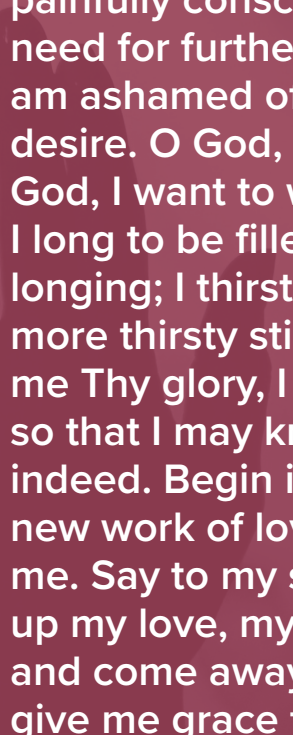




Perimeter
CHURCH

Fasting Guide



“O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, “Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.” Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long.”

A. W. TOZER

PRAYER AND FASTING

Throughout history, God has called on His people to humble themselves through prayer and fasting. **As a spiritual family, we practice prayer and fasting to deepen our intimacy with God.**

Fasting is a spiritual weapon God used to advance His kingdom, move nations, spark revival, and bring victory to the lives of His people.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God says, “If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” Prayer and fasting fulfill these requirements.

If you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. You will discover more time to pray and seek God’s face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sin, you will experience special blessings from God.

Fasting is part of a believer’s life of faith in Christ. In a fast, the believer chooses to do without something that is hard to do without for a set period of time.

Biblical fasting is more than simply not eating, but it is abstinence from food with a spiritual goal in mind. It is always accompanied by prayer in the Bible; it is a form of worship. Fasting is a way of serving God (Luke 2:37) and ministering to the Lord (Acts 13:2).

As we fast over these next few days, let us all be reminded that we do everything for the glory of God.

WHY FAST?

God expects us to fast

“And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face.”
- Matthew 6:16-17

Jesus said “When you fast”, not if you fast. This means that fasting, like prayer, is not an option. Fasting is part of the Christian life.

Jesus fasted

“And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.” - Matthew 4:2

Before His ministry, Jesus fasted for forty days. He knew He needed spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting makes us physically weak, but spiritually stronger and more prepared to do God's work.

The early Church fasted

“Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” -Acts 13:3 (see also Acts 14:23)

The Church fasted for Saul (Paul) and Barnabas. Later, Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders in various churches, fasting and praying before commending these leaders to the Lord.

Fasting demonstrates humility before God

“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer kept returning to my bosom.” - Psalm 35:13 (See also 1 Kings 21:27-29; Ezra 8:21)

Humility lets us experience God's grace. When we humble ourselves in prayer and turn from our wicked ways, God promises to hear us and answer us according to His perfect will.

Fasting makes us sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit

“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry.” - Luke 4:1-2 (See also Acts 13:2, Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29)

We are prone to forget our priorities. Fasting is a visible reminder to us that God takes precedence over all our needs. Fasting lifts up the matter at hand to God who is able to bring about awesome works that bring Him great glory.

Fasting brings about personal and national spiritual revival

“If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”
- 2 Chronicles 7:14

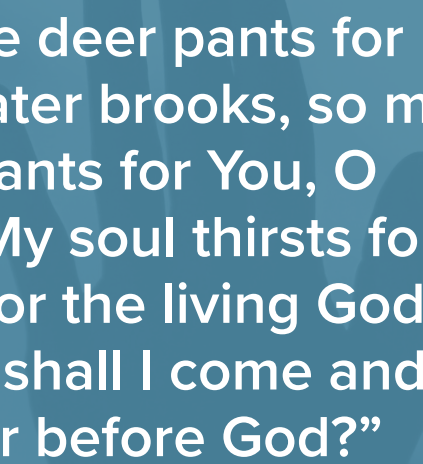
“So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.” - Daniel 9:3

Fasting prompts revival to an individual and to the country

It brings forth a stirring that will heal and change us and prepare us for greater things in God's kingdom.

Fasting is good for our health

Fasting improves our physical condition. Many impurities in the body are burned up when the body is denied food, thus, clearing the mind, cleansing, and healing the body. Even people who are underweight who fast for spiritual purposes have been known to gain weight after completing their fasts.” Many Bible teachers say that a three-day fast is especially beneficial for spiritual cleansing and also for breaking addictive habits.



**“As the deer pants for
the water brooks, so my
soul pants for You, O
God. My soul thirsts for
God, for the living God;
When shall I come and
appear before God?”**

PSALM 42:1-2

FOUR KINDS OF FASTING

There are probably as many ways to fast as there are ways to pray, but these four ideas are a starting point.

1. Normal fast

In a normal fast, a person goes without food for a predetermined amount of time—1 day, 3 days, 1 week, or longer. Water is allowed and necessary, of course. Extreme care should be taken with long fasts, especially if there are any underlying medical conditions. It is wise to consult your physician if you are planning on embarking on a long fast.

2. Partial fast

In a partial fast, a person just eats certain food in a period of time or has one or two meals a day. Daniel and John the Baptist maintained a certain diet during their fasts. John Wesley ate only bread and water for many days as his fast.

