



General Fasting Information

Fasting Is Biblical

The practice of regular fasting as normal Christian behavior was taught by Jesus (**Mt. 6:16–17, 9:15**), exercised by the early church (**Acts 13:2**), and has been the regular discipline of believers throughout church history. The practice of fasting in Scripture usually includes, but is not limited to, abstinence from food (**Dan. 10:3**) and may be engaged in for varying durations—typically for no more than a few days at a time.

Abstaining from all food for extended periods of time is biblical, but was rare and unusual in Scripture (**Ex. 34:28; 1 Kgs. 19:5-8; Lk. 4:2**), and thus should never be undertaken without counsel and appropriate supervision.

Fasting Is Always Voluntary

Though spiritual leaders may invite others to join in corporate fasting with a specific goal in mind and for a specific time, fasting can never be forced or made compulsory. In light of this, fasting is not a mandatory requirement for the Total Restoration Church family, but we do promote and encourage it as a biblically and historically proven means of positioning our hearts to receive more of God's grace in the context of commitment to prayer and to the Word (**Joel 2:15**). The level at which a person engages in fasting (particularly food) should be determined according to age and with regard to any physical limitations. Those with a known or suspected physical disability or illness, or those with any history of an eating disorder, should never fast, except in consultation with, and under the supervision of, a qualified doctor. Pregnant or nursing mothers should not fast food or drink as it could negatively affect the health and development of their baby and their own personal health.

Fasting Regularly

Participation in regular fasting as a lifestyle necessitates a healthy lifestyle on days when food is not being fasted (and should include exercise and a proper diet). A "fasted lifestyle" is a disciplined lifestyle, in which we steward our bodies and time with wisdom and diligence. Fasting is not only abstinence. Fasting is an exchange where we abstain from certain things in order to "feast" on God's Word and prayer, whereby the abundance of His grace is made more readily available to us. When undertaken with this type of commitment, a fasted lifestyle is sustainable on a long-term basis, just as it was for Daniel and his friends (**Dan. 1**).

Helpful Physical Tips

- Drink plenty of water!
 - Drinking half of your body weight in ounces of water per day is a good rule of thumb whether you are fasting or not.
- It is wise to abstain from strong stimulants such as caffeinated and sugary drinks during a fast, including the artificial sweeteners found in diet drinks. Also, avoid soy protein drinks, which have been known to cause health problems during a fast.
- If you are on a juice fast, drink raw fruit juices such as apple, grape, and pineapple, which are excellent sources of necessary natural sugar to stabilize blood sugar and keep energy levels up. Orange and grapefruit juice are also good, but they are not recommended for arthritis or allergy sufferers. Monitor juice acidity carefully (as an excess can cause canker sores). Raw vegetable juices such as carrot, celery, beet, or green vegetable combinations are excellent as well. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices can be made in a juice extractor or purchased ready-made (be sure to buy juices without any added sugars). Some of the benefits of drinking raw juice versus bottled are that raw juice does not stimulate digestion (hunger) and it maintains all of its enzymes and nutritional value.
- Expect some physical discomforts because of the detoxification process, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains or dizziness. Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches, but it is a part of the detoxification process. Physical annoyances may also include weariness, tiredness, nausea, and sleepiness.
- During a fast, four major areas of the body are going through a detoxification process. Take care to attend to each of these:
 - **Bowels/Colon/Large Intestines:** During a fast of three days or more, taking an herbal laxative (inquire at your local health store) or an enema before bedtime will help eliminate solid waste products; these can cause headaches and sluggishness if left in the body during a fast. This should be done early during the fast and then intermittently throughout the rest of the fast. The body begins detoxifying during a fast, depositing the toxins into the intestines. If you do not take a laxative or an enema, the toxins can hurt your intestines or reabsorb into your bloodstream, making you feel nauseous.
 - **The Kidneys:** Drinking fruit juices, vegetable juices, broth, or just plenty of water will remove many toxins via the kidneys.
 - **The Lungs:** If strength permits, walk half an hour during the day to help cleanse the lungs. Also do some deep breathing throughout the day by inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.
 - **The Skin:** Since one-third of the waste products eliminated during a fast are removed via the skin, adequate bathing is essential. Use a natural bristle

body brush or loofah sponge on your skin prior to bathing, to help cleanse the skin.

