



PRAYER & FASTING



I. Introduction

Prayer and fasting, but with a strong emphasis on the fasting portion. However, if you don't pray much during the fast, you could miss much of the benefit.

II. What is Fasting

Abstaining from all or some kinds of food or drink

A. Some ways to fast

1. All food

2. Daniel

Daniel 10:3- I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

3. Liquids only

4. 6:00am - 6:00pm

Judges 20:26- Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

B. Who?

1. Personal vs corporate

Matthew 6:16-18- Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Joel 2:12- Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.

2. OT men and women of God, Jesus, NT believers

C. Why?

1. Jesus said it, and did it

Matthew 6:16- Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Luke 5:35- But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.

2. Paul said to, and did it

1 Corinthians 7:5- Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

2 Corinthians 11:27- in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

3. God spoke to you

4. Seek God

5. Humble yourself

6. Rewards (see below)

III. Purposes, Benefits and Examples

A. Biblically (not exhaustive)

1. Isaiah 58

- Loose the bonds of wickedness
- Undo the heavy burdens
- Let the oppressed go free
- Break every yoke
- Help clothe the naked
- Light shall break forth where there was darkness
- Healing shall spring forth speedily
- Righteousness shall go before you
- The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard
- The Lord will answer

-The Lord will guide you continually

-Strengthened

-Raise up the foundations of many generations

2. 2 Chronicles 20:3- And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

Esther 4:3- And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

-Breakthrough and deliverance

3. Luke 2:37- and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Acts 13:1-3- Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

(Acts 13:1-3 continued) As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Exodus 34:20- But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem him, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. "And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

-Minister to the Lord

4. Daniel 9:3- Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Daniel 9:22- And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

Daniel 10:3- I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

-Skill to understand

5. Joel 2:12- “Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

-A way to turn to the Lord

6. *Matthew 6:18- so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

-The Father will reward you openly

7. *Luke 4:14- Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.*

-Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit

8. *Psalm 69:10- When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach.*

-Receiving humility

9. *James 4:6- But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*

-Receive grace from the humbling

10. *2 Chronicles 7:14- if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

-Land healed from the humbling

11. *1 Thessalonians 5:23- Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

-To strengthen your spirit to rule over your flesh

12. *Acts 13:1-3- Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.*

-To hear from God

-Separation

-To commission and send out

B. Personally

1. To get close to God

2. For supernatural power
(healing story and heat story)

3. Direction (stirred up)

4. Helps to hear (Yom Kippur granted repentance)

5. Breakthrough

IV. Practical Advice

A. Decide the purpose of the fast

B. Proclaim the fast before the Lord

C. Believe you've received the reward in Matthew 6:18 before the fast

Mark 11:24- Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

D. Minister to the Lord

Colossians 3:16- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.,

Ephesians 6:19- and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, Acts 13)

E. Minister to others

1. Only if the Lord tells you
2. Always minister to others after the fast

F. Expect assistance from the angels

V. Warnings

- A. Pride
- B. Consult doctor if necessary
- C. Stay in the WORD and prayer

Matthew 6:16- Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Isaiah 58

"Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins.

2 Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways, As a nation that did righteousness, And did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God.

3 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' "In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers.

4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness.

You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high.

5 Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the Lord?

6 “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

10 If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

11 The Lord will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones;

You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

12 Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the Lord honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,

Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,

14 Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.

The mouth of the Lord has spoken."