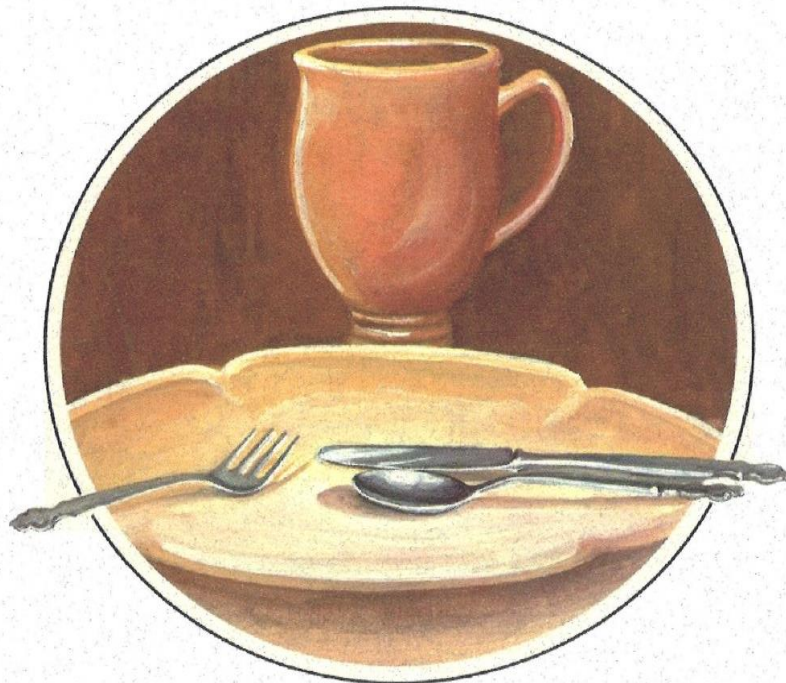


# *A Guide to Fasting*



Lighthouse Inc., Church

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## FASTING

Fasting is a very important discipline. Fasting is going without food or drink voluntarily, generally for religious purposes. Fasting, however, could also be done for other reasons. It was sometimes done as a sign of distress, grief, or repentance. This significant term implies that the essence of scriptural (fasting) lies in self-humiliation and penitence, and the subduing of something, whether fleshly or spiritual.

### **Isaiah 58:4-7 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup>Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as *you do* this day, To make your voice heard on high. <sup>5</sup>Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? *Is it* to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD? <sup>6</sup>“*Is* this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? <sup>7</sup>*Is it* not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

Once that the principle is acted on, **ROMANS 14: 6**. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

And **I CORINTHIANS 8:8** But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. **FASTING AND EATING ARE PUT IN THEIR TRUE PLACE, AS MEANS BUT NOT ENDS.**

There are now 28 yearly fasts in the Jewish calendar.

Daniel's mode of fasting was: **DANIEL 10:3** I ate no pleasant bread (I ate unleavened bread, even the bread of affliction **DEUTERONOMY 16:3** no meat or wine came into my mouth).

In **MATTHEW 9:14** (fast) is explained by (mourn) In **MATTHEW 9:15**, so that fasting was but an outward expression of mourning. **PSALM 69:10** not meritorious, nor sanctifying in itself. A mark of apostasy is commanding 'to abstain from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving. **I TIMOTHY 4:3**

From the Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database we find the following:

Instances of special fasts of individuals and of the people in the Old Testament, either in mourning and humiliation or in prayer, occur in **JUDGES 20:26; I SAMUEL 1:7; 20:34; 31:13; II SAMUEL 1:12; 12; 21; 3:35; I KINGS 21:9-12; EZRA 8:21-23; 10:6; ESTHER 4:16; NEHEMIAH 1:4**

National fasts are alluded to in **I Samuel 7:6** (Wherein the drawing of water and pouring it out before Jehovah expressed their confession of powerlessness and utter prostration: **Psalms 22:14; 58:7; II Samuel 14:14; II Chronicles 20:3; Jeremiah 36:6-10; Nehemiah 9:1; Joel 1:14; 2:15.**

In New Testament times the strict Jews fasted twice a week (**LUKE 18:12**), **NAMELY, ON THE SECOND AND FIFTH DAYS**. While Christ is with His people either in body or in spirit, fasting is unseasonable, for joy alone can be where He is; but when His presence is withdrawn, sorrow comes to the believer and fasting is one mode of expressing his sorrowing after the Lord. This is Christ's teaching, **MATTHEW 9:15**.

