
PRAYER FASTING - Forsaking the Physical to Focus on the Spiritual

What is fasting?

- Fasting is intentional abstinence from food for a specific amount of time for a reason.
- Fasting is not skipping meals haphazardly, because you did not have time to eat.
- Fasting is planned self-denial of the physical pleasures of food to seek the spiritual benefits of God in prayer.

Is fasting optional or required according to Scripture?

- ✓ Fasting is required and mentioned in the Bible as much as, if not more than, prayer (cf. an exhaustive Bible concordance).
- ✓ God expects Christians to **give** (“when you give...” cf. Matt. 6:2ff)
- ✓ God expects Christians to **pray** regularly (“when you pray...” cf. Matt. 6:5-7).
- ✓ God expects Christians to **fast** regularly (“when you fast...” cf. Matt. 6:16-17; Esth. 9:31).
- ✓ God did not say “if,” but “when.”
- ✓ Therefore, just as God expects us to give and pray regularly, He expects us to fast consistently. Routine and special fasts are required.

What are the three type of biblical fasts?

1. **Standard Fast** - (Matt. 4:2 Luke 4:2) - Abstaining from food, caffeine, soft drinks, and junk food, but not water or sleep for a specific amount of time, a day, week, or longer.
2. **Partial Fast** - (Dan. 1:5; 9:3) – Restricting the diet to healthy foods necessary for the nourishment of the body while eliminating junk food, rich food or soft drinks and caffeine.
3. **Complete Fast** - (Acts 9:9) - Abstaining from food and drink. It is highly recommended not to withhold water for more than three days since the body needs water more than it needs food.

- ❖ We recommend the **Standard Fast** for those who can do it, otherwise the partial fast for those who are restricted diets or have medical concerns.

What blessings come from fasting?

- Your light will break out like the dawn (Isa. 58:8).
God will make sure you shine brightly among all people.
- Your recovery will speedily spring forth (Isa. 58:8).
God will help you to overcome obstacles and setbacks quicker.
- Your righteousness will go before you (Isa. 58:8).
God will open doors of protection and opportunity for you.
- The glory of the LORD will be your rear guard (Isa. 58:8).
God will limit unexpected, unnecessary problems. (God’s got your back!)
- When you call the LORD, He will answer you (Isa. 58:9).
God will answer your prayers in a definite way. You’ll be heard on high.

What causes Christians to fail fasts?

- Uncommitted to the spiritual things of God
- Not a Disciple of Christ – failure to grasp and follow the biblical prescription for discipleship (A Christian disciple must be a disciplined follower of Jesus Christ.)
- Disinterest – failure to understand the necessity of fasting and its awesome impact
- Ignorance of how to successfully fast
- Flesh-Driven Priorities – letting temporal desires for food and physical comfort overcome the higher spiritual desires of seeking God's will and spiritual victory
- No Self-Control – which is a part of the fruit of the Spirit
- Wrong Reasons – treating a spiritual fast as a physical diet

