

FASTING

Fasting is abstaining from food for a spiritual purpose.

Fasting is not a tool to twist the arm of God so that He will give you exactly what you want. Fasting has a spiritual purpose, and that purpose is to get your flesh out of the way so that the Spirit of God can move in your life. Fasting removes the barriers to communication with God and allows the spirit man to commune directly with the heavenly Father – without disturbance. When a person makes a determination to fast, they are making a determination to remove the obstacles in their life to total submission to the will of God. No wonder Satan is determined to eradicate this practice! Fasting tears down his strongholds. Fasting clears the way for our victory. Satan will do anything to prevent that.

Man is a triune being made up of body, soul and spirit. It is the spirit that came from God and longs to be reunited with God. Given the opportunity, the spirit will reach out to God and communicate with Him. These three parts of the person, however, compete for influence. Your spirit can influence your soul, and your soul can influence your flesh. If you are in tune spiritually with God, your soul has no choice but to delight in the decisions of your spiritual life. Your flesh submits to the authority of your soul.

WHY FAST?

- Fasting enables you to break the hold of the flesh and bring your appetites into control. It places you in submission to the Spirit of God.
- Fasting helps to build godly character. As we spend time with God, we become more like Him in our speech, thinking, behavior, etc.
- Fasting helps to loose the chains of bondage. Fasting breaks spiritual strongholds. (Isaiah 58:6)
- Regular fasting can help protect us from the blindness of our own opinions and desires.
- Fasting will help us to be led by the Spirit instead of being led by faulty judgments.
- Fasting is a powerful tool for healing and restoration (Isaiah 58:8)
- Fasting crucifies the flesh. We are not to live our lives pursuing whatever gratifies the cravings and appetite of the flesh (the lower, carnal nature). Fasting enables you to break the hold of the flesh and bring your appetites into control.
- Fasting helps us to hear the voice of God more clearly.
- Fasting opens your spirit to the supernatural power of God.

FOUR KINDS OF FASTS

1. The **normal fast** is going without food for a definite period during which you ingest only liquids (water and/or juice). The duration can be 1 day, 3 days, 1 week, 1 month or 40 days. Extreme care should be taken with longer fasts, which should only be attempted after medical advice from your physician.
2. The **absolute fast** allows no food or water at all, and should be short. Moses fasted for 40 days, but this would be a challenge for anyone without supernatural intervention. Be sure to test the spirit that tries to talk you into a 40-day fast, even if it includes liquids.

3. The **partial fast** is one that omits certain foods or is on a schedule that includes limited eating. It may consist of omitting one meal a day. Eating only fresh vegetables for several days is also a good partial fast. John Wesley ate only bread (whole grain) and water for many days. Elijah practiced partial fasts at least twice. John the Baptist and Daniel with his three friends are other examples of those who participated in partial fasts. People who have hypoglycemia or other diseases might consider this kind of fast.
4. A **rotational fast** consists of eating or omitting certain families of foods for designated periods. For example, grains may be eaten only every fourth day. The various food families are rotated so that some food is available each day.

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL FASTING

Declare, Determine, Commit And Dedicate

- Declare that you are fasting and commit to it. By making this declaration, you are putting every part of your being on alert. You are letting your body and mind know what you intend to do. Set the boundaries of your fast. Determine what type of fast you will go on and how long the fast will be.
Determine your purpose for fasting. Are you fasting for divine guidance and revelation in a certain area of your life; the salvation of a loved one; to break a spirit of strife in your home or workplace; or to sever ungodly soul ties? Are you deciding whom to marry; where to move, or do you desire to draw closer to God?
Commitment and Dedication: Write a statement of commitment to God about why you are fasting and what you believe will be accomplished during this time. Write a brief prayer of dedication, devoting this time of denial to God and to His purposes in your life.

Repent Of Your Failings And Shortcomings

- Most people have so many things that stand between them and God that they need several days just to clear the air and be ready to communicate well. Fasting is not just for the purpose of resolving specific problems. It has the purpose of renewing and strengthening your relationship with God so that your everyday prayers can be more effective.
- If you fast, yet you have something in your heart against your neighbor – grudges, unforgiveness, bitterness, strife, envy, or backbiting – don't expect to get miracles from God. Any of those things will bring you into bondage if they are allowed to rule in your heart. Use this time of prayer and fasting to bring these things to the light and allow God to deal with them.
- Let God search your heart and bring to light hindrances to answered prayer of which even you are not aware.

Intercede For Others

- When you have prayed for others, the Father will stretch out His hand to you and invite you to receive all that you are personally lacking.
- Intercede for the leaders of our society. Intercede for our community leaders. And intercede for our spiritual leaders.

- We are admonished by Jesus Himself to pray for more laborers for the spiritual harvest. If we should pray for them to get into the harvest, surely we can uphold them during their labors in the field.

- As Believers, we are all members of the same Kingdom. Support one another. Pray for one another. Intercede for one another.

Boldly Present Your Own Needs Before The Lord

- *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6-7
- God shows His interest in your need by His concern with your “daily bread.” He wants to supply for you personally. Don’t be hesitant to take your petitions before Him. Do it boldly. God wants to help YOU.