As to the texts quoted for fasting as a mean of spiritual power, the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts omit **MATTHEW 17:21**; they omit also (and fasting) **MARK 9:29**. They and Alexandrinus manuscript omit (fasting) and **I CORINTHIANS 7:5**. Evidently the growing tendency to asceticism in post apostolic times accounts for these interpolations. The apostles (prayed with fasting) in ordaining elders **ACTS 13:3-4; 14:23**. But this continuance of the existing Jewish usage never divinely ordered does not make it obligatory on us, except in so far as we severally, by experience, find it conducive to prayer.

Moses, Elijah's and Christ's (The great Antitype) 40 days' of foodlessness was exceptional and miraculous. Forty is significant of punishment for sin, confession, or affliction.

Christ, the true Israel, denied Himself for 40 days, as Israel indulged the flesh 40 years. They tempted God that time; He overcame the tempter all the 40 days (**GENESIS 7:4, 12; NUMBERS 14:33; 32:13-14; PSALM 95:10; DEUTERONOMY 25:3; II CORINTHIANS 11:24; EZEKIEL 29:11; 4:6; JONAH 3:4**)

Jesus said to His disciples: **MARK 9:29 THIS KIND CAN COME OUT BY NOTHING BUT PRAYER AND FASTING**. We are entering a season where we must-incorporate the spiritual disciplines to open up the heavens and win the war ahead.

## **WHAT IS FASTING?**

**Matthew 6:17-18 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly

One of the most powerful weapons of spiritual warfare that God has given to His children is fasting -- a way of crucifying the flesh or denying your flesh the basic sustenance of food. Although fasting will weaken you physically, it will highly enlighten you spiritually. It is important to note that fasting should be combined with prayer for utmost effectiveness.

People who have never fasted don't know what is involved. Fasting can sound like drudgery and seem difficult. Many associate fasting with a long, long period of time, and yet a fast can be as short as one meal and still allow God to do some wonderful things in your life.

Fasting is a form of spiritual discipline that informs God that you are serious about repentance. Fasting is a significant part of your Christian walk just as praying and reading the Bible is significant. Fasting is for everyone who desires to draw closer to God.

When you fast, you do not have to give up just food; it can be anything of importance to you that is a sacrifice to give up. Whenever you fast, you need to pray and seek the Lord, otherwise you are just depriving your body of food and not getting in touch with what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you.

Although fasting is not commanded in the Bible, it is expected of all believers in their Christian walk, for Matthew 6:17-18 says, "When you fast." Jesus did not say, "If you fast" but rather "When you fast"; therefore Jesus reveals through scripture that fasting is expected of us; however, it is not commanded (for example, you are not committing sin by not fasting).

Fasting is simply defined as going without food for a period of time, either entirely or partially. It's a spiritual discipline that has many benefits.

### **Why would anyone starve themselves?**

Why would anyone take something that they enjoy, even need, and willingly give it up for a day, a week or perhaps even a month?

## **FIVE REASONS FOR FASTING**

I BELIEVE THERE ARE FIVE REASONS WHY EVERY CHURCH NEEDS TO HAVE A REGULAR FASTING TIME.

### **1. JESUS URGED IT.**

Throughout the Bible the emphasis is on public fasts. Joel put it this way: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly" (**JOEL 2:15**). Jesus also put an emphasis on fasting corporately. He declared, "Then shall they fast in those days" (**Mark 2:20**). He knew the church would be assaulted by the enemy from every direction and, therefore, urged the church to fast. Thus the primary form of fasting is a corporate fast. Secondary fasting is individual fasting.

