



Fasting

A Spiritual Discipline

People may consider the spiritual discipline of fasting as an intimidating practice. In fact, our lives in western culture are often influenced and preoccupied with consumption; and the thought of going “without” may produce apprehension.

However, throughout Scripture we see how the Lord’s people experience depth in their devotion to Him by expressing their reliance on Him through fasting. However, we should not fast as a strategy to get something we want; rather, fasting is a responsive action to welcome the Lord and see Him at work in our lives and through our lives.

With the indulgences we enjoy in western culture, we may consider fasting from things or activities other than food, such as television, movies, hobbies, or social media. Thus, fasting involves abstaining from something (e.g., food, entertainment, or other habitual tendency) to experience something different; and with spiritual fasting, the Lord may reveal this “something” for our lives. The objective is to remove something we usually consume so that we can experience Jesus more profoundly.

Biblical Examples of Fasting

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| Luke 4:1-2 | Esther 4:3 |
| Nehemiah 1:4 | Acts 13:2, 14:23 |
| 2 Samuel 12:17-23 | Matthew 6:16 |

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Motivations for Fasting

According to Scripture, there are good and bad reasons for fasting. Check your motivations before you begin.

DO NOT FAST...

- To be seen by others (Matthew 6:18)
- To be justified by God (Luke 18:9-14)
- To be praised by God (1 Corinthians 8:8)

RATHER, FAST...

- To repent
- To seek God’s direction
- To gain spiritual strength against an enemy’s attack
- To renew a desire for the Lord rather than the things of this world
- To identify disturbances in our lives
- To acquire new habits (i.e., time with Jesus!)
- To look for and welcome Jesus’ return
- To recognize, identify, and reach the lost

Structuring Your Fast

To help facilitate this process, please read the information below and consider these prompts to help you prepare.

TYPES

Complete Fast

Drink only liquids, primarily water with light juices as an option

Selective Fast

Removing certain elements from your diet (meats, sugar, bread...)

Partial Fast

Abstaining from food in the morning, afternoon, or evening

Soul Fast

Fasting other things that might influence your life (social media, TV...)

CONSIDERATIONS

What type of fast will you be doing?

From what will you be fasting (food, TV, hobby, social media...)?

Why are you fasting/what are you hoping to learn about God through this experience?

What problems do you anticipate?

How will you record and track what you are learning and experiencing?

At what times during the day can you specifically pray for God to help you through the fast?

How long will your fast be?