

GUIDELINES TO FASTING AND PRAYING



TRANSFORMATION
C H U R C H

2023

21 DAY FAST INFORMATION SHEET

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.

TYPES OF FAST

There are **several types of fasts. 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 sunup to sundown. You can select from three types of fasting — a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or limit yourself to one meal.

Note: Whenever engaging in any type of extensive fast, you should seek counsel from a medical professional, especially if you suffer from type of illness.

WHAT IS A DANIEL FAST?

The Daniel Fast is based on the prophet Daniel's spiritual and dietary experiences in the Bible. Two references lay the foundation for the diet:

“Please test your servants for ten days and let them give us vegetables [pulses] to eat and water to drink.” **Daniel 1:12**

“In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks (21 Days). 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.” **Daniel 10:12-13**

Daniel himself experienced a renewed sense of vigor and strength after following a plant-based diet for three weeks, and a modern diet plan was created based on achieving his results of greater spiritual, mental, and physical health.

While only vegetables and water are listed in the scripture, the word “pulse” in the King James Bible is defined as “bean or seed grown for food.” allowing for fruits, whole grains, and other plant-based foods to be included in the diet plan.

BIBLICAL FASTING FOCUS

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 should serve to "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 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.

Deciding How Long - You may fast as long as the Spirit leads you. 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.

What the Bible says about why we should Fast?

1. SEEKING GOD'S DIRECTION

"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

God not only sustained Moses during his fast, but also gave him wisdom and direction.

2. FASTING FOR HUMILITY

“...I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions....So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.” Ezra 8:21-32

They fasted humbly, prayed fiercely, and God answered.

3. FASTING FOR FREEDOM

“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

It's not just an outward practice, but an inner transformation. It's about addressing the deep, ugly sins of your life, untying the cords of that yoke, and breaking free.

4. RETURN TO GOD WITH REPENTANCE

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

Return to me. This was a call to repentance, for the people to return to God's mercy and steadfast love. And one of the ways to show their truly repentant heart was through fasting.

5. FAST FOR INTIMACY WITH GOD, NOT PRAISE FROM MAN

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:16-18

As Christians, our intentions matter. Don't fast for attention, recognition, or the sake of not-so-silent suffering through the duration of your fast. Fast to draw nearer to God and rely on Him on deeper levels than you have before.

6. GROW IN SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

“After fasting forty days and forty nights, he [Jesus] was hungry.” Matthew 4:2

Fasting can strengthen us spiritually when we choose to stand on God's Word in our own human frailty.

7. NEW WINE INTO WINESKINS

“Then John's disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast. “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” Matthew 9:14-17

The entire purpose of the disciples' and the Pharisees' fasting was to show a longing for the day God would show up and show favor to Israel again. Jesus was right there with them! There was no need for fasting at that moment. But immediately afterward, Jesus said, “the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.” He wasn't putting an end to all fasting. He specifically said the time to fast would be coming again!

But now, our fasting isn't filled with mourning as it was for the Pharisees. Instead, it's filled with longing because we know Jesus came and will come again!

8. SEEKING THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE

“So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” Acts 13:3

It would seem that the church here fasted for guidance from the Holy Spirit. They didn't know what to do next, but they ached for God's direction. And this particular instance of fasting happened *after* Christ's coming. This fasting was not about legalism. This was a deep hunger in these people searching for guidance of the church's next steps.

9. PRAYING AND FASTING

“..and there was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.” Luke 2:37

So many of the Bible verses that talk about fasting also mention prayer. The two seem to go hand-in-hand. This spiritual discipline of fasting and praying was important in the Old Testament, impactful in the New Testament, and is still a powerful way to approach God on a deeper level.