

Guiding Scripture

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” – John 10:10

“Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” – Matthew 17:19-21

THE DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

The constant propaganda that is fed to us today convinces us that if we do not have three large meals each day, with several snacks in between, we are on the verge of starvation.

FASTING IN THE BIBLE

Throughout Scripture we see that fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. It is vastly different from dieting. Fasting yields spiritual results while dieting yields physical results. Biblical fasting is always centered on spiritual purposes.

Read: Luke 4:1-13

Examples those who fasted: Daniel (Daniel 10:3), Esther (Esther 4:6), Paul (Acts 9:9), Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9), Elijah (1 Kings 9:18)

Fasting is a private matter between the individual and God, however, occasionally, there are times of corporate or public fasts. The only annual public fast required in the Mosaic law was on the day of atonement according to Leviticus 23:27.

Corporate fasts can be a wonderful and powerful experience when there is a prepared people who are of one mind. **Serious problems in churches or other groups can be dealt with and relationships healed through unified corporate prayer and fasting.**

IS FASTING A COMMANDMENT?

Jesus does not command that we fast, however, He does suggest that we fast. (Matthew 6:6 & Matthew 9:15)

Fasting is designed for those who long for a more intimate walk with God.

TYPES OF FASTS

1. The Disciples' Fast (Matthew 17:21) – For deliverance from sin, addiction, bondage. If we fast, we can break the power of sins and addictions that limit our freedom in Christ.
2. The Ezra Fast (Ezra 8:21-23) – For God's help in solving problems and for protection from Satan. Ezra said that they prayed and fasted and God answered their request.
3. The Samuel Fast (1 Samuel 7:6) - For revival. The people were bound by idol worship and needed deliverance. Samuel called them to seek God and to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem. If we fast and pray for revival, God will pour Himself out on His people.
4. The Elijah Fast (1 Kings 19:4-8) - Mental freedom from emotional problems or habits. Through fasting, God will show us how to overcome emotional problems and destructive habits.
5. The Widow's Fast (1 Kings 17:9-16) – Fasting to provide for the needy. The widow went without food to meet the physical needs of someone else. Because she sacrificed her food, God made sure that she had more than enough food.
6. The Paul Fast (Acts 9:9) - For physical healing and to get direction from God. If we fast and submit our will to God, He will reveal His will to us.
7. The John the Baptist Fast (Luke 1:15) - To enhance our walk with God and witness. If we fast for the influence of our testimonies to reach others for Christ, God will use us.
8. The Esther Fast (Esther 4:16, 5:2) – For protection from the evil one. If we fast for protection, God will deliver us from evil.
9. The Jesus Fast (Matthew 4:1-2) - For spiritual power and victory over temptation, the flesh and the devil.
10. The Daniel Fast (Daniel 1: 5-21; 10:3) – Fasting for health and to seek God's favor, purpose and vision for life.

WAYS TO FAST

- Normal Fast – No food, water only.

- Absolute Fast – Absolutely no food or water (Caution: Should not be undertaken over 3 days and only then if you have a clear directive from the Lord and are in good health).
- Partial Fast – This could mean fasting certain meals of the day or abstaining from certain kinds of foods (i.e.: No meat or sweets, soup only, fruit and vegetables only, etc. In Daniel 10:3, Daniel ate no pleasant bread).
- Juice Fast – Fruit and vegetable juices only.
- Corporate Fast – A church or group of people who feel God has called them to fast together for a certain period of time.
- Jewish Fasting Period – The Jewish fast began at 6:00 P.M. in the evening and ended the next day at 6:00 P.M. (Some people follow this time period to begin and end fasts.)
- Fasting and Prayer — Remember, fasting should be combined with prayer. God called us to fast and pray. If you are fasting a certain meal of the day, use the time you would normally be eating to pray. The combination of prayer and fasting is a powerful way to focus on seeking God for breakthroughs and answers to prayer.
- Fasting and Abstinence — Although the word “fast” is used as abstaining from food in the Bible and does not refer to giving up other things, during a fast one can practice abstinence from other pleasures as well, such as entertainment, TV, hobbies and sex, as spoken about in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.