In **Matthew 6**, during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught three fundamentals of Christianity: giving, praying, and fasting. We should give not to be seen of men but privately (**verse 3**). We pray both privately and with other people (**verses 5 -7**). Jesus implied primary prayer is to pray alone. Secondary prayer is to

pray with other people. Some things are too private to pray about with others—they are only between God and the one praying.

Fasting individually is secondary because (1) it is easier to fast with other people than alone; (2) fasting corporately brings the most powerful unity a church or body of believers can ever witness; and (3) a corporate anointing is released in a church. Even though some may not be praying for a particular situation, they will benefit from the anointing others receive through that fast.

I have seen countless families get better jobs and receive promotions in their businesses during **21-day fasts**, and they were not even praying about those matters. However, someone else was and they received that blessing from the other's prayers.

## **2. FASTING HELPS PRODUCE FAITH.**

Faith must be released out of our mouths (**Romans 10:3-10**). Our source of faith is the Word of God, but we must speak it with our mouths. The same organ we speak with is the same organ we eat with—the tongue. Fasting and faith are first cousins. The tongue speaks faith and eats food, some unbelief cannot be broken without fasting.

God spoke to Joshua to tell the people as they were ready to invade Jericho, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout'" (**Joshua 6:10, NKJV**).

There are different types of fasts. In this situation God commanded the people to fast by not speaking. For over a week they could not speak. Fasting increases faith as we allow God's Word to saturate our minds.

## **3. FASTING IS THE SPIRITUAL METHOD TO BRING REVIVAL (JOEL 2:28)**

This passage speaks of a revival that affects the young and the old. It will come to pass "**afterward.**" After what?

Afterward is used much like the word then. If you will do this, then these blessings will happen in your life. Some requirements are necessary before "**afterward**" can take place: (1) "Blow the trumpet in Zion, (2) sanctify a fast, (3) call a solemn assembly" (Joel 2:15).

Fasting must occur before the blessing of "**afterward**" can happen. Joel was saying if we will fast and have the people seek God with public fasting, then "**afterward**" He will send a revival. Peter quoted this verse in Acts 2.

I have always believed that on the Day of Pentecost the Early Church was fasting in the Upper Room. The reason is not only because of the verse of Scripture Peter quoted from Joel but because of Jewish orthodox tradition.

Up through the fourth century the Early Church, following Jewish tradition, fasted on communion days until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. An orthodox Jew would fast on the sacred feast and holy days of the Jewish calendar until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. They would say their prayers and prepare themselves spiritually for the events that were to happen later that day.

When Peter said, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day," he was actually saying they were not drinking wine. This was a holy day, and they were fasting until 3 o'clock; it was only 9 o'clock in the morning.

If your church will begin to fast, you have God's promise from His Word that He will send a revival.

#### 4. FASTING PUTS US IN A POSITION TO FIND THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD (ROMANS 12:1-2)

We are to present our bodies unto God. One way we do so is through fasting. When we fast we do it as unto the Lord. We experience hunger and sacrifice pleasures so we may draw closer to God. *Fasting is not the answer-Jesus is; however, fasting puts us in a place to receive more of Jesus.*

To renew your mind, first begin devouring the Word of God every day. Secondly, you must fast. Fasting is much more than suffering a few hunger pains and not eating food. Hunger begins leaving after 3 or 4 days. If you can fast 3 or 4 days, you can fast 21 days or even 40 days.

Fasting is a mental discipline. It is much more difficult to fast mentally than it is physically. Through this process comes a renewal of the mind, a discipline of the mind, a desire to know the perfect will of God.

#### 5. FASTING BRINGS VICTORY

If this were the only reason to fast, it is enough. Victory is sweet and wonderful. Many would rather suffer defeat and not fast than come out of their comfort zones. Fasting takes you out of your comfort zone but leads you to victory.

When you fast and pray, you can defeat even the strongest devils. They flee from you. You don't have to be afraid. You have the name of Jesus. The power of that Name becomes greatly multiplied in your life when you seek Him in prayer and fasting.

I encourage you to add a **disciplined, regular time** of fasting and prayer to your life and to your church.

