

Fasting Basics

SIMPLY STATED, BIBLICAL FASTING IS REFRAINING FROM FOOD FOR A SPIRITUAL PURPOSE.

According to the Bible, there are three duties of every Christian: give, pray and fast.

Biblical fasting takes a lot of discipline and strength—strength which you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, says Matthew 6. When you give God your first through fasting, prayer and giving at the beginning of the year, you set the course for the entire year.

Why should I fast?

Are you in need of healing or a miracle?

Do you need the tender touch of God in your life?

Is there a dream inside you that only He can make possible?

Are you in need of a fresh encounter?

Do you desire a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord?

Are you ready to have heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?

Do you need to break away from bondages that have been holding you hostage?

Is there a friend or loved one that needs Salvation?

Do you desire to know God's will for your life?

BIBLICAL FASTING FOCUS

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

ROMANS 12:1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.”

MATTHEW 6:33

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

ISAIAH 58:6

“[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?”

We want to encourage you to target your prayers during the fast. Two specific areas we will be focusing on together are leadership and finances. The Bible instructs us to continually pray for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2). When we lift up our leaders, here in the United States and around the world, we can expect God’s peace in our lives and in our nation.

Another great promise, from the book of Isaiah, proclaims that the chosen fast will “undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free.” We are living in tough economic times and we know that so many people are under a financial burden. As we come together to fast and pray, we believe that your burdens will be lifted and that financial blessings will be released into your life!

We encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer and let your decisions about your biblical fasting come from Him. Ask the Lord to show you areas to target during your time of fasting and prayer. We believe that, as we pray and seek God and give Him our best at the first of the year, He will bless our ENTIRE year (Matthew 6:33)!

Fasting Types

There are several types of fasting. The one you choose is between you and God. He will honor your best sacrifice.

Full Fast

Drink only liquids (you establish the number of days).

The Daniel Fast

Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruits and vegetables.

3-Day Fast

This fast can be a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.

Partial Fast

A partial fast is from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sun up to sundown. You can select from three types of fasting —a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.

Scripture References for Fasting:

Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:9-14

Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word:

1 Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, Nehemiah 1:4, Daniel 9:3, 20, Joel 2:12, Luke 2:37, Acts 10:30, Acts 13:2

Corporate Fasting:

1 Samuel 7:5-6, Ezra 8:21-23, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16, Jonah 3:5-10, Acts 27:33-37

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 14:12, 1 Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast!

Fasting Tips

How to Begin

Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible.

Preparing Spiritually

Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

Deciding What to Fast

The type of fasting you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats, and the only liquid he drank was water. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

Deciding How Long

You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

What to Expect

When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

How to End

Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.

Daniel Fast

Steps to complete the Daniel Fast

Step 1: Be Specific

Daniel was not vague in his objection to the Babylonian diet. He defined the problem immediately.

The king's food was against dietary laws.

Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine.

The king's food had been offered up to idols/demons.

Step 2: Fast as a Spiritual Commitment

The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8).

Step 3: Reflect Inner Desire by Outer Discipline

Many people have an inner desire for better health, but they can't discipline themselves to avoid junk food, and other foods that are not good for their health. The physical health you seek from God may be more than an answer to prayer. Your physical health can be linked to any of the following factors:

Your food choices.

The level of your spiritual commitment as reflected in constant prayer during the fast.

Your time commitment. If you determine to fast for a certain time, keep it. For example, if you determine to fast 10 days, don't stop on Day 9.

Your testimony commitment. Your fast is a statement of faith to God that you want Him to heal your body, and faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast.

Step 4: Pray to Perceive Sin's Role in Poor Health

Notice James 5:13-16:

Sin is something related to the cause of sickness.

Lack of health/healing may be the result of spiritual rebellion.

Lack of health/healing may be due to sin of wrong intake, i.e. drugs, pornography.

Repentance is linked to health according to James.

Elders have a role in healing both spiritual and physical health.

Sick people must desire to be well.

The anointing oil could mean medicine for healing, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, or It could be baptism.

Prayer alone may not gain healing, faith is the major factor.

In Greek there are several words for “sick”. James uses “Kanino”, which not only includes disease, but also means weak or weary.

Attitude is important. James said, “are there any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”

Step 5: Fast as a Statement of Faith to Others

Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared the overseer to compare the appearance of the four sons of Israel with the young men who ate the king’s food.

Step 6: Learn the Effects of the Food You Eat

Why are some foods good for us, and other foods not? What does certain food do to your body? If we really knew, there would likely be some things we would never eat again.

Step 7: Yield All Results to God

Daniel said, “as you see fit, deal with your servants” (Dan. 1:13).

FOOD GUIDELINES FOR A DANIEL FAST

Daniel 1:12

“Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.”

Daniel 10:3 KJV

“I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.”

When going on a Daniel fast, or any type of fast, if you have questions outside of what Scripture says, prayerfully seek the Lord and be led by the Spirit for the specifics for your personal fast.



WHAT TO EAT

FRUITS

Fresh, frozen, dried, cooked or juiced. Try to avoid added sugar or preservatives.

COMMON CHOICES:

apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines, watermelon

VEGETABLES

Fresh, frozen, dried, cooked or juiced. Try to avoid added sugar or preservatives.

COMMON CHOICES:

artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, green beans, garlic, ginger root, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsley, peppers, potatoes, radishes, spinach, sprouts, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini

WHOLE GRAINS

Many people also include whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

COMMON CHOICES:

barley, brown rice, grits, millet, quinoa, oats

NUTS & SEEDS

Many people also eat nut butters including peanut butter and almond butter. Try to avoid choices with added sugar, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives.

COMMON CHOICES:

unsalted almonds, cashews, chia, flax, pine, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, peanuts, pecans, pistachios, walnuts

LEGUMES & BEANS

If you use canned beans, look for organic and/or low-sodium

COMMON CHOICES:

black beans, black-eyed peas, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, split peas, white beans

BEVERAGES

Water & fresh pressed fruit or vegetable juice

Fasting Movement

We begin each year by fasting for 21 days. Fasting in January is much like praying in the morning to establish the will of God for the entire day. When we put God first in our lives, in our families, in our finances – in everything – I believe that He will bless and multiply those areas. If we will pray and seek God and give Him our first and best at the beginning of the year, He will honor that sacrifice and bless our ENTIRE year!

If you are one of those people who sense that God has more for your life, take the first step and believe for more of Him. Start the year off right and discover the rewards of putting God first! I look forward to hearing about what God will do in our lives and in our land as we seek Him together.
Make fasting a “lifestyle!”

Fasting is not just for the beginning of the year. Commit to fasting, prayer and giving throughout the year and watch as God releases His hand of blessing over your entire year. Make fasting a regular part of your life and see how He supernaturally opens doors for you.

There is Life ... and there is living ... are you ready to start really living out God's plan for your life?

There's more to life...more to faith...more to you! God gives you the formula for success which boils down to two words: God first! That's where God began. Look at your Bible. What are the very first words written?
“In the beginning...” Genesis 1:13.

“God first” is His priority that should rule every decision of our lives. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us to hear His plan, receive His direction and His blessings. If you want success in your life, in your marriage, in your work, in your witness—putting God first is key.

God hears the cry of the oppressed and the unsaved. When God is our first priority, He can use us to help others. The words of Isaiah 58:6-14 give us insight into how significantly God views the power of fasting in fulfilling His kingdom purpose.