

## Basic Tips For Fasting

There are several Christians whom have never considered fasting on their journey with Christ. If you are one of them. Do not beat yourself up. You can only do what you know or are taught to do. Fasting is a biblical tool to help us break any stronghold in our lives! However, fasting must be accompanied with prayer. You can pray without fasting, but you cannot... I repeat, cannot fast without praying!

In most cases when we fast, we usually are denying food & certain drink. Fasting shows God our sacrificial love for soliciting His Holy help. So in most all cases, the person fasting will feel the reminder of the need of what they are doing when food and drink is denied. There are other ways to fast, ie., denying social media, etc. (more on that below). But you WILL feel the fast when abstaining from certain food and drink that brings you pleasure. I can almost hear your amen as I write this. Lol

If I can caution you here. Many times, we as believers put off prayer and fasting because our cravings get the best of us. Other times, it is the discomfort of headaches as we push the coffee aside for a period of time. These discomforts are only for a time. The sufferings of Jesus far outweigh anything we will feel when seeking the Lord. Still in doubt, then trust your pastor.

Ok ReIGNITE family, it is my desire to lead us into the New Year with a **21 Day Congregational Fast** (that's fasting together). Not to be confused with the 21 Day Daniel fast. That's something else. On this journey, I'd like you to simply seek God on whatever you enjoy eating, drinking or doing and abstain from it during the 21 days (**between Monday morning, Jan 11<sup>th</sup> – Sunday evening, Jan 31<sup>st</sup>**).

However, during this period, I caution you not to share with friends (bragging about how tough your fast is, but how you are persevering). No, prayer and fasting is one of the humblest things you can do to connect to the Father in heaven. So, make it between you and Him.

## Not So Fast

Fasting is voluntarily going without food — or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God — for the sake of some spiritual purpose. It is markedly counter-cultural in our consumerist society, like abstaining from sex until marriage.

If we are to learn the lost art of fasting and enjoy its fruit, it will not come with our ear to the ground of society, but with Bibles open. Then, the concern will not be whether we fast, but when. Jesus assumes his followers will fast, and even promises it will happen. He doesn't say "if," but "when you fast" (Matthew 6:16). And he doesn't say his followers might fast, but "they will" (Matthew 9:15).

**“Fasting is markedly counter-cultural in our consumerist society, like abstaining from sex until marriage.”**

We fast in this life because we believe in the life to come. We don't have to get it all here and now, because we have a promise that we will have it all in the coming age. We fast from what we can see and taste, because we have tasted and seen the goodness of the invisible and infinite God — and are desperately hungry for more of him.

## **Radical, Temporary Measure**

Fasting is for this world, for stretching our hearts to get fresh air beyond the pain and trouble around us. And it is for the battle against the sin and weakness inside us. We express our discontent with our sinful selves and our longing for more of Christ. When Jesus returns, fasting will be done. It's a temporary measure, for this life and age, to enrich our joy in Jesus and prepare our hearts for the next — for seeing him face to face. When he returns, he will not call a fast, but throw a feast; then all holy abstinence will have served its glorious purpose and be seen by all for the stunning gift it was.

Until then, we will fast.

## **How to Start Fasting**

Fasting is hard. It sounds much easier in concept than it proves to be in practice. It can be surprising how on-edge we feel when we miss a meal. Many an idealistic new fast-er has decided to miss a meal and only found our belly drove us to make up for it long before the next mealtime came.

Fasting sounds so simple, and yet the world, our flesh, and the devil conspire to introduce all sorts of complications that keep it from happening. In view of helping

you start down the slow path to good fasting, here are six simple pieces of advice. These suggestions might seem pedantic, but the hope is that such basic counsel can serve those who are new at fasting or have never seriously tried it.

## **1. Start small.**

Don't go from no fasting to attempting a weeklong. Start with one meal; maybe fast one meal a week for several weeks. Then try two meals, and work your way up to a daylong fast. Perhaps eventually try a two-day juice fast.

A juice fast means abstaining from all food and beverage, except for juice and water. Allowing yourself juice provides nutrients and sugar for the body to keep you operating, while also still feeling the effects from going without solid food. It's *not* recommended that you abstain from water during a fast of any length.

