

TWENTY FOUR HOUR FAST

by Clyde Hodson

What does it mean to fast?

To fast is to abstain from food for a spiritual purpose to either draw near to God for greater intimacy and worship or to seek more of His intervention for guidance, power and/or protection to do His will. For those who are unable to enter into a food fast it is suggested that they consider fasting from all forms of media. Fasting is an act of humility. It is saying to God, "I need you more than I need food!" And God gives grace to the humble. It is saying, "God, I need more...more of you. I want to give you more of my praise and worship. I need more of your guidance...more of your power...more of your protection...more of Your grace and compassion." The very nature of a fast is a grieving or mourning over a situation that only God can change.

Why did Biblical leaders fast?

- Moses received more of God and His instruction. Exodus 34:28
- Israel needed more of God's deliverance. I Samuel 7:6
- Jehoshaphat needed more of God's wisdom & intervention. II Chronicles 20:3
- The King of Nineveh needed more of God's compassion & grace. Jonah 3:5,6
- Daniel needed more of God's understanding. Daniel 10:1
- Ezra needed more of God's protection. Ezra 8:21-23
- Nehemiah needed more of God's wisdom & intervention. Nehemiah 1:4
- Esther needed more of God's intervention. Esther 4:15-17
- Anna wanted to give more worship to God. Luke 2:37
- Jesus needed more of God's strength. Matt. 4:1-11
- Prophets and teachers wanted to give God greater worship. Acts 13:1-3
- Paul and Barnabus needed more of God's anointing for themselves and others. Acts 13:1-3; 14:23

Jesus expected his followers to fast:

Jesus taught His followers how to fast with an expectation that they would fast. He taught, "When you fast..." Matthew 6:16,17 When questioned as to why His disciples were not fasting when John's disciples and the Pharisees' disciples were, Jesus responded that while He, the bridegroom, was with them they wouldn't fast, but when the bridegroom is taken away they will fast. Matthew 9:15

How do we fast for twenty-four hours?

We enter a fast as led by the Spirit of God. It is a heart response of wanting more of God. It is not to be entered into for show or personal ambition. It is built upon a life that is already yielded to God. And if our life is not yet yielded, that would be the very purpose of the fast.

During a twenty-four hour fast:

1. Allow yourself to be led and stirred with a sense of need by the Spirit of God.
2. Determine to not eat food after eating one meal (i.e. dinner, lunch or breakfast) until you sit down to eat that same meal the next day. You could do a media fast if you are unable to do a food fast. (no TV, Radio, Internet, newspaper, magazines, iPods, etc.)
3. Devote the normal time allotted to the two meals missed, as well as your normal quiet time to meditate, to pray and study concerning the focus of your fast.
4. As you feel discomfort in the last few hours of your fast, use the discomfort to remind you of your need for God and utter breath prayers concerning your focus. (A breath prayer is a simple prayer addressing one of the members of the Godhead followed by a simple request, i.e. Father, set him free!)
5. Practice this discipline weekly until you are released from the Spirit of God to stop.

You might want to consider fasting if:

- You need direction for your life.
- You need freedom from bondage.
- You want to see lost friends come to know Jesus.
- You want to see the Spirit of God transform the life of a friend.
- There are people going hungry or without shelter in your community.
- You are struggling in a conflict with a brother or sister in Christ.