Victory belongs to you, and fasting is one of the keys to help bring it into your life and ministry.

Fasting has been a spiritual discipline that has been out of vogue in many churches in the Western World for over a century.

Oftentimes we associate it with medieval Christianity or perhaps a political leader like Mahatma Gandhi, who used it as a weapon of passive resistance. So why in the twenty first-century would a community of faith take the time to fast?

The key lies in the fact that we are a community of faith. A community of Spirit filled people, who in faith seek to not just live a Christian lifestyle, but see our lives, our family, friends, neighbors and co-workers affected by the life and power of Jesus Christ. We want to become the kind of church God has in mind... the kind of church we read about in the New Testament where times of fasting resulted in a channel of God's power... and so it is in twenty-first century Christianity.

Fasting disciplines a person's spiritual appetite, aligns their soul with the will of God and opens a channel of God's life and power that perhaps no other activity can. We want to build momentum, we want to see the Lord move not just in each one of our lives, but the lives of every person that we have the opportunity to influence.

Throughout the Old Testament we see people fasting for a variety of different reasons:

For mourning	Nehemiah 1:4, I Samuel 31:13
For repentance	I Samuel 6, Nehemiah 9:1, Jonah 3:5
To hear from God	Ezra 8: 21
To provoke God to move on their behalf	II Chronicles 20:3, Esther 4:16, Daniel 9:3
To petition God	Acts 10:30
To seek the mind of God	Acts 13:2
To prepare for ministry	Matthew 4:2, Acts 13:3

## *TYPES OF FASTS*

The **Normal Fast** involves abstaining from all solid and liquid food except for water.

The **Absolute Fast** involves abstaining from both food and drink. You should never stay on this fast more than three days unless under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The **Partial Fast** involves abstaining from just certain foods. You can live on just certain foods during the duration of this fast such as bread and water, or you may choose to fast a certain meal each day.

The **Daniel Fast** consists of fruits, vegetables, and water.

The **Juice Fast** consists of fruit and vegetable juices only. If you are hypoglycemic, you might want to use a 50% water mix with the juice, especially if using bottled or canned juices. Fresh juices, however, are best. They may be purchased from a health food store or use a juicer.

The **Television and Entertainment Fast** involves setting aside television, radio, newspapers, and other forms of entertainment to seek the Lord. God will bless you mightily if you'll shut your TV off for 40 days to seek Him. You should also set aside newspapers, talk radio, video games and movie theaters. Instead, spend time with your family and the Lord. The purpose is to focus on God and avoid distractions.

The **Water, Honey, & Lemon Fast** is considered a cleansing fast. Squeeze 1/2 lemon in a cup of hot water and add honey to add flavor. This recipe can be used for an extended fast.

Some medical conditions are prohibitive to fasting. Get the advice of your physician if you have a medical condition. These conditions include diabetes, hypoglycemia, and heart disease. Pregnant and nursing mothers also should not fast because toxins will be passed on to the baby. Also, some medications need to be taken with food so use discretion. In these cases where you are unable to do a complete fast (water only) consider abstaining from television and dedicating yourself to prayer during this time.

## *WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FASTING?*

Fasting has many blessings associated with it:

Fasting brings direction from God - Acts 10:30, Acts 13:2-3, Judges 20:26

Fasting brings the power of the Spirit - Luke 4:14

Fasting brings answer to prayer - Esther 4:16, Nehemiah 1:4

Fasting brings action from God - II Chronicles 20:20-21

Fasting brings a spiritual breakthrough - Matthew 17:21

Fasting deepens humility - Ezra 8:21, I Peter 5:6

While fasting has many benefits we need to understand that it's not a way to earn God's blessing, or to somehow "get" God to answer our prayers, we still need to be obedient, humble and surrender to God's will and purposes in every situation.

The benefits of fasting are innumerable. Here is just a partial list of the many benefits of this most powerful of spiritual disciplines.