Concentrate On The Word Of God

- Once you have begun your fast, don’t spend all your time in front of the television. Too many foods are advertised on television. The most important reason not to watch a lot of television, however, is that television won’t feed your soul (or your spirit).
- Don’t waste your time on magazines or other frivolous reading materials either. Use this opportunity to get into the Word of God. Meditate on God’s promises. Let your mind dwell on them. Claim them for yourself.
- The Word of God is so powerful that it can penetrate any obstacle, any circumstance, or any problem in life. It is more powerful than a two-edged sword. It can separate the spirit from the soul. It can slice into the thoughts and intents of the heart. (See *Hebrews 4:12-14*)

Don’t Neglect The Prayer Aspect Of Fasting

- Our principle purpose in prayer is not to wrestle with the Enemy. If you allow him to, Satan will dominate your prayer time. The purpose of prayer is to communicate with the Father, to tell Him of our love, to worship and adore Him, and to intercede before Him for others.
- Don’t pray for the Devil to go. Command him to go. Use the authority God has given you. Put the Enemy in his place. Let him know that he has no right to disturb you while you are communing with the Father.
- Don’t hesitate to bind any evil spirit that torments you during prayer and fasting. Don’t ask God to take care of them. He has given you authority to take care of them. Don’t be afraid. Speak directly to the demons. Bind them in Jesus’ name. Command them to take their hands off of your family, off of your business, and off of your house.

Get Your Mind On God

- Be aware of God’s presence with you. Be conscious of His working in your life. If you let your mind wander, God can never reveal to you those better things that He has prepared for you.
- Prayer is a two-way conversation. We speak to God, and God speaks to us. When God is speaking you must not be thinking about the score of your favorite football game or the current special offer at the corner restaurant.

Learn To Sense The Presence Of God

- Many people do not get their prayers answered because they cannot sense His presence; and how can you converse with Him effectively if you cannot even sense His presence? Visualize Jesus as you talk intimately with Him. Look into His face. Talk to

Him. Tell your troubles, but bring His word to Him about those troubles too. Confide in Him. Lay bare your soul before Him.

- Don't think of Jesus as looking like some painting you have seen and liked. He is like nothing that any human has been able to capture with a paint brush. Look to the Jesus of the Bible, not the Jesus of popular myth.

Hold Steady During The First Few Days

- Be firm during the first three days of your fast. They are the most difficult.
- When those first days have passed, it becomes easier to fast.

Be Aware Of Special Needs

- Some people need to get away from everyone while they are fasting. The normal activities of the household might disturb their concentration.
- Some people need to take time off from work to seek the face of God. If we can take time off for vacations, for hunting season, or just to work around the house for a few days, why not do it for the welfare of our souls?
- If you are married, consider sleeping apart from your spouse while you are fasting. Deny the flesh. *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.* (1 Corinthians 7:5-KJV)

Drink Plenty Of Water While You Fast

- Your body can go a long time without food, but it can only go a few days without adequate liquids. Since you will not be getting the liquids normally contained in most foods, drink a lot of water while you fast. Start drinking more, even before you start. It helps you to flush the poisons out of your system.
- A fast is a good time to get free from your craving for sugar. Too many of us are addicted to sweets. And drinking plenty of water will help you get over this craving. Putting a little lemon or lime in the water may help.

Use Wisdom When Your Fast Has Ended

- When your fast has ended and you begin to eat normally again, use wisdom. Don't gorge yourself with all the food you missed while fasting. You'll destroy all the good benefits you would have derived from the fast.
- Begin to eat slowly, not all at once. Start with soups, fruits and vegetables. And use the opportunity to develop better, healthier eating habits. Now that you have the flesh under control, this will be easier to do.

TIPS FOR JOURNALING WHEN YOU FAST

- 1. Keep a prayer journal... Write out your prayers to God and His response to you**
 - a. Identify and confess all sins during the beginning of the fast and repent.
 - b. Identify any emotional strongholds in your life such as anger, fear, envy, bitterness, unforgiveness, rejection, etc. and apply the Word of God in prayer concerning those areas.
 - c. Ask God to refresh specific areas in your life according to Isaiah 58:11.
 - d. Pray for the anointing of God to destroy yokes and remove burdens in your life or the lives of others according to Isaiah 58:6.
 - e. Pray the Word concerning healing for yourself or someone else according to Isaiah 58:8.
 - f. Expect the benefits of fasting according to Isaiah 58:9.

- 2. If you have difficulty finding things to record in your journal, you may wish to use this list to guide you as you write:**
 - a. What has God revealed to you about Himself?
 - b. What has God revealed to you about His purposes?
 - c. What has God revealed to you about His ways?
 - d. What has God done in your life or through your life that has caused you to experience His presence?
 - e. What Scripture has God used to speak to you about Himself, His purposes or His ways?
 - f. What particular person or concern has God given you a burden to pray for? What has He guided you to pray for in this situation?
 - g. What has God done through circumstances that has given you a sense of His timing or direction concerning any aspect of His will?
 - h. What word of guidance or truth do you sense God has spoken to you through another believer?
 - i. What adjustment is God leading you to make in your life?
 - j. What acts of obedience have you accomplished this week? What further steps of obedience do you know God is wanting you to take?