

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE TO
FASTING
&
PRAYER



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A GUIDE TO FASTING

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WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His followers to fast and He said that God rewards fasting. Fasting, according to the Bible, means to voluntarily reduce or eliminate your intake of food for a specific time and purpose. There are many types of fasts:

- A Normal Fast – means to abstain from all food
- A Partial Fast – means to eliminate certain foods or specific meals
- A “Juice” Fast – means to drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times

When you give up eating, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They make their faces look sad to show people they are giving up eating. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give up eating, comb your hair and wash your face. Then people will not know that you are giving up eating, but your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18

WHY FAST?

There are many good reasons, and even health benefits, for fasting. However, our *ALL-CHURCH UNITED DAY OF FASTING* will be to seek God's will in our lives and prepare us for the new year and our Year of HOPE emphasis. But why fast?

1. Fasting gives you more time for prayer. You can use the time you'd normally spend eating in prayer for what God wants to do among us during this Campaign. In the Bible, fasting is always connected with prayer.

As the king's order reached every area, there was great sadness and loud crying among the Jewish people. They gave up eating and cried out loud, and many of them lay down on rough cloth and ashes to show how sad they were. Esther 4:3

2. Fasting demonstrates the depth of your desire when praying for something. It shows you mean business with God – you are serious enough about your prayer request to pay a personal price. God honors deep desire and praying in faith.

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.
Joel 1:14

Even now," declares the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Joel 2:12

3. Fasting releases God's supernatural power. It is a tool we can use when there is opposition to God's will. Satan would like nothing better than to cause division, discouragement, defeat, depression and doubt among us. United prayer and fasting has always been used by God to deal a decisive blow to the enemy!

So we fasted and prayed to God about this, and He answered our prayer.
Ezra 8:23

God says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" Isaiah 58:6

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

Often in the Bible, God's people fasted immediately before a major victory, miracle, or answer to prayer. It prepared them for a blessing!

- **Moses fasted before he received the Ten Commandments.**

Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant--the Ten Commandments. Exodus 34:28

- **The Israelites fasted before a miraculous victory.**

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. 2 Chronicles 20:2-3

- **Daniel fasted in order to receive guidance from God.**

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:3

While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. Daniel 21-22

- **Nehemiah fasted before beginning a major building project.**

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Nehemiah 1:4

- **Jesus fasted during His victory over temptation.**

*For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.
Luke 4:2*

- **The first Christians fasted during decision-making times.**

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Acts 13:2-3

TWO CAUTIONS:

1. Remember that fasting is not "earning" an answer to prayer. God cannot be blackmailed by human effort. God wants to answer our prayers and He answers out of grace. Fasting simply prepares us for God's answer.
2. Fast only if your health allows it at this time. If you are able **only** to do a partial fast - do it in faith and God will honor your intentions.

NOW, DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF FAST YOU'LL FOLLOW:

Possible Options:

A Normal Fast – skip the next three meals

A Partial Fast – skip one or two meals

A "Juice" Fast – drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times

Note: You should always drink water while fasting