

FASTING *(adapted from the 7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting and Prayer by Bill Bright)*

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that scares and confuses a lot of Christians. To make it a little clearer and give you a better understanding, this PDF is designed as a help & guide to equip you to understand fasting and make sure you don't hurt yourself in the process. The goal of giving you this information is to make your time of fasting with God more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

Step 1: Set Your Objective

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Try to make this a priority in your fasting.

Step 2: Make Your Commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15). For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast— one meal, one day, a week, several weeks
- Type of fast God wants you to undertake— water only, water and juices, how often, etc.
- What physical and social activities will you restrict (TV or internet, etc.)
- How much time each day will you devote to prayer and God's word

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Step 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls you to remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to rejuvenate your spirit according to His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6)

- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17)

Step 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast.
- Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

WHILE YOU FAST

Your time of fasting and prayer has come. You are abstaining from all solid foods and have begun to seek the Lord. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- Limit your activity
- Exercise only moderately. Walk 1-3 miles a day if convenient.
- Rest as much as your schedule permits
- Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety.
- Expect some physical discomforts, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness or the “Blahs.”

Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches. Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness. The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

Step 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Morning

- Begin your day in praise and worship.
- Read and meditate on God’s word.
- Invite the Spirit to work in you and do His will according to Philippians 2:13
- Invite God to use you. Ask him to show you how to influence the world around you (family, work, church, community, country, etc.).
- Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will.

Noon

- Return to praying on God’s word

- Take a short prayer walk
- Spend time in intercessory prayer (praying on other people's behalf, for them)

Evening

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- If others are fasting with you, get together for prayer.
- Avoid TV or other distractions that will take away from your fast.

When possible, begin and end each day on your knees for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with God in prayer and study of His word are often better spent alone.

A dietary routine is vital as well. Dr. Julio C. Rubial— nutritionist, pastor, and specialist in fasting and prayer— suggests a daily schedule and list of juices you may find useful and satisfying. Modify this schedule and the drinks you take according to your circumstances and tastes.

5am-8am

Fruit juices, preferably freshly squeezed or blended and diluted to 50% distilled water if the fruit is acid. Apple, pear grapefruit, papaya, watermelon, or other fruit juices are generally preferred. If you cannot do your own juicing, buy juices without sugars or additives.

10:30am-noon

Fresh vegetable juice made from lettuce, celery, and carrots in three equal parts.

2:30pm-4pm

Herb tea with a drop of honey. Avoid black tea or any tea with caffeine.

6pm-8:30pm

Broth made from boiling potatoes, celery, and carrots with no salt. After boiling about half an hour, pour the water into a container and drink it.

Tips on Juice Fasting

Drinking fruit juice will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy. It will give you the strength to continue.

The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy warm vegetable broth.

Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints, even if your breath is bad. They stimulate digestive action in your stomach.

BREAKING YOUR FAST

When your designated time for the fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break the fast is extremely important for your physical well-being.

Step 6: End Your Fast Gradually

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive track will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Here are some suggestions to help you break your fast properly:

- Break an extended fast with fruit, such as watermelon
- While doing that add some of the following
 - first day: add raw salad
 - second day: add baked potato, no butter or seasoning
 - third day: add steamed vegetables
 - fourth day: begin to reintroduce your normal diet
- Gradually return to your regular diet eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruits such as watermelon and cantaloupe. Advance to a few tablespoons of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and baked potato.

Step 7: Expect Results

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. Over time, you will begin to see the way God is moving through your obedience to Him through practicing this spiritual discipline.

For more information or help with prayer, fasting, or other spiritual disciplines; please contact Forefront Church:

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