? **What obstacles might cause your fast to fail?**

? **How do you plan to avoid or overcome them?**

? **Who can provide supportive accountability?**

Why am I fasting? (Check one to three reasons.)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To make your voice heard on high (Isa. 58:4b) <input type="checkbox"/> To loose the bonds of wickedness (Isa. 58:5) – salvation, <u>to win souls to Christ Jesus!</u> <input type="checkbox"/> To undo the bands of the yoke (Isa. 58:5) – freedom in Christ, to loose Christians <input type="checkbox"/> To let the oppressed go free (Isa. 58:5) – deliverance <input type="checkbox"/> To break every yoke (Isa. 58:5) – rescue <input type="checkbox"/> To divide your bread with the hungry (Isa. 58:5) <input type="checkbox"/> To bring the homeless poor into the house (Isa. 58:5) <input type="checkbox"/> To cover the naked (Isa. 58:5) <input type="checkbox"/> To gain divine wisdom and understanding (Dan. 9:3, 12) <input type="checkbox"/> To change God's mind (Jonah 3:5, 10) <input type="checkbox"/> To effectively mourn over a significant loss (2 Sam 1:12) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To repent of sin (1 Sam. 7:6) <input type="checkbox"/> To seek deliverance from the LORD (2 Chron. 20:3-4) <input type="checkbox"/> To humble yourself before God (Ezra 8:21) <input type="checkbox"/> To gain divine protection (Ezra 8:22-23) <input type="checkbox"/> To deliver others (Neh. 1:3-4; Dan. 6:18) <input type="checkbox"/> To identify with and confess the sins of your people (Neh. 9:1) <input type="checkbox"/> To gain spiritual boldness and resolve (Esther 4:16) <input type="checkbox"/> To regain a focus solely upon the LORD God (Dan. 9:3) <input type="checkbox"/> To call a solemn assembly or holy convocation (Lev. 23:36; Joel 1:14) <input type="checkbox"/> To return to the Lord with all your heart (Joel 2:12) <input type="checkbox"/> To seek God's favor (Zech. 8:19-22) <input type="checkbox"/> To gain spiritual strength over spiritual enemies (Matt. 4:2, 11) |
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- To effectively serve in the presence of God (Luke 2:37)
- To hear who the Holy Spirit wishes to specifically set apart as His servants (Acts 13:2)
- To consecrate people for holy service (Acts 13:3; 14:23)
- To buffet the body or put it under spiritual subjection (Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 6:13 20; 9:27)

WORDS OF WISDOM DURING YOUR FAST ¹

If you have never fasted, start with small time increments. Do not start off with a forty day fast, unless God has called you to such a fast, you are sure God has called you to it, and you are committed to listen to His instructions during it, even when or if to end it prematurely. It would be better to start with partial fast or shorter standard fast.

During Jesus' fast Satan came to discourage Him. Prepare yourself now with the word of God to defeat the enemy of your soul, when he shows up. And above all worship the Lord during your fast through prayer, praise, Scripture and holy living. Victory in Christ awaits you!

Before starting a fast of three (3) days or more:

- Divine direction - don't copy others; be sure you are led of the Lord as to what type of fast and how long.
- No caffeine - discontinue a few days BEFORE the fast
- Eat less the day before a fast to help your body adjust
- Eat fruit as a meal before the fast
- Temptations - know that the evil one will try to discourage and distract you during your fast. Be sure to trust God, not your feelings or stomach during this time.

During the fast:

- Dress warmly - expect to feel colder during a fast, especially in your hands and feet
- Use warm, not hot, water for showers and baths
- **Avoid ice cold beverages, caffeine (coffee, pop), sugars (sweets).**
- Exercise regularly, but moderately - if you experience weakness, discontinue
- Fast in secret - don't brag or complain to others you are fasting; it is between you and the Lord.

After the fast:

- Avoid starches for a few days
- Chew your food well
- Stop eating when you feel full
- Don't become physically active too soon
- Eat healthy food

¹ Parts of "Words of Wisdom" were adapted from <http://www.thebiblestudypage.com/fast.htm>.

Here is a suggested schedule for reintroducing food after a complete fast:

- DAY 1: liquids every couple of hours in small amounts; fresh fruit juices are great
- DAY 2: eat small quantities of fruit, milk and yogurt in small quantities
- DAYS 2 and 3: (the longer you fast, the more time you should allow before reintroducing these foods)
- In small quantities: salads, homemade vegetable soup without grease, cooked vegetables
- After a few days: cheese, nuts, eggs
- Finally: fish, poultry and meats

PARTIAL FAST:

A partial fast eliminates certain foods, drinks or non-food pleasures. The Lord may lead you to do a partial fast eating and/or drinking certain foods and avoiding others. For example:

- drink fruit juices, eat only fruit, nuts and vegetables
- eat bland foods (foods which are nutritional, but not rich) eliminating meats, sweets

DO **NOT** FAST WITHOUT YOUR DOCTOR'S CONSENT IF YOU ARE:

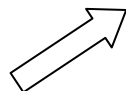


- a diabetic
- malnourished
- pregnant or nursing
- on prescribed medication or have chronic medical conditions

We want to help you grow closer to the Lord Jesus Christ!

Questions?

Ask!



Click to e-mail us a question.