

Prayer & Fasting

OVERVIEW

In the most basic form, fasting is abstaining from food. However, there is more to fasting than merely not eating. Fasting is *not* about getting or receiving something; biblically speaking, **fasting is done in response to a serious, grievous, or sacred moment**—sin, fear, sickness, needs, threats, uncertainty, preparation, etc. It is realizing our lack of control over a situation or ‘moment’, mourning our inadequacy, and seeking to place **our whole being** into the presence of God. It is a holistic action that stimulates our heart, mind, soul, and body. Only God forgives, brings peace, heals, provides, protects, gives revelation, etc. **It is not about seeking the “end goal”, but simply placing our ‘moment’ into God’s presence to allow him to deal with it**—how he deals with it is up to him!

FASTING & FEASTING

Jesus, in response to a question on fasting, stated, “The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; **in those days they will fast.**” (Luke 5.35). While Jesus was on earth, the kingdom of God was physically present. Now, we live in the in-between, where Jesus is ascended and we await his return—which will be celebrated with a *feast* (Isa. 25.6-9; Luke 14.1-24; Rev. 19.6-9).

Fasting, then, can be seen as craving God’s kingdom (reign) on earth. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6.10). This is not merely a future hope of the kingdom, but a current desire for God’s ruling presence. God’s kingdom *is* breaking into the present and he uses his Spirit-filled people to reveal and share that kingdom (Rom 14.17-18). **When we realize and feel the weight of the brokenness, injustice, and oppression in the world, and we fast in response to its condition, God’s response is to bring his reign of healing, justice, and freedom.** Fasting, then, brings us into partnership with God in what he is doing in and around us.

CHOOSING A FAST

1. Full Fast

Full Fasts are when you abstain from all food and drink for a full day—or more. Traditionally, Jewish fasting is from sun-down to sun-down. *Examples: Jesus fasting forty days (Matt. 4.2); Paul fasting in response to encountering Jesus (Acts 9.9).*

2. Daniel Fast

Daniel Fasts are when you eat only *certain foods*—fruit, veggies, or nuts—to sustain (not fill) you through the fast period which can last days or weeks (Dan. 1.12, 10.2-3).

3. Intermittent Fast

Intermittent Fasts are when you abstain from food and drink for a certain period of time. This could be from sun-up to sun-down or skipping a meal or two in a day. It could go for a day or over multiple days

4. Lenten Fast

Lenten Fast is removing beloved foods or drinks to help to turn attention to God over a number of weeks. This could be the likes of chocolate, soda, or coffee.

5. Soul Fast

Souls Fasts are when you remove some *thing* from your life for a number of weeks. It might be television, social media, video games, screens in general, or pleasure reading—anything that can be a distraction from seeking God. Soul Fasts can be combined with any of the other Fasts.

P.R.E.P. DURING A FAST

During your fast, it is important to remember to actually spend time seeking God. Do not feel like it has to be for the entire fast (as in you cannot do anything else), but that you take time during your fasting periods to **P.R.E.P.**

- **P**ray
- **R**ead Scripture
- **E**ngage in worship
- **P**erceive the leading of the Spirit

