

A Common-Sense Guide to Fasting

Introduction:

Most people feel that fasting moves God. No, fasting moves us into a position to receive from God what He has already provided for us.

Definition of Fasting: Abstaining from Food for a Religious (or Spiritual) Purpose

Why Do We Fast?

1. We fast in obedience to God's word – **Joel 2:12; 2 Cor 6:4-6; Matt 6:16-18; 9:15**
2. We fast to humble ourselves before God and obtain His grace and power – **James 4:10**
3. We fast to overcome temptation in areas that keep us from moving in God's power – **Luke 4:1-14**
4. We fast to be purified from sin (and to help others become purified as well) – **Dan 9:3-5; Jonah 3:5-10**
5. We fast to become weak before God so God's power can be strong – **Psa 109:24-28; 2 Cor 12:9-10**
6. We fast to obtain God's support in order to accomplish His will – **Acts 13:3-4; 14:23**
7. We fast in times of crisis – **Esther 4:15-16**.
8. We fast when seeking God's direction – **Ezra 8:21-23**.
9. We fast for understanding and divine revelation – **Jer 36:6**.

What fasting is not:

1. It is not doing without food for the sake of doing without food.
2. It is not dieting – that is adjusting your life for a health reason.
3. It is not a cure-all. It will bring you victory. It is a weapon
4. It is not a major doctrine of the church (Hebrews 6:1-2).
5. It does not negate sin in your life. Sin must be dealt with
6. It is not to impress others.
7. It will not automatically make your faith grow – it is what you do when you fast that makes faith grow.
8. It is not for teaching, reproof, correction or training in righteousness – that is the word of God (2 Tim 3:16).
9. It does not impress God.
10. It does not move God. It moves you into a position to hear or be used of God.

Different Types of Fasting:

1. **The complete fast** => a total fast where you eat nothing and drink nothing, i.e.; 40 days for Moses & Elijah
 - The longest you should go without food & water is three days.
2. **The normal fast** => involves total abstinence from food, but regular intake of water.
 - Some people drink distilled water to clean out your system – to flush out the poisons or use some lemon juice in the water. Some people like to have soup broth for longer fasts.
3. **The Daniel fast or partial fast** => He ate “no pleasant bread” but instead ate vegetables and drank water
 - This is a good recommended way to start if you have never fasted before. This is a good fast for people with diabetes, hypoglycemia and anemia. It is also practical for people working physically or mentally demanding jobs.
4. **The group fast or corporate fast.**
 - Ninevah in Jonah's day; (2) Ezra; (3) Queen Esther; (4) King Jehoshaphat – 2 Chr 20; (5) Joel called a fast (6) Daniel
5. **The “Holy Spirit led” fast**
 - This will be individual to you. The Holy Spirit may lead you to fast a meal a day, breakfast twice a week, coffee, soda, etc.

The Benefits of Fasting:

1. You are humbling yourself. You are submitting yourself to God and His will for your life.
2. You will see life's priorities more clearly. The kingdom of God will become first in your life and you will get clarity concerning your values in life. (Matt 6:33)
3. You will see balance return to areas of your life where there is imbalance
4. Your selfish ambitions and pride will begin to be washed away. You will start valuing and really appreciating the things that God has given to you
5. You will be more sensitive to God's Spirit, and the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit will work more effectively in your life. Things will become very clear to you.
6. Your hidden areas of weakness or susceptibility will rise to the surface so that God can deal with them
7. God will make you more unselfish. One of the things we need more of is self-control. Fasting will help you have self-control.