next day, etc...) (2 Chron. 20).

Fasting can take other forms than abstinence from food:

During the fast:

- Fast from TV or your favorite programs and pray instead
- Give up that Saturday morning golf and pray instead
- Give up other sports or outings/activities and instead use the time to pray

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