

| **FASTING BASICS**

Simply stated, biblical fasting is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose. According to the Bible, there are three duties of every Christian: give, pray and fast.

Biblical fasting takes a lot of discipline and strength—strength which you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, says Matthew 6.

The Christian Church has a rich history of fasting. Moses, Elijah, Esther, Nehemiah, Daniel and Paul, fasted at crucial points. Jesus both taught and modelled fasting. Godly men and women throughout the centuries have used fasting as a means to draw near to God

Why should I fast?

Christian fasting is more than just skipping a few meals. It is giving up eating for a period of time to focus more completely on God. There are a number of possible reasons for fasting:

1. Are you in need of healing or a miracle?
2. Do you need the tender touch of God in your life?
3. Is there a dream inside you that only He can make possible?
4. Are you in need of a fresh encounter?
5. Do you desire a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord?
6. Are you ready to have heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?
7. Do you need to break away from bondages that have been holding you hostage?
8. Is there a friend or loved one that needs Salvation?
9. Do you desire to know God's will for your life?
10. Engaging in spiritual warfare

What Christian fasting is not...

- Not a way to “pay” for your sins or “earn” God’s love. Not a way to “force” God to do something.
- Not a way to show off or prove your spirituality.
- Not a way to lose weight or improve your health.

When you fast...

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Be prepared to be a little more tired or feel cold
- On a longer fast you might need more rest than usual
- If you normally consume caffeine you will probably have a headache
- Those who have health problems that may be affected by fasting should check with their doctor first before fasting more than one day

What to do when you fast...

- Dedicate the time/money you would normally spend on eating to God
- Set aside extra time for prayer and meditation (otherwise you are just skipping meals)

Types of fasts...

- Partial fast: give up some, but not all foods (e.g. give up meat, sweets, etc.)
- Complete fast: give up all food, and take only water and juice
- Non-food fasts: give up TV, computer games, etc.
- Daniel fast: Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruits and vegetables
- (more details on Types of Fasting notes)

BIBLICAL FASTING FOCUS

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

ROMANS 12:1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.”

MATTHEW 6:33

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

ISAIAH 58:6

“[Is] not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”

We encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer and let your decisions about your biblical fasting come from Him. Ask the Lord to show you areas to target during your time of fasting and prayer. List down your prayer requests.

HOW TO END A FAST

Generally, you should take the same amount of time as you spend fasting to ease back into regular eating. This is especially important for fasts longer than 1-2 days.

Biblical examples and commands concerning fasting

Judges 20:26 – Israel fasted for victory in war.

1 Sam 1:6-7 –Hannah fasted for a son,

1 Sam. 7:6 –Israel fasted in repentance,

1 Sam. 31:13 –Men of Jabesh Gilead fasted in mourning for Saul,

2 Sam. 1:12 –David and his men fasted in mourning for Saul, Jonathan, and the fallen of Israel,

2 Sam: 12 –David fasted for mercy upon his child,

1 Kings 21:27 –Ahab fasted for mercy,

2 Chron. 20:3 –Jehoshaphat and Israel fasted for help and protection,

Ezra 8:21-23 –Ezra and the people fasted for help and protection,

Nehemiah 1:4 –Nehemiah fasted in mourning and for help upon Jerusalem,

Nehemiah 9:1,2 –Israel fasting in mourning and repentance,

Esther 4:16 & 9:3 –Esther and friends fasted for victory,

Psalms 35:13,14–Fasting in prayer and mourning,

Psalms 69:10,11– Fasting in prayer and mourning,

Isaiah 58:6-8–The fast which pleases God,

Jeremiah 36:9 –Israel fasted for mercy

Joel 1:14; 2:12,15–God commanded fasting and repentance,

Jonah 3:5–The Ninevites fasted in repentance for mercy,

Daniel 9:3–Daniel fasted for wisdom,

Matthew 4:2 –Jesus fasted when tempted in the wilderness,

Matthew 6:17-18 – Jesus promised that the Father would bless fasting,

Matthew 9:14-15 – Jesus said his disciples would fast,
Luke 2:37–Fasting was part of Anna’s service to God,
Acts 13:2–Fasting was part of the ministry of the workers at Antioch
Acts 13:3 & 14: 23–Ordination was accompanied by fasting