

FASTING & PRAYER

Matthew chapter 6, shows us three principles or disciplines that a disciple of Jesus should eagerly strive to live by: To give, pray and fast. 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.

WHY SHOULD I FAST?

- If you desire a deeper, intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord?
- If you need the tender touch of God in your life?
- If you are ready to have a heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?
- If you desire to know God's will for your life?
- If you are in need of healing or a miracle?
- If you need to break away from bondages that have been holding you hostage?
- If there is a dream inside you that only He can make possible?
- If there is a friend or loved one that needs Salvation?

Fasting & prayer was an expected discipline in both the Old & New Testament eras. Moses fasted at least two recorded forty-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast, "when you fast," not if you fast.

Fasting & prayer can restore the loss of our "first love" for our Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.

Fasting & prayer is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."

Fasting & prayer enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life. The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you!

Fasting can transform your **prayer life** into a richer and more personal experience.

Fasting & prayer can result in a dynamic personal revival in our own life-and make us a conduit of hope to others.

Fasting and prayer are the only disciplines that fulfill the requirements of 2 Chronicles 7:14.

3 KINDS OF FAST PRESENTED IN THE BIBLE

The type of fast you choose is between you and God - he will honor **your best sacrifice**.

1. **The Normal Fast** | Abstaining from all food, solids or liquid, but NOT from water - Mathew 4:2 | Luke 4:2
2. **The Absolute Fast** | Abstaining from both food and water. Normally this kind of fast should not be for more than 3 days. Because the body begins to dehydrate after 3 days. – Esther 4:16 | Acts 9:9 | Ex 24:38 (*it would be wise to seek direction from a dr. before your attempt this kind of a fast.*)
3. **The Partial Fast - (Daniel Fast)** | a restricted diet rather than complete abstinence from food. | Daniel 10:2-3

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 14:12, 1 Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast!

Some Guidelines

Set reasonable goals for this week of fasting. Consider the following options:

- Fast one meal a day.
- Fast one or two meals per day.
- Fast one or two entire days or more.

If you go completely without food for a full day or longer:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Drink some fruit juice for energy.
- Remember that some medications should not be taken without food.

Cautions

There are some cautions to consider as you contemplate a food fast. It is wise to consult your doctor before you begin your fast to make sure there are not medical reasons why it would be harmful to radically change your diet short-term or long-term.

Persons who should not fast without professional supervision are those who...

- are too thin or are prone to anorexia or bulimia.
- suffer weakness or anemia.
- have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood disorders, or heart disease.
- have chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, or heart.
- are on insulin for diabetes or are hypoglycemic.
- are pregnant or nursing.

Other Types of Fasts

If it is **not possible for you to fast meals**, consider fasting other things such as time spent with TV, the Internet, sports, hobbies, or other interests that command a lot of your time and attention. Replace this time with spending time with God. Spend time reading His word, listening to Him, talk to Him, practice silence and solitude. Use this season of fasting and prayer to slow your pace of life.

10 PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL BIBLICAL FASTING

- **MAKE CLEAR COMMITMENTS**
 - Before you start choose what type of fast you will do? Will it be a normal fast, or a partial fast?
 - Also choose the length. 1 day? 2 weeks? You can always shorten or lengthen it, but start with a clear goal in mind.
 - Don't go overboard. If you are new to fasting don't start out with a 7 day fast
- **REMINDE YOURSELF THAT YOU CAN'T FAIL AT THIS**
 - If you plan on fasting 3 days and fasted 1 day, **that is still worship unto God**. It is not failure - Avoid hard and fast rules that bring self-righteous guilt if you don't follow them.

- **AVOID SKIPPING MEALS WITHOUT PRAYER/WORD**
 - Effectiveness will be lost without spending time with God. Spend time reading His word, listening to Him, talk to Him, practice silence and solitude. Use this season of fasting and prayer to slow your pace of life.

- **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER/LIQUIDS**
 - Water is your best friend during a fast. Drink until you don't want anymore, then get a refill. Water will give you a sense of being full, alleviate hunger pangs, and help flush your body of toxins.

- **EXPECT GOD TO SPEAK**
 - Have a journal to record what God speaks to your heart?

- **EXPECT DISCOMFORT**
 - There are great health benefits to fasting, but they are not gained without hunger pangs or "discomfort."

May God richly bless you as you seek to grow closer to Him through fasting and prayer.