

BRIEF PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR FASTING

(For more detailed information we suggest reading book "Fasting" by Jensen Franklin)

QUICK TIPS

How to Begin

Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you *fasting*? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible.

Preparing Spiritually

Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

Deciding What to Fast

The type of fasting you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats, and the only liquid he drank was water. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

Deciding How Long

You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

What to Expect

When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

How to End

Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.

WHY FAST?

If you do not already know of the power and importance of fasting, here are some very important facts:

- Fasting was an **expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras**. For example, Moses fasted at least two recorded forty-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast, "when you fast," not if you fast.
- Fasting and prayer can **restore the loss of the "first love"** for your Lord and result in a **more intimate relationship with Christ**.
- Fasting is a biblical way to **truly humble yourself in the sight of God** (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."
- Fasting enables the **Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition**, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.
- The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you!
- Fasting can **transform your prayer** life into a richer and more personal experience.
- Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life-and make you a channel of revival to others.

FASTING SAFELY

You should protect your health. **But I assure you, if done properly, fasting will not only prove to be a spiritual blessing, but physical blessing as well.**

By all means, consult your doctor before you begin your fast. Also, if you are under any type of medication, make sure you talk to your doctor before changing your regime. Prudence and caution are in order.

When you are assured that you are in good health, you are ready to begin your fast.

In spite of the absolute safety and benefits of fasting, there are certain persons who should NEVER fast without professional supervision. For example:

- Persons who are physically **too thin** or emaciated
- Persons who are prone to **anorexia, bulimia, or other behavioral disorders**

- Those who suffer **weakness or anemia**
- Persons who have **tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases, or who have heart disease**
- Those who suffer chronic problems with **kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other important organs**
- Individuals **who take insulin for diabetes, or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia**
- Women who are **pregnant or nursing**

WHAT KIND OF FAST IS RIGHT FOR YOU

The Bible recounts primarily two types of fasts. A partial fast is described in the book of Daniel. Although the water fast seemed to be the custom of the prophet, there was a three-week period in which he only abstained from "delicacies," meat, and wine (Daniel 10:3).

The two primary types mentioned in the Bible are the "absolute" and "supernatural absolute" fasts. These are total fasts—no food (solid or liquid) and no water. Paul went on an absolute fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:9). Moses and Elijah engaged in what must be considered a supernatural absolute fast of forty days (Deuteronomy 9:9; I Kings 19:8).

So, I strongly advise you to drink plenty of liquids. Obviously, if God leads you to undertake an absolute fast, you should obey. If so, be certain, without doubt, that God is leading you.

Water-only fasts that last for **more than several days need to be undertaken with complete rest and under medical supervision because of the extreme danger of over-toxication, breakdown of vital body tissues, and loss of electrolytes.**

I personally recommend and practice **water and juice fasting**, especially if you are going to fast for an extended period of time. This type of fast will provide you with more energy than absolute or water-only fasts and still lead you into the humbling experience of denying your desire for solid food that you can chew.

When it comes to making your final decision about what type of fast is right for you, the best advice I can give you is to **follow the leading of the Holy Spirit**. He will guide your heart and mind as to what is best for you. **Remember, the most important consideration in fasting is your motive.** Why are you fasting? To seek something personally from God's hand or to seek His face in worship, praise and thanksgiving?

Spiritual preparation

In preparation for this special time with God, I strongly urge you to **examine your heart**, and **detect any unconfessed sin**. Scripture records that God always requires His people to repent of their sins *before* He will hear their prayers.

King David said: *Come and hear, all of you who reverence the Lord, and I will tell you what he did for me: For I cried to him for help, with praises ready on my tongue. He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins. But he listened! He heard my prayer! He paid attention to it! Blessed be God who didn't turn away when I was praying, and didn't refuse me his kindness and love.* (Psalm 66:16-20)

In your prayers, confess not only obvious sins, but less obvious ones as well. The sins of omission as well as the sins of commission experiences. These may be experiences **leaving your first love for our Lord: worldly-mindedness, self-centeredness, spiritual indifference, and unwillingness to share your faith in Christ with others, not spending sufficient time in God's Word and in prayer, a poor relationship with your spouse, your children, your pastor, or other members of your church.**

Physical preparation

Although fasting is primarily a spiritual discipline, it begins in the physical realm. You should not fast without specific physical preparation.