- \* The Word of God comes alive
- \* Addictions and strongholds are broken
- \* We become more sensitive to God's presence
- \* The physical body is purged of toxins
- \* It becomes easier to trust and obey God
- \* The sanctifying process is accelerated
- \* Faith increases
- \* Doubts and fear vanish
- \* God reveals to us our sinful attitudes
- \* Decrease of self-indulgence
- \* Decrease of self-righteousness
- \* Emotional scars are healed

## *SPIRITUAL REASONS FOR FASTING*

### **ISAIAH 58:6-7**

The prophet Isaiah writes: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

Thus, there are 7 reasons for fasting according to **Isaiah 58:6-7**, and they are as follows:

1. To bring justice
2. To undo heavy burdens and break the yoke of bondage
3. To free the oppressed and loose the bands of wickedness
4. To share food
5. To provide shelter for the poor
6. To clothe the naked
7. To provide for one's family

However, there are several other reasons for fasting:

1. To mourn and repent
2. To receive God's instructions
3. To die to the flesh
4. For humility and deliverance from bondage
5. To resist the devil's temptations
6. Due to lack of food
7. For health and healing
8. For spiritual power to cast out demons

### **1. To Mourn and Repent **DANIEL 10:2-3****



"In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled." (Also see **Esther 4:3; Isaiah 58:5; Joel 2:12-13; Zechariah 7:5**)

## 2. To Receive God's Instructions **EXODUS 34:28**

"And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments." (Also see **Acts 9:9-12; Acts 13:2**)

## 3. To Die to the Flesh **ISAIAH 58:3**

"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and taketh no knowledge?"

## 4. For Humility and Deliverance from Bondage **PSALM 35:13**

"But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom." (Also see **I Samuel 7:3-14; Ezra 8:21-23**)

## 5. To Resist the Devil's Temptations **I CORINTHIANS 7:5**

"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (lack of self resistance)." (Also see **Luke 4:1-2**)

## 6. Due to Lack of Food **I KINGS 19:8**

"And he (Elijah) arose, and did eat and drink, and went in strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."

## 7. For Health and Healing **ISAIAH 58:8**

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, 'Here I am'. (Also see **Psalms 35:13**)

## 8. For Spiritual Power to Cast Out Demons **MATTHEW 17:18-21**

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour." Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, 'Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'"

## PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE THAT FASTED

\* **Moses** fasted twice for 40 days-Following his first fast, Moses received the Law. The second was to turn God's wrath away from God's sinful people. **Deuteronomy 9: 9, 18 - 19; Exodus 34: 27 - 28**

\* **Hannah**, for a child. She was barren and deeply distraught. God gave her release from inner turmoil. Then He gave her a baby boy, Samuel, who grew into a mighty man of God. **I Samuel 1:7,8**

\* ***Elijah*** fasted for 40 days while fleeing in fear from wicked Jezebel, who threatened to have him killed. God gave him comfort, boldness and instructions to go back the way he came and anoint new prophets. **1 Kings 19**

\* ***King David*** for seven days that God might heal his dying, infant child, conceived illegitimately with Bathsheba. The baby died, yet David experienced God's wonderful peace through this incredible trauma. **II Samuel 12:16-23**

\* Proclaimed by ***King Jehoshaphat*** - When he and his army were surrounded by enemies and destruction seemed imminent. After proclaiming the fast, they rejoiced with praises and God destroyed their enemies. **II Chronicles 20**

\* Proclaimed by ***Ezra*** - Prior to a very perilous journey to Jerusalem. **Ezra 8**

\* ***Nehemiah*** - For restoration of the city he loved (Jerusalem). **Nehemiah 1:4**

\* Proclaimed by ***Queen Esther*** - For the entire nation to fast for three days without food or water. They were on the brink of annihilation. **Esther 4**

\* ***Daniel's*** partial fast of 21 days - He received a vision and revelation of end times. **Daniel 9**

\* Proclaimed by the ***King of Nineveh*** - With national repentance to avert disaster through God's wrath. **Jonah 3**

\* ***Jesus*** for 40 days. If God in human flesh fasted, how much more ought we? **Matthew 4:2**

\* ***John the Baptist*** - He and his disciples fasted often, as did the Pharisees. **Matthew 9:14, 15; Mark 2:18**

