



Grace Tabernacle Family Life Outreach Center's "Fasting Explainer"

What is Fasting? For Christians, fasting is when a person stops doing something central to their normal routine for spiritual purposes AND spends time in prayer and seeking God through his word. Typically, the fast is from certain foods and drinks.

Why we Fast: There are many examples of people who fasted in the Old and New Testament. Most importantly, Jesus fasted (**Matthew 4:1-11**) There is also an expectation that we will fast, Jesus says in **Matthew 6:16-18**, "Whenever you fast" to make sure that you aren't doing it in a way that seeks glory from other people. This lets us know that our motives for fasting are important to God.

Pray this prayer to make sure your decision to Fast is aligned with God's word:

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. **Psalms 19:24**

A few other reasons to Fast:

1. **Fasting ushers in a deeper reliance on God.**
 - a. Fasting is not easy. It requires you to resist cravings and ask God to help you. This "denying of our flesh" creates space to rely on God in a new way.
 - b. "Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." **Deuteronomy 8:3**
2. **Fasting is a way to worship and honor God.**
 - a. We pay attention to what is important to us. Fasting creates an environment that removes distraction and gives our full attention to our Heavenly Father.
 - b. "And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don't worry about such things. These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need." **Luke 23:29-31**
3. **Fasting is a way to ask for God's guidance, protection, and forgiveness.**
 - a. We should always seek God's direction. Yet we will all face important and life altering decisions (marriage, relocation, relationship, job, health decisions, etc.). Fasting helps to clarify our communication with God. The people of Israel were in battle and needed to know if they were to continue. Through fasting and prayer God answered them. "Then all the Israelites went up to Bethel and wept in the presence of the LORD and fasted until evening. They also brought burnt offerings and peace offerings to the LORD." **Judges 20:26**



- b. Seeking protection for ourselves and loved ones is another reason to fast. “And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled.” **Ezra 8:21**
- c. Seeking forgiveness and repentance is another reason to fast which allows a connection to God on a deeper level. “On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” ⁵The people of Nineveh believed God’s message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.” **Jonah 3:4-5**

4. Fasting **through** grief and mourning

- a. It is important to note that people all throughout God’s word expressed deep sadness over the loss of a loved one. However, we move through these processes and don’t allow loss to rob us of the beautiful future God has in store.
- b. “David and his men tore their clothes in sorrow when they heard the news. They mourned and wept and fasted all day for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the Lord’s army and the nation of Israel, because they died by the sword that day.” ² Samuel 1:11-12

5. Fasting because of obedience to God

- a. God’s ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts. **Isaiah 55:8-9**
God sees beyond what we can see, and obedience to Him also signifies trust in Him. God may tell you to fast and you don’t understand why. The scripture says that “obedience is better than sacrifice.” Meaning- do what God told you to do instead of what is easier and what you want to do.

TYPE OF FAST	WHAT IS REQUIRED?	SCRIPTURE(S)	PURPOSE
Daniel’s Fast*	Not eating meat and “pleasure foods (sodas, sweets, etc.)”	Daniel 10:3 and Daniel 1:12-13	Daniel committed himself to a simple diet. Because he denied himself he was blessed with more wisdom and greater ability.
No Food, No Drink*	Not eating or drinking anything for a period of time	Esther 4:16	Esther was about to do something considered radical and she needed support and prayer from others to save her people. She was successful.
No Food*	Not eating food	Luke 4:1-2	Jesus was about to begin His ministry. After Jesus defeated Satan’s attempts to tempt him, the angels ministered to Him and Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit’s power and went out teaching.



Non-Food Fasts	Committing to not doing something (T.V., social media, gaming system) for a period of time.	Romans 12:12	This can help to refocus us and allow us to see how much time we spend on social media, eating out, watching T.V. playing video games, etc. This allows us to pay attention to our time.
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*If you have health concerns, please consult with your physician.

Tips to make sure you are not just dieting

The difference between fasting and dieting is fasting is for the purpose of a deeper relationship with God. For this to happen we must take active steps to know Him more and understand the heart of God.

Tip 1: Read God's word: Psalm 119:105

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Tip 2: Meditate on God's word: Psalm 1:1-3

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

Tip 3: Purpose to hear God's word: Romans 10:17

"So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Tip 4: Pray to communicate with God: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

"Never stop praying."

Tip 5: Gather with God's people: Hebrews 10:24-25

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.