## **2. Plan what you'll do instead of eating.**

Fasting isn't merely an act of self-deprivation, but a spiritual discipline for seeking more of God's fullness. Which means we should have a plan for *what positive pursuit to undertake* in the time it normally takes to eat. We spend a good portion of our day with food in front of us. One significant part of fasting is the time it creates for prayer and meditation on God's word or some act of love for others.

Before diving headlong into a fast, craft a simple plan. Connect it to your purpose for the fast. Each fast should have a specific spiritual purpose. Identify what that is and design a focus to replace the time you would have spent eating. Without a purpose and plan, it's not Christian fasting; it's just going hungry.

## **3. Consider how it will affect others.**

Fasting is no license to be unloving. It would be sad to lack concern and care for others around us because of this expression of heightened focus on God. Love for God and for neighbor go together. Good fasting mingles horizontal concern with the vertical. If anything, others should even feel more loved and cared for when we're fasting.

So as you plan your fast, consider how it will affect others. If you have regular lunches with colleagues or dinners with family or roommates, assess how your abstaining will affect them, and let them know ahead of time, instead of just being a no-show, or springing it on them in the moment that you will not be eating.

Also, consider this backdoor inspiration for fasting: If you make a daily or weekly practice of eating with a particular group of friends or family, and those plans are interrupted by someone's travel or vacation or atypical circumstances, consider that as an opportunity to fast, rather than eating alone.

#### **4. Try different kinds of fasting.**

The typical form of fasting is personal, private, and partial, but we find a variety of forms in the Bible: personal and communal, private and public, congregational and national, regular and occasional, absolute and partial.

In particular, consider fasting together with your family, small group, or church. Do you share together in some special need for God's wisdom and guidance? Is there an unusual difficulty in the church, or society, for which you need God's intervention? Do you want to keep the second coming of Christ in view? Plead with special earnestness for God's help by linking arms with other believers to fast together.

We realize that not everyone can do the "Daniel Fast" for all kinds of reasons and that's ok. We have, however, provided some other ideas and practices for those who still want to participate in this fasting season. Our goal is that 100% of our church family would come along side us as we focus our full attention on the things of our heavenly Father.

##### **Full Fast**

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

\*Please talk to your personal physician before attempting a Full Fast.

##### **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.

### **Technology Fast**

Maybe it's time to give up certain things in the technology world. Whether it be social media platforms like Facebook or Snapchat to Video games and yes, even Netflix. Whatever is distracting you from seeing God's true vision and the life He has for you this is a perfect time to set those things aside to focus on Him.

## **5. Fast from something other than food.**

Fasting from food is not necessarily for everyone. Some health conditions keep even the most devout from the traditional course. However, fasting is not limited to abstaining from food. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, "Fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose."

If the better part of wisdom for you, in your health condition, is not to go without food, consider fasting from television, computer, social media, or some other regular enjoyment that would bend your heart toward greater enjoyment of Jesus. Paul even talks about married couples fasting from sex "for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer" (1 Corinthians 7:5).

## **6. Don't think of white elephants.**

“Without a purpose and plan, it's not Christian fasting; it's just going hungry.”

When your empty stomach starts to growl and begins sending your brain every “feed me” signal it can, don’t be content to let your mind dwell on the fact that you haven’t eaten. If you make it through with an iron will that says *no* to your stomach, but doesn’t turn your mind’s eye elsewhere, it says more about your love for food than your love for God.

Christian fasting turns its attention to Jesus or some great cause of his in the world. Christian fasting seeks to take the pains of hunger and transpose them into the key of some eternal anthem, whether it’s fighting against some sin, or pleading for someone’s salvation, or for the cause of the unborn, or longing for a greater taste of Jesus.

## **Common Questions... Why are we fasting as a church?**

Fasting is a discipline that helps to shift our priorities. It puts Him first and allows us to hear His plan, receive His direction and His blessings. If you want success in your life, in your marriage, in your work—putting God first is the key.

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

Fasting isn’t mentioned much in the New Testament so is that something that we REALLY need to do? Fasting just isn’t for the Christian fanatics! I used to think the same thing until I realized that ... hello.... JESUS CHRIST himself fasted on a regular basis in order to know how His Father was leading Him. In fact, Jesus ministry began with His baptism by John then immediately He went into the desert for a 40 day fast. “Jesus was led by the Spirit in to the desert where for 40 days He ate nothing”.