If you plan on fasting for several days, you will find it helpful to begin by **eating smaller meals before you abstain altogether**. Resist the urge to have that "last big feast" before the fast. Cutting down on your meals a few days before you begin the fast will signal your mind, stomach, and appetite that less food is acceptable.

Some health professionals suggest **eating only raw foods for two days before starting** a fast. I also recommend **weaning yourself off caffeine and sugar products** to ease your initial hunger or discomfort at the early stages of your fast.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Receiving God's best blessing from a fast requires solid commitment. **Arranging special time each day with God** is absolutely crucial in attaining intimate communion with the Father. You must devote yourself to seeking God's face, even (and especially) during those times in which you feel weak, vulnerable, or irritable. **Read His Word and pray during what were mealtimes.** Meditate on Him when you awake in the night. Sing praises to Him whenever you please.

Focus on your Heavenly Father and make every act one of praise and worship. God will enable you to experience His command to "pray without ceasing" as you seek His presence.

As you enter this time of heightened spiritual devotion, **be aware that Satan will do everything he can to pull you away** from your prayer and Bible reading time. When you feel the enemy trying to discourage you, immediately go to God in prayer and ask Him to strengthen your resolve in the face of difficulties and temptations.

The enemy makes you a target because he knows that **fasting is the most powerful of all Christian disciplines** and that God may have something very special to show you as you wait upon Him and seek His face. Satan does not want you to grow in your faith, and will do anything from making you hungry and grumpy to bringing up trouble in your family or at work to stop you. Make prayer your shield against such attacks.

My major reason for fasting is for **personal revival, revival for our nation**, for the world and for the **fulfillment of the Great Commission**. But **praying for our own needs and interceding for others** are also important reasons to fast and pray. Bring your personal needs before the Lord, intercede for your loved ones, your friends, your church, your pastor, your community, your nation, and the world. By your prayers of humility, as you fast, you will help the Great Commission be fulfilled. However, do not become so caught up in praying for yourself and others that you forget about simply reverencing and praising God. True spiritual fasting focuses on God. **Center your total being on Him, your attitudes, your actions, your motives, desires, and words**. This can only take place if God and His Holy Spirit are at the center of our attention. **Confess your sins as the Holy Spirit brings them to your attention** and continue to focus on God and God alone so that your prayers may be powerful and effective.

A renewed closeness with God and a greater sensitivity to spiritual things are usually the results of a fast. Do not be disappointed if you do not have a "mountaintop experience," as some do. Many people who have successfully completed extended fasts tell of feeling a nearness to God that they have never before known, but others who have honestly sought His face report no particular outward results at all. For others, their fast was physically, emotionally, and spiritually grueling, but they knew they had been called by God to fast, and they completed the fast unto Him as an act of worship; God honored that commitment.

Your motive in fasting must be to glorify God, not to have an emotional experience, and not to attain personal happiness. When your motives are right, God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him in a very special way.

NUTRITIONAL BALANCE

For an extended fast, I recommend **water and fruit and vegetable juices**. The natural sugars in juices provide energy, and the taste and strength are motivational to continue your fast. Try to **drink fresh juices**, if possible. Off-the-shelf juice products are acceptable, as long as they are **100% juice with no sugar or other additives**.

If you are beginning a juice fast, there are certain juices you may wish to avoid and certain ones that are especially beneficial. Because of their acid content, most nutritionists **do not advise orange or tomato juice** (these are better tolerated if mixed with equal portions of water). The best juices are **fresh carrot, grape, celery, apple, cabbage, or beet**. They also recommend "**green drinks**" made from green leafy vegetables because they are excellent "de-toxifiers."

Fruit juices are "cleansers" and are best taken in the morning. Since vegetable juices are "restorers" and "builders," they are best taken in the afternoon.

Most knowledgeable nutritionists recommend:

- Watermelon-just put it in the blender without adding water.
- Fresh apple juice
- Green juice-blend celery, romaine lettuce, and carrots in equal proportions. (Vegetable juices like this one are important, for they supply the electrolytes necessary for proper heart function!)

