

GOD SPEAKS
The Discipline of Fasting
Week 4 August 4, 2024
Pastor Mike Popovich

In Meditation we seek calm and open our mind.

In Prayer we talk to God about whatever is in our mind.

In Fasting, we set aside eating for a time which can open our heart.

1. Fasting has a bad reputation because of the way it was used in the Middle-Ages to punish the body as if the body was bad.
2. Our society has a strong emphasis on food.

BIBLICAL FASTING

Biblical fasting is abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.

A Scriptural Normal Fast is abstaining from all food but not water for a period of time.

A Partial Fast: When certain foods were not eaten.

An absolute Fast: Abstaining from all food and water.

Supernatural Fast: When they did not eat or drink for 40 days.

When You Fast

We are not told to fast. It is expected that at some time we will fast and pray. When we do, here is some instruction.

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18 NIV

The Disciples Did Not Fast

Then John’s disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?” 15 Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast. Matthew 9:14-15 NIV

What do you need to do to focus on Jesus and what He wants you to do in the world?

You can meditate, you can pray and you can fast.

PURPOSE OF FASTING

Fasting must forever focus on God. It must be God initiated and God ordained.

In the Old Testament God challenged the heart behind their fasting.

Zechariah 7:4-5 NIV

Food can cover up things in our soul. A Psalm of David: Psalm 69:10-15 NIV

Food does not sustain us.

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:4 NIV

We begin to rediscover the truth about this world that food is not what keeps us alive. It is Jesus who created this world and holds it together.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17 NIV

Fasting keeps God in the center of our life.

The discipline of fasting keeps me free from ‘things’ taking control of my life. I give them control but fasting helps me take control back.

Partial Fast: Lunch to lunch

Normal Fast: 24 hours with only water

Extended Fast: Start with three days

Fasting can bring breakthrough in the spiritual realm that will never happen in any other way