

MAY 2008

PRAYER AND FASTING

We are praying and fasting as a church to see the out pouring power of God.



BIBLICAL FASTING -DRAWING NEARER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

The first biblical fasting is recorded when Moses fasted for 40 days on Mount Horeb. Although it is not mentioned in the scriptures that the patriarchs of old had fasted till Moses' time, it is safe to presume that they did, as there were many accounts of mourning among the people of Isreal in the Old Covenant.

In the first five books of the Bible, it is interesting to note that Moses did not

command any particular fast, except on the Day of Atonement.

In the book of Leviticus, Moses spoke about "afflicting your souls. "In Hebrew, it means, "You shall humble yourselves deeply before God in your heart by sorrow, judging and loathing yourselves; and outwardly by fasting and avoiding all carnal comforts and delights."



By regular fasting, you serve notice to your body and your carnal nature: "Body, you don't control me. I'm not subject to you. You'll obey what the Holy Spirit in me declares I have to do!"

Biblical Fasting in the New Testament

Going over to the New Testament, in all the Epistles that are written to the Church, not one time is the Church told to fast. That does not mean we should not.

Biblical fasting is mentioned, but no laws have been made, nor are the Churches commanded to fast. The reason being, fasting is done as the occasion arises.

When you fast, you are not changing God. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. But fasting will help to change you. It will crucify

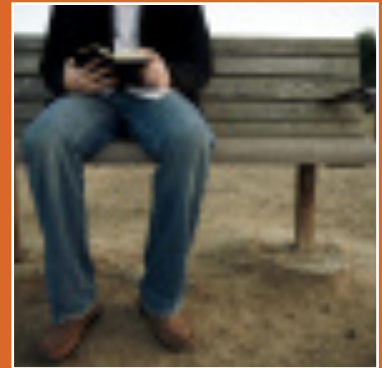
your flesh and help you to be more sensitive to the presence and voice of the Holy Spirit.

It is good to fast when there are many things troubling and pressing you, and you need God's help. When you fast, take the time to pray and seek the Holy Spirit, who is able to deliver you.

Or if the Holy Spirit has spoken to you, or put an impression in your heart, urging you to fast, then do it! Obey His leading and you will see a miracle.



Christian Fasting



Fasting is defined as the voluntary abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. It is often done with prayer because fasting intensifies your praying.

Voluntary abstaining
from food



In the Early Church, christian fasting and prayer were the standard ways by which the New Testament leadership operated. In the Antioch church, the sending of Barnabas and Saul for missions was entirely a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4).

PRAYER AND FASTING

The leaders in the Antioch church were ministering to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Christian fasting is often a neglected spiritual activity among believers. Yet it is referred to all throughout the pages of the Bible.

The most natural thing for us to do everyday is to eat. When we give up eating, we deliberately turn away from the natural to invoke the supernatural. All throughout the Scriptures, we see how God attached tremendous importance to fasting as the appointed way for His

people to humble themselves before Him. When Ezra and Israel fasted and humbled their souls before God, the Lord protected them from their enemies (Ezra 8:21-23). When Jehoshaphat humbled himself before the Lord by fasting, God delivered the kingdom of Judah from destruction (2 Chr. 20:2-4).

Jesus humbled Himself! The result of His fasting was the great personal victory He had over Satan's temptations.





7 BASIC STEPS TO
Successful
**Fasting
& Prayer**

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success.

By following these seven basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

STEP 1: Set Your Objective

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.

STEP 2: Make Your Commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast ([Matthew 6:16-18](#); [9:14,15](#)) For Him it was a matter of *when* believers would fast, not *if* they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast - one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, forty days (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often)
- What physical or social activities you will restrict
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit ([Galatians 5:16,17](#)).

STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness ([1 John 1:9](#)).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you ([Mark 11:25](#); [Luke 11:4](#); [17:3,4](#)).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His *command* in Ephesians 5:18 and His *promise* in [1 John 5:14,15](#).
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature ([Romans 12:1,2](#)).
- Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others ([Psalm 48:9,10](#); [103:1-8](#), [11-13](#)).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart ([Hebrews 11:6](#)).

STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Morning

- Begin your day in praise and worship.
- Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to [Philippians 2:13](#).
- Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, your church, your community, your country, and beyond.

Schedule cont.

Noon

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for your community's and nation's leaders, for the world's unreached millions, for your family or special needs.

Evening

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

When possible, begin and end each day with your spouse for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

Breaking Your Fast

When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being.

STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Here are some suggestions to help you end your fast properly:

Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon.

While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:

First day: Add a raw salad.

Second day: Add baked or boiled potato, no butter or seasoning.

Third day: Add a steamed vegetable.

Thereafter: Begin to reintroduce your normal diet.

Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and

STEP 7: Expect Results

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence ([John 14:21](#)). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians.

It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor you for your faithfulness.

I encourage you to join me in fasting and prayer again and again until we truly experience revival in our homes, our churches, our beloved nation, and throughout the world.