– Luke 1:1-2. Also, let’s not forget that He was Jewish and practiced all of the Jewish holidays, which included many days of fasting. But most importantly Jesus teaches, “WHEN you give” – Mat 6:3; “WHEN you Pray” – Mat 6:5; “WHEN you fast” – Mat 6:16. Did you catch the little word that seems to change everything? WHEN... Not if you feel like it.... Not if you are a religious fanatic.... WHEN. In other words, it’s an expectation of spiritual discipline that is expected in order to grow.

## **What can you expect during your fast?**

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.

So, remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6, “But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. 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.” and do your best not to let anyone know you’re fasting by complaining about it, looking like it or being mean. We all can get a bit edgy when we go without certain foods, coffee or cokes for a while. So pray that you don’t bite anyone’s head off because you’re fasting.

Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus’ example when you fast. Spend time listening to worship music. 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.

## **What can you expect after your fast?**

Here’s a tip from experience...don’t go to Outback and order the biggest, greasiest bacon cheeseburger on the menu! It will not end well. When you come off your fast, realize your body has been purified and has gone without certain things (proteins, sugars, caffeine, etc.) for some time. It will take some time for your body to re-adjust. So, don’t overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.

## **Resources and Books**

[www.christ-web.com/missions/farho/daniel-fast](http://www.christ-web.com/missions/farho/daniel-fast)

[www.danielfast.wordpress.com/](http://www.danielfast.wordpress.com/)

[www.jentezenfranklin.org/fasting/types-of-fasts/the-daniel-fast/](http://www.jentezenfranklin.org/fasting/types-of-fasts/the-daniel-fast/)

[www.ultimatedanielfast.com](http://www.ultimatedanielfast.com)

## **BOOKS:**

**FASTING** by Jentezen Franklin. Scripture filled to teach and support the practice of Biblical fasting as a means of focused prayer.

**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE DANIEL FAST** by Kristen Feola. This has over 100 all natural recipes for the Daniel Fast.

## **Here are our guidelines**

Fasting involves much more than going without food. Genuine fasting requires planning and preparation, and it also demands an intentional and complete commitment to seeking the Lord throughout the fast.

Below are several steps you should take if you desire to fast effectively.

### **PLAN YOUR PRAYER TIME**

Determine how much time you will spend praying and studying God's word daily. Part of the fast is filling the time you normally would spend preparing and eating meals with prayer and study. You must be intentional in this.

### **TAKE A SPIRITUAL INVENTORY BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

When you fast and pray you are giving up food to discipline your body. Make sure you do the same with your attitudes and thoughts. You want to bring all parts of your life under the discipline of Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

### **REPENT**

Acknowledge your sin, repent, and be done with it. For God to hear your prayers you must first empty yourself of your sin. Ask for forgiveness and then live forgiven. (1 Chronicles 7:14-15)

### **CHECK YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**



If you have hurt another person, you must go to them and ask for forgiveness. If there is someone who has offended you, pray for them and forgive them. (Mark 11:25-26)

### **ASK GOD TO TEACH YOU FROM HIS WORD**

Remember, there is a measure of spiritual blindness in each one of us, so we must ask the Holy Spirit to teach us and to take away our spiritual blindness. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

### **ASK GOD TO FILL YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The more you know about the Holy Spirit, the more you can give Him control of your life. And the more you walk with the Holy Spirit, the more He can exercise His influence through you. (Ephesians 5:18)

### **YIELD YOURSELF FULLY TO JESUS CHRIST**

Give everything to God. Once you have yielded your physical self you must also yield your inner self. (Romans 12:1)

### **ASK FOR FAITH**

The first step toward a stronger faith is developing an expectant heart for things which you are praying. (Hebrews 11:6)

### **BE AWARE OF SPIRITUAL ATTACKS**

Remember there is an enemy and he will do anything and everything to destroy your fast and wreck your faith. Be prepared to face the enemy by keeping your thoughts on God and His Word. (Jude 20)

**\*The information used today has come from several sources to help your fast:**

God's Word

Pastor's Desk (Lol)

ChurchoftheHighlands.com

Christ's.church.com