Helpful Spiritual Tips

- Seek advice and permission before the fast. Seek medical advice before the fast, especially if you have any existing medical concerns or conditions. If you are under 18 years of age, discuss your desire to fast with your parents. Spiritual covering, submission, and unity are important factors when fasting. Discuss your plans with church leaders. Remember, fasting is an attitude of the heart! Ask them if they would consider fasting with you.
- Fast and pray in order to humble yourself and purify your worship. In fasting we are not trying to get something from God, but seeking to realign our hearts' affections with His. In fasting we can more readily say, *"We love you, Lord, more than anything in the world."* Lust of any kind is perverted worship, but fasting enables us to cleanse the sanctuary of our hearts from every other rival.
- Don't boast about your fast. Let people know you won't be eating only if necessary (**Mt. 6:16–18**).
- Do the fast with someone else. Two are better than one! We encourage parents and kids to consider fasting together. Several generations fasting together has a powerful impact.
- Take time to pray and read the Word. This may seem obvious, but busyness and distractions can keep you from devotions. Reading books with testimonies of victories gained through fasting will encourage you, too. *Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting* by Derek Prince, *Fast Forward* by Lou Engle, and *God's Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis are just some of the books about fasting that are available.
- Have a clear target as your prayer focus. Write it down. Be diligent to write down truths and thoughts about the beauty of Jesus during the fast.
- Expect to hear God's voice in the Word, dreams, visions, and revelations. Daniel prepared himself to receive revelation through fasting (**Dan. 10:1–2**). There is a fasting reward (Mt. 6:18). Write down any dreams, visions, prophetic words, revelations and biblical passages that have been unveiled during the fast.
- Prepare for opposition. On the day of your fast you can bet that donuts will be at the office or in class. Expect that someone will suddenly be inspired to cook your favorite meal. Press through. Many times, you may feel more tension build at home. Satan tempted Jesus on the fast, and we must expect the same. Discouragement

may come in like a flood, but recognize the source and take your stand on the victory of Christ.

- If you fail, don't give in to condemnation. The "to fast or not to fast" dilemma can be a major tool of the enemy. Even though you may fail several times, God always extends grace. Just hit the "delete" button and continue on your fast.
- Breakthroughs often come after a fast, not during it. Do not listen to the lie that nothing is happening. It is our conviction that every fast done in faith will be rewarded with the undeniable grace of God.

Helpful Tips for Breaking A Fast

- Break your fast gradually. Exercise watchful self-control. Break your fast on a meal that is light and easy to digest (i.e., a pound of grapes, a shredded apple, watermelon, or steamed vegetables).
- A fast of three days or more should never be broken by eating animal proteins, bread, sugar, dairy, and processed foods (because these heavy foods put a severe strain and shock on the digestive organs which have been resting throughout the fast). Eating too heavily after a fast can produce serious discomfort (stomach cramps, nausea, and weakness) and can nullify the physical benefits of fasting; it can also cause serious irreversible complications or even death.
- After breaking an extended fast, continue drinking fruit or vegetable juices because the stomach is continuing to detoxify.
- During any fast exceeding two days, your stomach will shrink. Do not over-expand it again by overeating. If you have been prone to eating too heavily, guard against going back to this habit. If you train yourself to eat more lightly, your stomach will adjust itself accordingly.
- For the first few days after a fast, continue to drink fruit or vegetable juices, and base your food consumption on mostly (or exclusively) on fresh fruit and raw/steamed vegetables.
- Example meals for the first few days after a fast:
 - 1 pound of fruit, a baked or boiled potato (without butter), steamed vegetables, or a vegetable-only salad without oil-based dressing.
 - Avoid bananas for the first few days (they have no juice in them and can easily cause constipation).

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- After the fast, you may return to heavier foods (such as animal proteins), but maintaining a healthy diet after the fast will promote lifelong health and allow you to fast correctly in the future.
 - Take extra care in breaking a water fast. Begin with drinking fruit or vegetable juices and gradually ease into eating fruit and steamed vegetables.
 - It is important after a fast to begin to discern between real hunger and cravings, so you do not feed your cravings.

This Handout Is For Information Only

The information in this handout reflects only the limited opinions, experience, and suggestions of Total Restoration Church and is not meant to substitute the advice provided by your doctor or other healthcare professional.

Please do not use this information for diagnosing or treating a health problem/disease, or for prescribing any medication. Additionally, this information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. These tips have been found to be helpful and successful, but they are no guarantee that you will fast without experiencing any difficulties. We advise you to ask the Lord for increased discernment and wisdom concerning fasting and healthy living, do some of your own research, and talk with health experts and those experienced in fasting before moving forward with this grace of fasting.