

## FASTING INFORMATION

**Fasting opens the door to a deeper, more intimate, more powerful relationship with the LORD. It doesn't change the Lord. Fasting changes us.**

### Bible Examples of "God Results" with Prayer and Fasting

- Moses received the Ten Commandments during a forty-day fast. (Exodus 34:27-28)
- Esther asked the Jews to fast three days with her for deliverance from an evil government scheme against them. (Esther 4-7)
- Hannah wept and did not eat when she was not able to have a baby. (1 Samuel 1)
- Nehemiah fasted and prayed because of his sorrow over the destroyed walls of Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 1-6)
- King Jehoshaphat was facing annihilation of his people and proclaimed a fast. (2 Chronicles 20)
- In the middle of an extremely difficult battle the Israelites took a day to fast and pray regarding their future. (Judges 20:26-36)
- Samuel, the prophet, led the Israelites to fast, pray and repent for sinning against the Lord and the enemy miraculously retreated. (1 Samuel 7:5-13)
- Jesus fasted for 40 days before facing the enemy and starting His ministry. This is in contrast to how the enemy originally used food to entice Adam and Eve to sin. (Luke 4:1-13)
- Anna spent much of her life never leaving the temple but worshiped, fasted and prayed until she witnessed baby Jesus the Redeemer at 8 days old. (Luke 2:37)
- Daniel responded with prayer and fasting when he saw in the Word about the future of his people. (Daniel 9:2-3)
- Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted before going out to minister or sending out others. (Acts 13, 14)

#### ***Matthew 6:1-18***

##### **Giving to the Needy**

6 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

##### **Prayer**

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

##### **Fasting**

16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

## What is Fasting?

Fasting is an intentional denial of any kind of physical pleasure for a set period of time in order to obtain a higher spiritual purpose.

Fasting is giving up the natural in order to invoke the supernatural.

Fasting is the dedication to a period of time to devote oneself to the spiritual priority of prayer without food, media, etc.

Most of us could fast food or any physical desire, or social media and other media. Spend the time normally spent on those by praying and waiting on God. The measure of the intensity of your reaction to fasting is indication of how much you will benefit from the fast. Say no to yourself so you can hear God's yes.

True fasting requires replacing missed meals, etc. with the reading of the Word and prayer. Sometimes it is very helpful to focus on reading about the benefits and results of fasting to build your faith in this area. As God for His grace!

When we eat, we eat for our own satisfaction or need, but when we fast we do so with God in mind for His pleasure. Commit as much time as possible to Him.

We usually obey our stomach's cry for food, or for our need to see the latest posts or political news. We can easily become slaves to those things. When we fast, God says, "This is for me." This tells Him that the call of my soul for Him is greater than the cry of my stomach for food or for anything else.

Fasting attracts God's attention more than anything else. We are a spiritual being, yet in our daily lives we often prioritize the needs and care of the body over the needs and care of our spirit and soul. We can even overfeed our body and starve our soul and spirit. Fasting flips this priority, and in reality during a fast we are asking God to nourish our soul and spirit.

Fasting sharpens our spiritual focus. When you eliminate food from your diet for a number of days, your spirit becomes uncluttered by the things of this world and amazingly sensitive to the things of God.

***Are you able to give up something that satisfies your flesh in order to invest in something that will strength your spirit and satisfy a deeper spiritual need?***

## Biblical Fasting

Jesus taught that fasting was a required part of a Christian life that satisfies God, right along with praying and giving. (Matthew 6)

Jesus said that fasting would be a priority for his followers after His death on the cross. (Matthew 9:15)

Fasting was common in the Bible when people needed a breakthrough, for physical or emotional needs, challenging circumstances or relationships, or when guidance is needed. Fasting is not a diet or is not limited to religious monks.

Isaiah challenged believers to humble themselves before the LORD in a true, acceptable and chosen fast. (Isaiah 58:5)

## Types of Fasts/Cautions

**Complete Fast:** Drink ONLY water

**Partial Fast:** Eliminating specific items such as meat, sweets, caffeine, etc., or drinking only juice and water or eating only fruits and vegetables

**Cautions:** Consult a doctor before fasting foods. Be aware of medications and other medical concerns in determining your type of fast. Seek additional information about safe fasting.

## PREPARE...

**Spiritually:** Confess your sins, forgive others, fully surrender your life to Jesus, spend time in the Word, worship and prayer

**Physically:** Before starting the fast give up caffeine, decrease high fat and high sugar foods, and drink LOTS of water (water is your best friend in a fast)