



FASTING GUIDE

What is fasting?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that involves the voluntary abstinence of food (or other activities) for sake of intense spiritual pursuit of God.

Why Fast?

Fasting often seems overwhelming for many followers of Jesus. Yet, fasting is to be a normal part of our Christian lives. Jesus said, “But when you fast . . . your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt 6:17–18). Jesus desires and expects His followers to fast. In addition, Jesus promises that God rewards and blesses us when our fasting is done according to His word.

In Zechariah 7:5, God questioned the nation of Israel about their fasting by asking, “Was it for me that you fasted?” When we fast, our supreme motive is to seek after God Himself. Mike Bickle states, “Fasting restrains our physical pleasure, but enhances our spiritual pleasure. Our greatest pleasure comes from feasting on the person of Jesus. Fasting is an exchange: we abstain from legitimate things to “feast” on God and to experience more of His presence and grace.”

There are many ways and reasons to fast, but the basic idea is to set aside the time you would usually spend eating and focus that time on God instead.

We do not fast to gain more of God’s love, forgiveness, or attention, but to receive the affection, forgiveness, and pleasure He already has for us. Fasting is not to move God’s heart, but to move our hearts to a deeper hunger for God, His Kingdom, and glory in the earth. God is the center of our fasting.

Fasting **tenderizes our hearts** so that we experience God’s presence more. Fasting **changes our desires** and enlarges our desire for righteousness. Fasting **increases our understanding** of the Word. Fasting is a **catalyst to increase our sensitivity** to the Holy Spirit.

Fasting **makes our body healthier** and changes what we desire to eat and drink. Fasting **strengthens our sense of identity**—as sons of God, before the Father. Fasting **reveals the things** that control us.

Simply put, fasting means not eating. Instead of using mealtime for food, you use it to spend time with God by being still in His presence, praying, reading the Bible, and worshiping. Some fasts last for one meal, one day, multiple days, or even weeks. Fasting may begin at sunrise and end at sunset or extend 24 hours per day. You have a great deal of freedom as you fast. Some people avoid everything but water. Others focus solely on not eating and instead drink whatever they want.

Types of fast:

- 1) **Full Fast:** Drink only liquids (you establish the number of days).
- 2) **The Daniel Fast:** Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruits and vegetables.
- 3) **Partial Fast:** A partial fast is usually from a certain time like 6:00 am to 6:00 pm or from sun up to sundown and usually involves fasting from 1-2 meals a day.

Note: The level at which a person engages in fasting from food should be determined according to age and physical limitations. Those with a physical disability, illness, or eating disorders should *not* fast, except under the supervision of a physician. Pregnant and nursing mothers could consider doing a Daniel Fast and add fish and cheese to their fast, but should consult their doctor first. Minors are discouraged from fasting food. The Bible **never** calls children to fast food. For those with physical limitations and minors who desire to fast, consider non-food abstentions, such as a media fast.

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(no TV, movies, Internet, video games, and other entertainment. Only media use for work, school, and worship purposes).

PREPARING FOR YOUR FAST

As you prepare for your time of prayer and fasting, here are some practical suggestions:

Spiritually

- 1) Replace the time you would spend preparing for a meal and eating with prayer, worship, and God's Word.
- 2) Plan ahead for your time of seeking God. Have everything ready so you can simply enter into God's presence and begin feasting on Him.
- 3) Pray through the prayer targets you are provided with.
- 4) When you're fasting, you will feel hunger pangs. Let your hunger point you to a deeper hunger for God and His presence in your life. Allow your physical hunger to serve as a reminder that you are hungry to know Jesus and that you rely on Him for every need.

Physically

- 1) Drink lots of water – at least 64 ounces a day.
- 2) Expect headaches, hunger pangs, and cravings for food, sugar, and caffeine.
- 3) The second and third days of fasting can be the most challenging in terms of physical pain and discomfort. The body is beginning to rid itself of toxins that have built up over the years.
- 4) Walk by faith, not your feelings. There may be times when you will feel like this is worthless and nothing is happening. Focus on the fact that you are obeying God and have a heart to know Him.

Other thoughts

- 1) Play worship music as much as possible while working, driving, resting, etc.
- 2) Limit the amounts of time you spend watching TV and on other activities that will distract you from your fast.
- 3) Get plenty of rest. Go to bed early.