\* ***Anna*** - A widow who dedicated herself to prayer and fasting and is honored in the eternal Word of God. **Luke 2:37**

\* ***Paul the Apostle*** - He fasted for three days after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus (while still known as Saul of Tarsus). He later wrote in II Corinthians 11 that he fasted often. **Acts 9:9 - 12; Acts 27: 33**

\* Christians from Antioch, Apostles, elders and Church members - **Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:23; II Corinthians 6:4-5**

\* ***Isaiah 58*** is the fasting chapter. Read and study it to discover the many benefits of fasting when done God's way.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING FASTING

### A) Is fasting for everyone?

Fasting is beneficial for anyone who desires to draw closer to Christ. Every Christian should do some sort of fast at least once a month. The Apostle Paul fasted often.

### B) What if I don't feel called to fasting?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline, just like prayer and reading the Bible. It is not something we are called to do, rather we choose to obey Christ and sacrifice some of the pleasures of this life in order to please God. Fasting trains us in self-control and produces fruits of peace and righteousness.

### **C) Why is fasting so important?**

It reduces our appetite for carnal pleasures and creates a hunger for God's treasures. We are commanded to walk in the Spirit so we won't fulfill the desires of the flesh. Fasting helps us to resist the flesh and walk uprightly before the Lord - to live a life which is pleasing to Him.

### **D) How do I get started?**

Begin with a one meal fast and go from there. Some of the most powerful fasts can be one or two meals if you enter into it with pure motives and a desire to spend time with the Lord Jesus.

### **E) What should I do while fasting?**

Spend as much time with Jesus as possible. This is how we become more and more like Him. Read your Bible, worship with song and thanksgiving, be silent and listen. Silent reverence with repentance is powerful!

### **F) Should I fast if I have dietary restrictions or am on medication?**

You should seek the Lord and consult your physician if you have any concerns. Medical science has known for some time that our bodies purge toxins while we fast. Chapter 58 of Isaiah mentions healing as one of the many benefits of fasting. However, use discretion when doing a food fast and consider an alternate fast if you are medically restricted in any way.

### **G) I really enjoy eating; do I have to do a food fast or are there other types of fasts?**

The most beneficial fast for your body and spirit is water only. However, God will honor any type of fast if you have a sincere desire for personal revival and holiness. Here are some alternatives to a food fast.

### **H) Why do I get headaches when I try to fast?**

Your body is purging toxins which have accumulated from years of a poor diet, prescription drugs and bad habits. Headaches are one of the results of this cleansing process (usually the second day).

Prepare your system prior to a fast by eating healthier. Avoid red meat, sugar, caffeine and bread. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables three or four days before going on a fast of more than one day.

### **I) How will I benefit from fasting?**

The benefits of fasting are many for those who continue faithfully in this discipline. Here are just a few.

A significant increase of understanding and revelation from the Word of God

Addictions and strongholds are broken--permanent changes take place

Recognition of sinful attitudes or conditions of your heart that you haven't noticed before

Decrease of self-indulgence and self-righteousness

An increase of faith; Fear and doubt diminish because of confidence in God rather than your flesh

Supernatural release from bitterness and an ability to forgive others

A much greater sensitivity to God's presence

The ability to hear God is greatly enhanced

You increasingly become more like Jesus with a notable increase of love, humility and wisdom.

### **J) Will all of my prayers be answered if I fast and pray the right way?**

No, probably not. Fasting does not force God to do something He otherwise wouldn't do. Your circumstances may actually worsen at first. If you're fasting for God to change a particular person, it may not happen. However, there is no wasted time or energy when seeking God through fasting, prayer and worship. He will change YOU! He will soften your heart and give you a healthy perspective of your circumstances and relationships.

### **K) I don't hear many sermons on fasting. Does the Bible have much to say on the subject?**

Yes! The Old and New Testament alike speak volumes on fasting. Study these references and ask God for the grace to implement fasting into your life.

