



FASTING

A Biblical Guide

Acts 13:2

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said...

FASTING IS:

Abstaining from food for spiritual purposes - prioritizing the Word of God, prayer, and repentance - subjugating the carnal man to the Spirit.

FASTING ISN'T:

- A way to manipulate God into getting your way
- A way to earn God's blessing or favor
- A way to get God to do something that goes against His will
- A way to boast of your spirituality to others
- A diet plan

WHY DO WE FAST?

- Deeper intimacy with God (James 4:8)
- focused attention on the King and His kingdom instead of peripheral things (Matthew 6:33)
- An expression of longing for the King (Psalm 42:2)
- Making our flesh subject to the Spirit (1 Corinthians 9:27)
- To humble ourselves before God (Psalm 35:13, 1 Kings 21:27-29)
- Express a return to God and repentance (1 Samuel 7:6)
- Feast on His word (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4)
- To set yourself apart for prayer (Colossians 4:2)

Old Testament Examples:

- Moses (Exodus 34:28)
- Children of Israel (Judges 20:26, 1 Samuel 7:6)
- Daniel (Daniel 1:8-14, Daniel 9:3, Daniel 10:2-3)
- Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29)
- Esther (Esther 4:16)
- Ezra (Ezra 8:21-23)
- Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4)
- David (2 Samuel 1:12, 2 Samuel 12:16-23, Psalm 69:10)
- Joel (Joel 1:14, Joel 2:12)
- Isaiah (Isaiah 58:6)
- Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-9)
- Judah (2 Chronicles 20:3)

New Testament Examples:

- Jesus (Matthew 4:1-2, Luke 4:1-2, Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Matthew 17:14-21, Mark 2:19-20)
- Church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3)
- Cornelius (Acts 10:30)
- Saul (Acts 9:9)
- Paul & Barnabas (Acts 14:23)
- Paul (2 Corinthians 11:27, 2 Corinthians 6:5)
- Anna (Luke 2:37)
- Husbands and wives (1 Corinthians 7:5)

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Decide on a timeframe upfront - ie: 24 hrs/3 days/7 days
- What is the fast regarding?
- Be intentional with your time - time that you would usually spend eating, feast on His Word
- Remove distractions
- Immerse yourself in prayer
- Ask Him for guidance
- Have specific prayer points
- Don't begin or end your fast with a huge meal
- Be aware of your mood - crankiness, impatience - don't be rude
- Avoid legalism
- Watch out for spiritual pride
- Don't let it become a religious routine
- If you have health concerns, consult your doctor prior to beginning



"Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the pious custom of fasting. Strict exercise of self-control is an essential feature of the Christian's life. Such customs have only one purpose—to make the disciples more ready and cheerful to accomplish those things which God would have done."

— **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**



"Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God."

— **Andrew Murray**



"I believe the power of fasting as it relates to prayer is the spiritual atomic bomb that our Lord has given us to destroy the strongholds of evil and usher in a great revival and spiritual harvest around the world."

— **Dr. Bill Bright**



"Feed prayers on fasting."

— **Tertullian**



"Fasting in the biblical sense is choosing not to partake of food because your spiritual hunger is so deep, your determination in intercession so intense, or your spiritual warfare so demanding that you have temporarily set aside even fleshly needs to give yourself to prayer and meditation."

— **Wesley Duewel**