



WHAT IS FASTING?

Fast, *tsom*; Strong's # 6685: A fast; a day of fasting; a time set aside to mourn or pray with no provision for one's normal food needs.

"*I humbled my soul with fasting.*" (Psalm 35:13) This allows Christ's power and authority through. (Matthew 17:14-21)

God said, "*Turn to Me with fasting.*" (Joel 2:12)

Fasting was ordained of God. (Jeremiah 36:6)

God said we should "*Give yourselves to fasting and prayer.*" (1 Corinthians 7:5)

Fasting which pleases God and is a ministry to Him is to fast sin in our lives. "*In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit all your laborers...*" (Isaiah 58:3b)

"*If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing finger, and speaking wickedness...*" (Isaiah 58:9b) This is fasting.

"*If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise...*" (Isaiah 58:10)

Fasting breaks yokes, brings out the power and authority of Jesus name and quickens the Word of God in your heart. Fasting is always associated with personal and corporate revival.

PRACTICAL PURPOSES OF FASTING

Fasting is not just the giving up of food, fasting is the release of our burdens and a loosing of bondages we have on each other. Giving up food helps us to remember this, but fasting, like prayer, is a spiritual principle that leads God-ward, and thus is an act of love. The Bible says we fast to:

- **Honor God.** Fasting is a ministry to God. (Matt. 6:16-18) (Zec. 7:5) (Luke 2:37) (Acts13:2)
- **Humble ourselves before God, thus entering His presence.** (Ezra 8:21) (Psalm 69:10) (Isa.58:3)
- **Personally repent.** Fasting reveals roots of problems or sin. (1Sam. 7:6) (Nehemiah 9:1-2)
- **Repent on behalf of the churches, national and worlds sins.** (Deut. 28) (Daniel 9:19) (Ezra 10:6)
- **Change God's mind.** (2Samuel 12:16,22) (Jer.18:7-10) (1Kings 21:27-29) (Jonah 3:5,10)
- **Release people to a new task.** (Ezra 8:21-23) When people enter ministry, they and the church should fast. (Acts 13:2-3) (Acts 14:23)
- **Earnestly seek God.** (Judges 20:26) (Jer 29:12-14) (Joel 2:12)
- **Break bondages.** (Isa.58:6) (Matt.17:14-21) (Mark 9:14-28) (Luke 9:37-42)
- **Gain revelation and wisdom concerning God's will.** (Dan.9:2-3,10:1-3) (Isa.58:5,6,11) (Joel 1:13-14,2:12,15) (Acts 13:2-3)
- **Discipline our bodies.** (Psalm 35:13) (Rom. 13:14) (1Cor.9:27) When normal prayer and counseling do not work, fast and pray.
- **Prepare for the Bridegroom.** Fasting is a sign of the believer's longing for the Lord's return. It is also a sign of preparation for Christ's coming (preparing the bride). It is most certainly a sign of mourning of Christ's absence. (Luke 5:35)

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WHEN YOU FAST

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A Biblical Guide To Victorious Fasting

Fasting is to voluntarily do without food, exactly the opposite of the first act of sin in the Garden when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.

FASTING IS PLEASING TO GOD

"OUR GIVING UP FOOD SYMBOLIZES AND ENFORCES THE FAST WHICH GOD DESIRES."

4 TYPES OF FASTING accompanied BY PRAYER:

The Absolute Fast

The 'absolute fast' is to do without food or water. It should not last over three days as the body then begins to dehydrate. The absolute fast is usually done to cast out evil spirits or for an emergency. (Esther 4:16) (Ezra 10:6) (Acts 9:9)

The Partial Fast

This is a simple diet ... liquids or one meal a day, often only of vegetables, potatoes or rice. This type of fast can be taken anytime. (Dan.10:2-3)

The Normal or the Extended Fast

This is a fast with only water and can last from one day up to 40 days or longer. Some people drink juice or other liquids, although this is not recommended as it is harder for the body to adjust. (Matthew 6:16-18)

Note: (a) If you drink only water, hunger usually leaves after three or so days. (b) Headaches and discomforts stop after a week or so and (c) Energy begins to return after about two weeks. (d) Get plenty of exercise. (e) The body becomes more susceptible to feeling the cold.

The Supernatural Fast

God sustained Moses in His presence supernaturally twice for 40 day periods - the ultimate example of a supernatural fast. (Exodus 24:18, 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9,18) Do not attempt this type of fast.

ENDING THE FAST

Medical experts agree that "breaking the fast" is critical to the fast itself.

When you fast, your stomach shrinks and your intestines become idle, so solid food must be re-introduced correctly to avoid kidney failure, digestive distress or just

plain shock to your whole system.

In fact, after a 40-day fast, you should make a careful transition for around three days before returning to eating meats or fats or heavy foods.

But also importantly, if you end your fast gradually, the physical and spiritual benefits will last much longer. If you rush into solid foods, you may lose much of your deep sense of peace and experience physical problems such as diarrhea, sickness, fainting, and frankly even death in extreme cases, due to shock!

Helpful Bible Starting-Points About Fasting:

Moses fasts 40 days - Exodus 34:28

Moses receives from God - Deuteronomy 9:9-29, 10:1-11

David fasts in repentance - 2 Samuel 12:16,17

Elijah fasts 40 days - 1 Kings 19:1-8

Resolved to hear from God - 2 Chronicles 20:1-29

Fasting for protection - Ezra 8:21-23,31

Mourning over sin - Ezra 10:6, 10:10-11

Fasting in intercession - Nehemiah 1:4

Fasting for dire situations - Esther 4:3

To turn from wrongdoing - Job 33:19,20

Humbling the soul - Psalm 35:13

Weeping and fasting - Psalm 69:10; 102:4

True fasting - Isaiah 58

Daniel's partial fast - Daniel 1:8-17

Fasting for insight - Daniel 10:2-3

A call for revival - Joel 1:13-14, 2:12,15,18-27

People of Ninevah spared - Jonah 3:5-10

Honor God with fasting - Zechariah 7:4

How to fast - Matthew 6:16-18

Jesus fasted - Matthew 4:1-3, Luke 4:1-2

Mourning for the Bridegroom - Matthew 9:14-17

Casting out demons - Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29

Paul fasts when saved - Acts 9:7-19, 13:2

Early church fasting - Acts 13:2-3; 14:23

Paul on fasting - 1 Corinthians 7:5 ; 2 Corinthians 11:27,28

"... Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to free the oppressed, to break every yoke, help the hungry, poor?..."

(Isaiah 58:6-6 paraphrased)

Family Resources for Spiritual Growth

The Spirit and the bride say "Come!"

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