## *PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FASTING*

1. The early church gave themselves to fasting and prayer for a time. If they needed it then, we need it now! Every time you pray and fast for a certain amount of time, you are investing in a powerful kingdom - the kingdom of God.
2. Set a definite time for your fast so you know in advance how long you will be fasting. Keep in mind fasting changes your heart. A one-day or one-meal fast can be very powerful when submitted to God as a sacrifice of yourself.
3. Since you are denying your flesh and seeking the Lord, you may find yourself in the midst of spiritual warfare and thus becoming irritable or unwilling to pray. Some of these feelings may be physically induced just because of a physical reaction. Plan beforehand to "pray through" the spiritual battle.
4. On longer fasts (2 or more days) the body is cleansing itself from physical impurities. Possible side effects from toxins include bad breath, headache, nausea, hunger, weakness, and leg cramps. To help prevent these problems, abstain from caffeine, sugar, and junk food five days prior to your fast. Drink pure water (distilled if possible) throughout your fast, it helps with elimination of toxins. The cleaner your system, the less discomfort. The less waste that is stored in the body when you begin your fast, the fewer toxins will be released.
5. Try to rest if you feel weak and get some fresh air every day.
6. Spend time in prayer, worship, repentance, and read your Bible. Use the time you would normally spend eating or preparing food for "spiritual exercise". Many people have noticed that the Bible simply comes alive while they are fasting.
7. Have specific spiritual goals that you desire to obtain while praying and fasting. Without prayer and a set purpose, fasting is only a glorified diet.

## *PREPARATION*

The first thing you need to do before you fast is set a definite time period for your fast. Will your fast be: 1 meal, 3 days, 7 days, 21 days, 40 days?

The second thing you need to do is decide which type of fast you will undertake. Will it be: a normal fast; a Daniel fast; or perhaps a television and entertainment fast?

If you are going on a prolonged fast, please don't begin your fast immediately but rather gradually cut your food intake back and then begin your fast. Also cease drinking caffeine products a few days before you start a prolonged fast so you can get over the withdrawal headaches before you start.

## PRECAUTIONS

Drink warm water instead of cold and do not drink too much water at one time. Do not drink milk, coffee, or other beverages during the fast for this will be considered dieting and not fasting. (Follow these procedures on all types of fasts except the absolute fast.)

Do not take excessively hot baths during a prolonged fast; for this may cause dizziness. However, take a bath regularly during your fast because fasting causes many impurities to be secreted through the pores of your skin thus causing an odor.

It is very important to avoid milk or milk products. They are a whole food and need to be digested, but you have shut down your digestive system. They will have nowhere to go, and will remain in your colon for 40 days. This is unsafe and unwise.

Avoid sugary drinks. They are refined sugars, and unlike the fruit juices which are in a sugar form the body can use, they reintroduce toxins.

Do not engage in excessive work or exercise.

Walk, read, pray, and worship during mealtimes to overcome temptations.

## SOME SYMPTOMS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE

1. Headache
2. Nausea
3. Low fever
4. Sleeplessness
5. Stomach pains

**If you have any of these symptoms do not take medication for them.**

## THREE PHASES OF A PROLONGED FAST:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Phase 1 | Craving Food   |
| Phase 2 | Feeling weak and faint for 2 - 3 days or even longer.    |
| Phase 3 | Growing stronger and no longer having concern about food |

## BREAKING THE FAST

Breaking the fast is the most difficult period after the fast; it requires discipline and self-control. If you fast for 40 days, then you should allow your body an adequate period of time to recover so you will be able to resume your regular diet.

Break your fast with grape Juice, fresh fruits, and steamed vegetables, adding other foods in a day or two. Avoid meat, bread, and fats for several meals or days depending on the length of the fast. Continue to do

this until you gradually begin to build yourself back up. Keep in mind your stomach has been inactive and it takes a while to restore essential digestive enzymes and acids. Fasting is a very healing process for your body so do not undo your efforts with unhealthy foods.

### *FINAL THOUGHT*

If our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ could fast for 40 days and 40 nights while in human form, couldn't we do the same?

**I HAVE PERSONALLY FASTED FOR 40 DAYS BACK TO BACK AND HAD NO ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES. (Pastor Barbara)**