

THE PURPOSES OF FASTING AND GUIDELINES FOR FASTING

Fasting has several purposes:

1. To deny ourselves and resist our flesh. Our physical body and our physical nature are not evil in and of themselves. Our flesh does tend to be demanding and would like to rule us. As disciples Jesus is our Lord and we want Him to rule us and have first say in our lives.
2. To humble ourselves before the Lord. Fasting is turning aside from ourselves to seek the Lord and acknowledge our great need for Him. As we fast, we enter a state of physical weakness. As we come out of a fast, we have opportunity to pray, be filled with the Spirit, and allow the Word of God to speak to us.
3. To release the time and effort we would use preparing food and eating to pray and wait upon the Lord.
4. Fasting is not to force God to do anything. It is to yield ourselves in greater measure so we can obey and serve God for His will and purpose.
5. The fast God has chosen is described in Isaiah 58:8-12. If we fast for these reasons, we will experience what God's Word promises, yokes will be broken, strongholds overthrown, and captives will go free.

How to fast:

1. Begin gradually by fasting one full day, from sunrise to sunset, or even one or two meals per day.
2. Keep your vow and fulfill what you have committed to do. Do not break a fast before time unless you become ill.
3. Build a discipline of fasting, fasting one day a week, then adding a 2 or three day fast once a month. If you are fasting effectively add to the length of you fast until you can fast 5-7 days. Then you will be available to fast at the Lord's direction, and He can ask you to fast for a specific person, purpose, or amount of time, the fast of obedience.
4. Do not fast a long fast without having built up your ability to do so.
5. While you are fasting, you need to keep drinking water. Before a fast or early in a fast drink less coffee, soda, tea etc. until you are on water only. You can do a juice fast for one or two days as type of fast, but after more than 2-3 days juice will cause you to starve and not fast. Starving your body will deplete muscle tissue rather than using fat reserves.
6. It is also possible to do a Daniel fast. Meat, strong drink, sugar, and sweets are excluded. The goal is a plain, simple diet of vegetables, grains, plain breads, and beans for the most part. We did a Daniel fast where we were allowed dairy, eggs, and small amounts of cheese as well.
7. Break a fast gradually. In a sense you are "re-entering" normal life, responsibilities, and spiritual awareness. Your intestines will thin during a fast. After fasting a few days, you need to restart by eating soups, soft foods, cooked vegetables, fish, lighter meats, then pork and beef. Your stomach will also shrink, and it is best to eat

smaller amounts to begin with. It is best if you take half the time you have fasted to return to normal eating.

8. **IMPORTANT:** The elderly and those with medical conditions should consult with their physician before fasting. Small children should not fast. Older children can do limited fasts with parents' approval, usually one day or less.
9. All fasting should be done as a matter of free will and children should not be forced to fast.

FASTING OTHER THAN FOOD:

1. You can fast normal activities especially those which may tend to consume your time and preoccupy your mind and attention.
2. You can fast various forms of media, TV, cable news, radio, social media, internet, etc.
3. You can fast certain activities, hobbies, recreation, etc. and dedicate the time you save to seeking the Lord.
4. Fasting screen time can be very effective. You will be amazed how much difference this will make. You may have to do emails or texts for work but limit yourself as much as possible.
5. Our desire should be to bring every thought captive in obedience to the Lord. There is a real battle for our minds and our attention.