

Fasting

Why We Fast?

The definition of a biblical fast is to restrict food for a spiritual purpose, drawing closer to God. Fasting is an intentional choice to turn down the noise of the world and flesh, to allow the spirit to lead us more. (Gal. 5)

Fasting isn't for God. God isn't going to be impressed with us and fasting is not a ritualistic measure for God to do in our lives what we think God should do. Fasting is for us. It's a spiritual tool that God provided for us to strengthen our spirits, learn self-control of the flesh, draw closer to our Heavenly Father, and increase prayer focus. Fasting is an temporary intense action for a set period of time. This is like athletes doing Two-a-Days when conditioning for a season. The power in fasting isn't just the food we refrain from, the power of fasting is the time set aside to focus more on connecting with God through prayer, reading, and worship.

3 types of Fasting Found in the Bible:

1. An Absolute Fast:

- a. Moses fasted on Mount Sinai for forty days where the Bible states he did not eat or drink anything for that time. (Exodus 34:28) Today, some may do an absolute fast during daylight hours, but rarely for a long period of time because long term health problems could occur.

2. A Normal Fast:

- a. A normal fast is when only water is consumed. We see this from Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) and Jesus (Matt. 4). Both fasted for forty days.

3. A Partial Fast:

- a. This is when some foods are consumed but others are restricted. We see this example from Daniel (Daniel 1:12) and John the Baptist (Matt. 3:4)

Fasting should be a normal part of our lives. We see many biblical examples in the bible of fasting. Although, only some of the examples are recorded, it was Jewish custom to fast regularly. The Day of Atonement is a one-day fast set in the Mosaic Law. We do know, Daniel fasted 3 times; David fasted after his child became ill, and Jesus fasted at the start of his ministry and while sitting at the well.

Preparation

Determine the purpose of the fast. Take some time to ask the Lord for direction in your fast.

- 1. Ask Him to reveal 3 or 4 things in your life that need changed. What are 3 new habits I need to form?**
- 2. Think long. What are 5 things you want to accomplish over the next 12 months / 3 years / 5 years?**

Chances are you have unrealized dreams and desires in your heart just waiting to be mined out. Create a life goal list. Dream. Let these dreams be a focus in your fasting time.

3. Do a heart evaluation:

- **Am I tired emotionally, mentally, and spiritually?**
- **What fears or worries do I have that I need God to help me conquer?**
- **Is there unforgiveness in my heart?**
Many people walk around carrying unresolved hurt and unforgiven wrongs. Is there unresolved hurt in your heart? Is there guilt or repentance needed in a past event?
- **Are there areas that are “Out of Balance” in your life?**
Is there a relationship that needs to be reengaged? Do you have financial mountains that you need to tackle? Is there a project looming over and causing unbalance?

If you are fasting in part of a corporate fast, the fast will be called by the leader of your group and given a specific purpose by him or her. Ester did this when she called a 3-day fast before approaching the king on behalf of her people. But even if you are a part of a corporate prayer, don't miss the personal things God wants to speak and do in your heart.

Scriptures to meditate on:

- Isaiah 58:6-9
- Ezekiel 44:30
- John 17:16-18
- 2 Cor. 10:4-5
- Joshua 1:9
- Philippians 3:20
- Romans 8:5
- John 7:37-38
- Colossians 3:1-2
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Philippians 4:8
- Numbers 13:30
- Colossians 2:6-7
- Matthew 4:3-4
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- 1 Cor. 10:13