3. Juice fast

This is a partial fast specifically restricted to only juices.

4. Object fast

It is possible to fast on something other than food. Some decide to fast on TV or screen time. But for the rest of this guide, we will address food fasts. The key is to replace the time spent on that activity with time devoted to the Lord.

PREPARING TO FAST

1. Set your objective and commit to a type of fast

Why are you fasting? Renewal? Guidance? Healing? Special grace? Ask for leading from the Holy Spirit. Once you know why, you must commit to the fast.

- Choose the type of fast God wants you to undertake.
- Choose how much time you will devote daily to prayer and meditating on God's Word.

2. Be expectant

Be reminded that the Lord listens to a prayer from the heart. Be humble and authentic as we expect results from God.

3. Prepare yourself spiritually

The foundation of fasting is repentance. Unconfessed sin hinders prayers. Seek forgiveness from all you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you as the Holy Spirit leads you.

4. Prepare yourself physically

If you take medication or have a chronic ailment, consult your physician before beginning the fast.

5. Lessen physical activities

Limit your physical and social activities during your fast so you can spend more time in prayer and reading the Bible.

As you dedicate time in fellowship with the Father, ask for guidance. Clearly define your expected personal applications in your life, family, finances, and church. You are entrusting these to God.

Expect God to answer. Remain thankful throughout and after the fast.

CAUTION TO FASTING

While there are benefits in fasting, some should not fast without professional supervision.

For example:

- Persons who are physically too thin or emaciated.
- Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia, or other eating disorders.
- Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- Persons who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases, or who have heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other important organs.
- Individuals who take insulin for diabetes, or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing.
- People taking prescription drugs should consult their attending physician before starting a fast.

“Deep and lasting satisfaction for our souls comes not from the delights of the world or from a merely religious or vertical relationship with God. Satisfaction comes from God to those whose passion in life is to know him in the struggle to be like him in the world.”

JOHN PIPER

DURING A FAST

1. Seek the Lord

During the times you usually allocate for meals, commit to prayer and Bible reading. What you don't eat physically should be compensated spiritually.

2. Commit to change

Work on whatever God convicts you of immediately. If you need to make amends, immediately contact those with whom you have broken relationships. Follow the prompting of the Spirit and record in your journal for future reference and a way to keep yourself accountable.

3. Pray for suggested items

Pray for the items and people on your prayer list, as well as how the Spirit leads. Let us use this time to intercede for our family, church, country, government, Journey Group members, Christians around the world, missions, etc.

4. Fill your mind with the Word of the Lord

Soak in God's Word. Although our body may hunger, our soul must be filled with the spiritual food that will help us to deny our flesh. Consider a fast from food as a spiritual feast.

5. Put yourself on a schedule

Set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen to His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be. Listed below are some ways you can schedule some time or activities to help you stay focused and dedicated during your time of fasting:

- Praise and worship.
- Confession and repentance of sin.
- Meditate on God's Word.
- Pray for His vision in your life and empowerment to do it.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for your leaders, the world's unreached millions, your family, and personal needs.
- Take short, spiritual walks.
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television, computer games, casual internet surfing, movies, parties, or other distractions that may dampen your spiritual focus.

6. Attend Morning Prayer Sessions

Visit perimeter.org/pray for prayer gathering locations and times.

7. Have the right motives

Your fast is to glorify God, listen to Him, be more intimate with Him, and lift your burdens to Him. When your motives are right, God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him in a very special way.

1. End your fast gradually.

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid food immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and your digestive tract can have negative, even dangerous, consequences.

Try several smaller meals or snacks. Ending your fast gradually will result in continued good health. Start with fruits, fruit juice, salads, and soups, and then eventually eat more solid food.

Overall, the following four factors represent what we are trying to accomplish when breaking a fast:

- Frequent meals to fewer meals
- Small meals to larger meals
- Easy to digest to harder to digest
- Less variety to more variety

2. Continue to pray.

Don't let your prayer end the day you finish the fast. Build from the momentum you gained. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Carry the newfound passion with you throughout the rest of the year.

3. Expect greater intimacy with God.

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, seek God's face, and meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence. (John 14:21).

4. Experience the joy of God's presence.

"Thou wilt make known to me the path of life: In Thy presence is fullness of joy; in thy right hand are pleasures forever." - Psalm 16:11

Let us bask in the fullness of joy in the Lord as we abide in His glorious presence. When we have denied our flesh, empowered our spirit with prayer, and solely depended on God for nourishment, we experience God's magnificent power.

Conclusion

A season of fasting and prayer gives us the opportunity to realign our lives according to His will.

As we humble ourselves before Him in prayer, we can expect Him to move mightily in our midst. God's will is for each and every one of us to grow in our understanding of Him. Daily, we need to experience a greater awe of His inexhaustible love, power, and holiness. So seek Him with all your heart; God has promised that you will find Him!

“The key to Christian living is a thirst and hunger for God. And one of the main reasons people do not understand or experience the sovereignty of grace and the way it works through the awakening of sovereign joy is that their hunger and thirst for God is so small.”

JOHN PIPER



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