Some nutritionists recommend **warm broth, especially if you live in a colder climate**.

You may find the following daily schedule helpful during your fast. I recommend you print it and keep it handy throughout your fast.

- 5:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.
Fruit juices, preferably freshly squeezed or blended, diluted in 50 percent distilled water if the fruit is acid. Orange, apple, pear, grapefruit, papaya, grape, peach or other fruits are good.
- 10:30 a.m. - noon
Green vegetable juice made from lettuce, celery, and carrots in three equal parts.
- 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Herb tea with a drop of honey. Make sure that it is not black tea or tea with a stimulant.
- 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Broth from boiled potatoes, celery, and carrots (no salt).

I suggest that you **do not drink milk because it is a pure food and therefore a violation of the fast. Any product containing protein or fat, such as milk or soy-based drinks, should be avoided. These products will restart the**

digestion cycle and you will again feel hunger pangs. It is not recommended to drink **caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea. For health reasons stay away from soda and carbonated drinks like Coca-Cola.** Because caffeine is a stimulant, it has a more powerful effect on your nervous system when you abstain from food. Another key factor in maintaining optimum health during a fast is to limit your physical activity. **Exercise only moderately**, and **rest** as much as your schedule will permit (this especially applies to extended fasts). **Short naps are helpful** as well. Walking a mile or two each day at a moderate pace is acceptable for a person in good health, and on a juice fast. However, **no one on a water fast should exercise without the supervision of a fasting specialist.**

Physical Effects	Reliefs
<p>Hunger Pangs These are greatest usually during the first three days of the fast. Your body is adjusting from using the food in your digestive tract (which remains about three days) to consuming stored fats.</p>	<p>Psyllium Bulk Help eliminate hunger pangs and also aids in cleansing the body. Several capsules can be taken throughout the day with plenty of water. Silymarin tablets may also be helpful, for they are believed to protect and enhance the cleansing of the liver.</p>
<p>Coldness, bad breath and heightened body odor, changes in elimination (constipation or diarrhea), light-headedness, changes in sleeping and dreaming patterns, aches and pains. A white-coated tongue at the beginning of a fast may be a part of the body's pattern of throwing off toxins. Also expect to go to the bathroom often (you will be drinking lots of water!)</p>	<p>After the first two weeks of an extended fast, many of these symptoms subside. Continuing aches in a certain area of the body usually means elimination of fatty tissue is going on in that area, which is not harmful. However, any extensive pain should be examined immediately. YOU SHOULD STOP FASTING IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING SEVERE PAIN OR SWELLING.</p>
<p>Headaches or stomachaches may be a result of salt, sugar, or caffeine withdrawal.</p>	<p>Eliminating those items from your diet prior to fasting is the best way to avoid these pains.</p>
<p>Lower back pain may indicate that you are dehydrating</p>	<p>Drink more fluids</p>
<p>Dizziness may be caused by a sudden change in position, such as rising suddenly from a chair.</p>	<p>Stop for a second or two, then recover. Move slowly. (A word of caution: these conditions may be symptoms of other problems requiring medical attention.)</p>
<p>Minor fasting discomfort</p>	<p>Take one teaspoon of psyllium seed powder morning and evening. Mixed in lukewarm water, it becomes like Jell-O. This powder will hasten the elimination of toxins from your colon and help to prevent headaches and dizziness for most healthy people. Alfalfa tablets can help control bad breath and cleanse the system. Two tablets at a time can be taken several times a day.</p>

BREAKING A FAST

Most experts agree that breaking a fast with **vegetables, either steamed or raw, is best.** Your stomach is smaller now, so eat lightly. Stop before you feel full. Stay away from starches like pastas, potatoes, rice, or bread. Also avoid meats, dairy products, and any fats or oils for a week or more. Introduce them very slowly and in small amounts.

DISCLAIMER

The material contained in this pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose, provide medical advice, or take the place of medical advice and treatment from your personal physician. The author is no way claims to be a medical doctor. Readers are advised to consult qualified health professionals regarding fasting and/or treatment of their specific medical condition.