

FASTING

Purpose of fasting:

- Giving up something you love for something you love more!
- Draw closer to the Lord. (Joel 2:12-15) The Lord is not moved by fasting itself.

Reasons to Fast: Reasons vary....Purpose does not!

- When facing major decisions
- In preparation for a great work or major event(s)
- When we are in trouble
- At the beginning of a New Year
- When in repentance.
- When we need specific & clear direction about something/someone
- When someone else is in trouble but not spiritually mature enough to fast for themselves (ie., a child)
- When our health is attacked or seriously threatened
- When the Lord leads/calls us to fast
- When facing a financial need (this was the case with Ezra's fast & the leader's returning from captivity back to Jerusalem carrying the temple treasury with them. There would be thieves along the way so they fasted for God's protection.)
- Personal Examples: 17th of each month for son whose baseball number is 17, first Monday of each month for ministry needs, First Friday of each month for family needs, etc.

Types of Fasts:

- **Full/Complete Fast:** One would drink only liquids—especially water. May consider taking in other liquids such as 100% fruit or vegetable juices or a clear broth (vegetable/chicken/beef). Thru prayer, determine the number of days to set for you full fast. Check with your doctor first.
- **Partial Fast** limiting certain foods for a prolonged time period, i.e., meats or abstaining entirely from all foods for a portion of the day, i.e., until 3 p.m.
- **Daniel Fast** (Daniel 10) fasting from all meats, breads, sweets, and any drink except water for a specific set period of time. Actually one would eat only fruits and vegetable (no rice; rice is not a vegetable, it's a grain/bread) and drink water. Always check with your doctor especially if you have medical conditions. (The biblical Daniel fast lasted 21 days).
- Some people choose to fast from **all media**: no TV, radio, computer! newspaper, magazines, etc., This might be practical for a diabetic desiring to fast. Also effective when "addicted" to these things. Starve your flesh! (Not only are you not giving yourself what you want, you are giving yourself what you truly need) How might your life change if you substituted Bible study and prayer for the latest, greatest..._____?
- **Main fasting** that the Bible talks about is from **food**. Keep that in mind when deciding.
- **Corporate Fasting:** Between groups of believers for a specific purpose yielding powerful results. True, it involves others but still remains *private and personal*. Esther called a corporate fast among her people for protection against extreme danger (Esther 4:16) and Samuel called for a corporate fast for national revival.

How Long Do I Fast?

Beginner: Start slowly. Do not start with a 40-day fast if you have never fasted before!

- One meal (for several days)
- One food/food group for set amount of days/weeks
- Ask the Lord what HE wants YOU to do.

YOU DECIDE! IT'S BETWEEN YOU AND THE LORD!

Helpful Guidelines:

- Consider finding/enlisting a prayer partner or two!
- Keep a journal
 - Journaling helps pass the time
 - Journaling helps keep you on task and focused on the Lord, not food
 - Record what you are hearing from the Lord, the new insights gained while fasting
 - Write down at the beginning of the fast your goals/intended gains from the fast
 - Decide the length of your fast and write your dates down in the form of a contract
Beginning Date _____ **End Date** _____
 - Write down the things you are fasting for
 - Record the results of your fast
 - Record your feelings, physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally during your fast
- Fasting is *before the Lord*, not unto man
 - Let immediate family, close friends know what you are doing
 - Check with you doctor (especially if you are diabetic)

Principles

- When we renounce the natural we release the supernatural.
- Fasting is a biblical discipline.
- Fasting is not just skipping a meal but rather replacing a meal in order to 'feed' more fully on the Lord.
- Fasting may be physical discipline but it is also a spiritual feat.
- Fasting breaks one out of the world's routine, humbles one and brings you back to your first love, causing the roots of your relationship with Christ to grow deeper.
- Fasting invites Christ to share secrets with you about Himself, His plans and His desires for you.
- Fasting is a powerful way to cleanse the body from toxins, over nourishment and disease. It brings with it renewed energy and good health.
- Fasting is a sacrifice born out of expectancy.
- Fasting causes one to be more sensitive to the things of the Holy Spirit. As you flesh dies, your spirit becomes more alive to Him, bringing you to a new level spiritually.
- Faith is required for fasting.
- The Holy Spirit is preparing you for what is ahead when He calls you to fast.
- Fasting enables one to discern between what we want and what we need.
- Fasting brings one in line with God's priorities.
- Life will seem to slow down when you are fasting.
- Afflict and mourn are words associated with fasting.
- Fasting itself is a constant prayer before God.
- Fasting breaks the yoke of bondage.

Tips:

- Rewards of fasting do not always come during the fast but after a time of fasting.
- Do not be legalistic when fasting. Be obedient, but not legalistic. Listen to/for the Lord.
- Do not police others you know are fasting themselves. Mind your own fast.
- Listen for the Lord about your fasting while you are fasting; He may speak to you about modifying your fast. Obey Him.
- Expect spiritual opposition during and even perhaps after your fast.

Recommended Reading/Resources:

Elmer L. Towns, *Fasting for Spiritual Break Through*, Regal Books