



FASTING 101

Jesus didn't say "If you fast...", but "When you fast..." (Matthew 6:16). But in today's culture we don't hear a lot about how to fast. Here are a few things that can help you get started.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is simply not eating. Biblical fasting is a spiritual discipline that believers practice to grow closer to Christ. We use the time we normally spend eating to spend time with God in prayer and Bible study. Jesus tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" in Matthew 6:33. When we fast for the purpose of godliness we are physically seeking first the Kingdom of God. We will experience hunger pains, which remind us that we must be hungry for God and rely on Him for everything.

1. Pick the kind of fast you want to do:

- Hardcore fast is from food and water: should only be done for a short period of time and closely watched by a Physician.
- Normal Fast: fast from food for a certain period of time. Drink lots of water, and you might also decide to do juice or other liquids.
- Partial Fast: giving up certain foods and drinks for a period of time. Also known as a Daniel fast: No sweets, no wine, no meat, no bread. Basically vegetables and fruits.
- Cultural Fast: Eliminate something that you usually spend time doing. For instance, TV, music, cell phone, Facebook/Twitter, email, or a hobby. Use the time you would usually spend on these things to spend time with God.

Whatever you decide, make sure you consult a Physician to ensure you are medically fit for a fast. You should also consult a Physician if you are on any medications. Women who are pregnant should consider a cultural fast instead of a biblical fast. Women who are nursing should not do a biblical fast, but could speak to their doctor about participating in a Partial Fast (Daniel Fast). There are several reasons why you should refrain from fasting. Conditions such as anemia, anorexia, or heart disease are legitimate reasons not to fast.

2. Decide how long your fast will last:

In the Bible we see individuals fasting for 1, 3, 5, 21, or 40 days. The length is really up to you. Pick a length and go with it.

3. Decide your purpose: Why are you fasting?

The ultimate purpose of fasting is to honor Jesus and seek to know him more. If you are fasting for any other reason pause and rethink what you are doing. Fasting isn't a way to manipulate God, earn his love, or receive extra credit. We are saved by God's grace and His love is will not increase or decrease based on our performance.

You should decide some personal reasons for your fast. Is there a decision you need to make that you can focus on? Is there sin in your life that you need to repent of? Do you have a major prayer request that you want to focus on? Decide what your purpose is and let that guide your prayer life during the fast.

4. Plan ahead

Begin

Decide when your fast will begin. Make sure you don't hit up the buffet the night before your fast to stuff your stomach. No matter how much food you cram down the day before, you're still going to be hungry. You should also ask some friends to partner with you during the fast. Read more about accountability [here](#).



During

Uses the online Devotion Guide to help you stay connected to the Bible and prayer. If you do not spend time with God you are simply starving yourself. Time with God doesn't mean you have to pray for 2 hours a day. But it does mean you are spending meaningful time with the Lord.

Finish

You should also plan ahead to break your fast. It's not a good idea to run to Taco Bell the minute your fast is over and throw down your body weight in burritos. I can tell you from personal experience that you'll regret that decision. The best way to break the fast is with softer foods. Oatmeal, mashed potatoes, and some fruit will be a good way to ease back into the routine.

Celebrate With Friends

Expect God to do something big in your life and celebrate with friends when the fast ends. God is definitely going to use this fast in some ways. Part of the journey is experiencing that blessing and learning to enjoy Jesus in a deeper and more meaningful way.

