

ADDITIONAL DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

FASTING

Fasting on a regular basis (living a fasted lifestyle) can have profound effects on individuals as they make room for God to move in their lives. Jesus teaches on fasting with expectancy that we will fast, and He gives us instruction on how it is to be done.

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

When You Fast...

In scripture, the primary means of fasting is abstaining from food, solid or liquid but not water. When Jesus fasted forty days He ate nothing (Luke 4). A partial fast is when part of a diet is restricted but not all. This is like what Daniel did for three weeks as recorded in Daniel 10:3. There are also absolute fasts when one neither eats nor drinks (Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9). Absolute fasts should never be done without clear word from God. Group fasting has the potential to be powerful. National calls to prayer and fasting have had significant results (Columbia, Uganda). Fasting can bring breakthroughs in the spiritual realm that cannot happen any other way. And fasting on a regular basis (living a fasted lifestyle) can have profound effects on individuals as they make room for God to move in their lives. Jesus teaches about fasting in the sermon on the mount saying, “When you fast...”, seeming to make the assumption that people will fast and giving instruction on how it is to be done (Matt 6:16).

(see also: Isaiah 58; Daniel 9:3; Acts 14:23; Matt 9:15; Acts 13:2-3; Luke 2:37)

Some Practicals On Fasting From Food

1. Have a specific purpose for the fast.
2. Start slowly. If this is your first time to fast, start slowly (fasting from specific items, fasting for one meal, fasting for one day, etc.) and move up to longer fasts over a period of time.
3. Set a definite beginning and ending time. If it is an extended fast, be accountable to someone.
4. Begin the fast with the resolve that it is going to have an effect.
5. Plan ahead – look at your schedule and make it a part of your planning for that week (set specific prayer times, etc.).
6. Set aside specific times for the Word and prayer. Natural times would include your usual meal times.
7. Worship and sing through the day to “feed” your spirit.
8. Keep a journal of what you receive from the Lord through the fast.

9. Walk by faith and not by feelings. Focus on the fact that you are obeying God. If you are fasting for a longer time than before, you may experience some physical discomforts (headache, etc.) Decide ahead of time that you will let these times lead you to desperation for God.

10. Always drink lots of water and/or juice.

11. You may need to rest more than normal.

12. Break the fast with healthy food – soup, broth, bread, fruit, etc.

13. Make it a part of your regular lifestyle.

Who Should Not Fast?

1. Those on medication which prevents it.

2. Those with specific medical conditions (hypoglycemia, pregnant women, etc.).

3. People who have hard physical jobs need to be sure and drink plenty of liquids (up to 64 oz. of water/juice a day).

(Note: Fasting is healthy for the average person! It is not harmful when done properly!)

HOW CAN YOU RESPOND?

First and foremost Jesus encourages us to fast (Matthew 6:16-18). Pray and ask God specifically what your fasts should look like. Read through the practicals above before beginning the fasting.