



FASTING GUIDELINES

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.

- Traditional Fast –means to abstain from all kinds of foods
- Partial Fast –means certain foods or a specific “time” you eat
- “Juice” Fast –means drinking fruit juices or vegetables during the time you eat

“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, here are three primary reasons:

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

“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

2. Fasting demonstrates the depth of your desire when praying for something. It shows you mean business with God – that 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 have 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 9:21-22

- **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 worshipping 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.

THE DANIEL FAST

Theme of the fast – fasting and prayer:

Your goal in fasting is to become closer to God by voluntarily denying the demands of your flesh. Increase your prayer life during this time. Study the Scriptures with a new intensity. When the fast is over, you should have a new spiritual strength from overcoming the cravings that usually control your life and try to stop you from dedicating yourself to God.

Biblical model:

Do a personal study of fasting. In the book of Daniel, chapters 2 and 10, Daniel describes two examples of his personal fasting and the dramatic results. Isaiah described God’s chosen fast in Isaiah 58. Jesus fasted in the wilderness (Matthew 4) and spoke of the necessity of fasting for believers. It was a normal part of early church life. Fasting is one

way we respond to the admonition throughout the Scriptures to die to our self-will and not to accommodate the desire of the flesh.

Following your own conscience:

The precise details of your fast are between you and God. In Roman 14, the apostle Paul describes how we should relate in love to one another in the matter of what we eat or choose not to eat. He says, “Each person is free to follow the convictions of his own conscience” (Roman 14). If you fast often, you may need to turn up your fasting another level during this time. If this is your first fast, you may not be able to endure as many restrictions as someone else who fasts frequently. In the future live a “fasted lifestyle,” increasingly accommodating God and not the flesh.

Restrict television and entertainment:

It will be difficult for you to consecrate yourself if you feed yourself on television and movies during this time.

Overview of the fast:

The Daniel fast drastically restricts normal food intake by cutting away many of the foods you commonly eat to satisfy your appetite. During the Daniel fast, there will be a sense of hunger much of the time and a sense of sacrifice even when we eat. We recommend that you restrict yourself to only one meal a day, leaving a small hunger.

Types of food included in this Daniel fast:

- Vegetables, preferably fresh or frozen vegetables. Vegetables such as potatoes, beans and soybean will help provide substance.
- Pure fruit juices or fruit (no sweetened drinks or sweetened fruit): apple juice, orange juice, grapefruit juice, cranberry juice and all kinds of vegetable juices.
- It is advisable to take vitamin, mineral, and possibly protein supplements during the fast. You may also include various nuts to serve as a protein supplement.
- Others- Seeds, nuts, sprouts, honey, molasses, or brown sugar. (Use the brown sugar very sparingly since most sugars are to be avoided.) (Olive oil or canola oil may be used sparingly in cooking if necessary – without frying, of course.)

Foods to avoid:

- Meat, white rice, fried foods.
- Caffeine (eliminate or moderate consumption).
- Carbonated beverages, foods containing preservatives or additives.
- Refined sugar and sugar substitutes, white flour and all products using refined white flour, margarine, shortening, high-fat products.

Water:

Drink 8 glasses of water daily throughout the fast. This is very important.

Side effects:

You may experience moderate to severe headaches for the first day or two as your body rids itself of caffeine, salt, sugar, and various impurities. You may need to take Advil, Aspirin or Tylenol.

Important exceptions:

Anyone with a medical condition related to eating or under the treatment of a physician must consult their doctor. Children, especially small children, will have special needs that must be considered. Under these conditions, find some sacrifice in the area of food that can be made without endangering health. Also, if you have extreme difficulty with the fast, such as impairment of your ability to work at your job, you will have to make adjustments. This is not a failure of will but is wisdom. Seek the Lord and discuss it with other Christians involved in the fast to find alternatives.

“God’s kingdom isn’t a matter of what you put in your stomach...It’s what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy. Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ.”

(Romans 14)