



DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING



January 8 -28,2024

WHAT SHOULD I FAST?

IN THE BIBLE THERE ARE PRIMARILY 2 KINDS OF FASTS MENTIONED:

1. **The absolute fast** – during this fast you consume no food and no water for the duration of your fast. Moses and Jesus undertook absolute fasts. **I do not recommend you try this!** (It could kill you!) Both Moses and Jesus were called to this kind of fast and it requires special/miraculous intervention from God to even survive this kind of fast.
2. **The partial fast** – giving up certain foods and/or drinks for a period of time in order to focus more intently upon God. An example of this is Daniel, who fasted for 21 days, abstaining from all meat, sweets, wine and choice foods (foods that he enjoyed and/or were delicacies).

In the Bible ALL fasts included food items. I believe that there are many other things that we can and should fast, but I firmly believe that all fasts ought to include some kind of dietary restriction; even/ especially if it is something we really enjoy.

Let me remind us that the time normally given to the things we are fasting should be used instead in prayer, worship, Bible study and listening for God's still small voice.

So let's say for instance that you are fasting lunch every day; spend that entire lunch hour in prayer.

SO WHAT SHOULD I FAST?

Below is a partial list, but one that people at The Quest have undertaken and benefited from:

- **ONE MEAL:** Lunch (or breakfast or dinner) every day (for 21 days)
- **FOODS YOU LIKE OR ENJOY:** Chocolate, meat, bread, sodas, coffee, wine/alcohol, sweets/ deserts, etc... You may want to even go so far as going on a strict Daniel diet (basically vegetarian).
- **SOLID FOOD:** One year I only drank fresh fruit and vegetable juices and soups.
- **ADDICTIONS:** Things that you are, or could possibly become, addicted to (i.e. drugs, alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, sugar, internet, etc.)
Something to remember is: **"Some of the things we fast from may very well be the things we need to repent of."**
- **TIME CONSUMING ACTIVITIES:** Internet, video games, TV, music, working out, reading things other than the Bible, sports – watching and/or doing, social media, shopping... this list could go on and on; use your imagination.

Just remember that a fast is meant to be both a discipline and a sacrifice. Don't take it lightly!

The greater the sacrifice and discipline, the greater the benefit.

WHY PRAYER AND FASTING?

I am often asked, "Why do I need to fast and pray?" The answer is really rather simple – because Jesus told us to!

Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7):

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. 17 But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. 18 Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)

Notice what Jesus said; “when you fast”. Jesus expects His followers to practice this ancient and modern spiritual discipline.

Fasting is a common discipline practiced throughout the Old Testament, the New Testament, Church history, and still today by men and women who earnestly desire to obey, know and receive from God Almighty.

In A GUIDE TO PRAYER, by Rueben Job and Norman Shawchuck it says:

“Fasting, perhaps as much as anything else, helps us to go into our ‘inner room,’ the space within ourselves. Fasting helps us shut the door of our inner selves to the outside attractions which crowd in and dissipate our prayer times and energies.

Fasting is the act of temporarily giving something up something that is very important to us in order that we may use the time normally given to that thing for prayer and reflect upon the pain of temporary ‘sacrifice’ to better understand the mystery and meaning of Christ passion and sacrifice for us.

Intercessory prayer can be greatly strengthened by fasting...”

In short, fasting helps us connect with God in a way that we otherwise would not. It is making a sacrifice of something we enjoy, or is habitual, and replacing it with time spent in prayer. We can fast things such as food/meals, entertainment, habits, media, sports, working out, alcohol, tobacco, etc. replacing that time with seasons of worship, Bible study, prayer and even quiet contemplation.

When our prayers are accompanied by fasting there is an increase of the power of those prayers both in our own lives and in the lives of those we are praying for.

Although prayer and fasting is a time of submission to God and a time to grow closer to Him, it is also a time to pray for those things and people that are important to us.

- *Esther fasted and prayed and her nation was spared.*
- *Daniel fasted and prayed and he received direction from God.*
- *Jesus fasted and prayed before entering His earthly ministry.*
- *The 1st Century Church prayed and people were set apart for ministry.*

Prayer and fasting changes people, circumstance and can even save people from danger, disease and judgment.

- *Does your life need to be changed?*
- *Do you have loved ones who need a miracle in their lives?*
- *Do you have questions that remain unanswered or problems that remain unresolved?*
- *Do you need healing in your life?*
- *Do you need, want, or desire to be closer to God?*

Then please, consider joining us on this 21 day adventure of obedience.

THE KIND OF FASTING THAT PLEASURES THE LORD

Carefully [read and reread Isaiah 58](#).

The fast that pleases the Lord includes intentional life-style changes and choices.

What changes do you need to make...

- What spiritual and attitude issues do I need to change?

- How can I better (or even begin to) serve others?
- How do I honor the Sabbath?
 - Daily?
 - Weekly?
 - Regularly?
- What can I expect, if I am obedient to God's instructions?

Fasting Tip: Start keeping a journal, either in a notebook or stored in your computer or phone of your journey as you prepare for and participate in this fast.

HOW SHOULD I PLAN MY DAYS?

First, let me say this: "A fast without prayer is simply a diet!"

I don't mean to sound like a broken record, but the time spent fasting from food and/or activity is time that should be spent in prayer, worship, Bible study, or sitting quietly in God's presence allowing Him to speak to you.

I have learned from my own experiences and from others that there are several practices that can/will enhance your 21 days of fasting accompanied with prayer.

1. When you fast a meal, the time spent normally preparing, consuming and cleaning up for that meal should instead be spent in prayer.
2. When you fast an activity, the time spent normally doing that activity should be replaced with prayer, worship, thanksgiving, Bible study and listening to God.
3. Begin every day spending time in prayer, worship, thanksgiving, listening and Bible study. Start your day this way!!!
4. End every day with prayer and reflection. Consider keeping a journal, writing down your prayers, praise, thanksgiving and thoughts.
5. Meet with and pray with other Christians as often as possible. Although prayer and fasting is an extremely personal discipline, in a situation like ours is very much corporate as well. We can help each other, grow together, pray with each other, and experience God together. During our 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, consider attending as many of the nightly gatherings as possible.

NOW, decide what you are going to fast and rework your schedule!

- Make that commitment to God.
- Let your family know (you don't want to catch them off guard and you need your support).
- Let a few others know – they can help keep you accountable.

Pick up a fasting service schedule at the Nexts steps table.