

Prayer and Fasting

When the disciples said, 'Lord, teach us how to pray', it was a genuine, heart-felt cry. It's a cry that needs to echo daily in our own lives as believers. We must cultivate a heart for prayer if we are going to create the lifestyle of a praying believer.

1. What is fasting?

Fasting is simply defined as going without food for a period of time, either entirely or partially. It is a spiritual discipline that has many benefits.

Please note: If you have any health issues please be sure to contact your GP or health professional for advice before committing to any fast, including the Daniel, partial or liquid fasts.

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2. Why would anyone starve themselves?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that has been out of vogue in many churches in the Western world for over a century. So why do we take the time to fast?

We are a church that seeks to not just live a Christian lifestyle, but see our lives, our family, friends, neighbours and co-workers affected by the life and power of Jesus.

We want to become the kind of church God has in mind, the kind of church we read about in the New Testament where times of fasting resulted in a channel of God's power. Fasting disciplines a person's spiritual appetite, aligns their soul with the will of God and opens a channel of God's life and power that perhaps no other activity can.

We want to build momentum, we want to see the Lord move not just in each one of our lives, but the lives of every person that we have the opportunity to influence.

Throughout the Old Testament we see people fasting for a variety of reasons:

- For mourning (Nehemiah 1:4; 1 Samuel 31:13)
- For repentance (1 Samuel 6; Nehemiah 9:1; Jonah 3:5)
- To hear from God (Ezra 8:21)
- To provoke God to move on their behalf (2 Chronicles 20:3; Esther 4:16; Daniel 9:3)
- To petition God (Acts 10:30)
- To seek the mind of God (Acts 13:2)
- To prepare for ministry (Matthew 4:2; Acts 13:3)
- For spiritual power (Matthew 17:21)

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3. What are the benefits of fasting?

Fasting has many benefits but it's not a way to earn God's blessing, or 'get' God to answer our prayers. We need to be obedient, humble and surrender to God's will and purposes in every situation.

- Fasting brings direction from God (Acts 10:30; Acts 13:2-3; Judges 20:26)
- Fasting brings the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14)
- Fasting brings answers to prayer (Esther 4:16; Nehemiah 1:4)
- Fasting brings action from God (2 Chronicles 20:20-21)
- Fasting brings a spiritual breakthrough (Matthew 17:21)
- Fasting deepens humility (Ezra 8:21, 1 Peter 5:6)

As you begin your fast, focus on the souls of those close to you who need salvation. Do not be discouraged but persistent. Keep praying!

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:3)

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