

Tabernacle Christian Centre

A Guide To Biblical Prayer & Fasting PT 1 & PT2

Biblical Fasting - Is fasting necessary for today's Christian church?

Biblical fasting is a spiritual discipline which was encouraged by Jesus, Himself, while He was on earth. When questioned as to why the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist fasted while Jesus disciples did not, Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? (*Jesus is the Bridegroom, so it was not the time to fast*) The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast" ([Matthew 9:15](#)).

Jesus was indicating that fasting would become a necessity when, the bridegroom (Jesus) was taken away. While Jesus, who was God manifested in human form, was still on earth, His followers enjoyed a close fellowship and friendship with Him. Jesus bestowed power and authority on them to the extent that they had limited power to preach, heal the sick, and cast out demons. Similarly, when Jesus sent them out to minister to the populace, He instructed them to take few provisions. "Then Jesus asked them, 'When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'Nothing,' they answered. He said to them, 'But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one'" ([Luke 22:35-36](#)).

Jesus was teaching that after His departure, the entire dynamic would change and the disciples would need a different type of preparation and provision. Fasting was to be a vital part of this new preparation. The new covenant is based on the truth that we have received everything in Christ, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" ([Ephesians 1:3](#)).

Nevertheless, we cooperate with the Spirit in the working out of our salvation with much prayer, meditation, and the study of God's Word. In addition to all these spiritual practices, Christians should also employ the humbling discipline of fasting.

Biblical Fasting - Is there a proper method to fasting?

Biblical fasting, unlike fasting for medical or health reasons, must be done with an attitude of seriousness and sincerity. When we fast, we willingly deprive the body of nourishment and the pleasurable taste of food. The body requires food for sustenance; therefore our hearts and minds must be totally focused and directed towards God so that He may be the full source of our strength during our period of fasting.

The purpose of a biblical fast is not to lose weight, but rather to gain deeper fellowship with God. Anyone can fast, but some may not be able to fast from food (diabetics, for example). Everyone can temporarily give up something in order to draw closer to God.

By taking our eyes off the things of this world, we can more successfully turn our attention to Christ. Fasting is not a way to get God to do what we want. Fasting changes us, not God.

Fasting is not a way to appear more spiritual than others. Fasting is to be done in a spirit of humility and a joyful attitude. [Matthew 6:16-18](#) declares, "When you fast, do not look with a sad countenance as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men 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."

In addition to our attitudes towards God and our stance before man, our motives must also be correct. We should fast in order to further the building up of God's kingdom by seeking to minister to others. The prophet Isaiah received from the Lord the acceptable motives for our fasts: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter -- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" ([Isaiah 58:6-7](#)).

Fast may last for varying lengths of time -- one day, three days, seven days, and more. We should prayerfully seek the Lord about the length of our fast. Fasting should have an object in mind; we should have a clear idea of the need and purpose. One of the most pressing reasons for Christian fasting may be revival -- **“Will you not revive us again...” (Psalm 85:6).**

Biblical Fasting - What are the benefits of Christian fasting?

Biblical fasting brings us into a closer union with God. While our bodies are being deprived for the purpose of drawing near to God, He has promised in return to draw near to us. This is a spiritual certainty. As we decrease, the Spirit increases. As individuals we are strengthened and renewed. **“...Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).**

While this verse applies to our eternal destiny, the principle applies to our daily sojourn; as we humble and deprive our bodies through fasting, our spiritual man is made stronger and our senses more acute. This principle served the apostles well during the early church days. Their decisions were made through fasting and prayer; God gave them instructions and directions. **“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, ‘the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:2-3).**

Wicked kings, destined for destruction, received mercy from humbling themselves and fasting **(1 Kings 21:29)**. The entire city of Nineveh, including animals, fasted upon hearing the pronouncement of judgment from the prophet Jonah -- and God spared them **(Jonah 3:10)**. Jesus received divine preparation for His earthly ministry while fasting and enduring temptation. Moses waited upon God forty days and received the divine revelation of God's commandments.

While we await the return of the bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ, fasting exemplifies our attitude of spiritual hunger -- the promise is that we will be satisfied. **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6).**

Conclusion

Fasting and Prayer helps us to focus on and enhance our relationship with our God. When we fast for something going on in our life, we are expressing to God that this need is specific, personal and requires special attention from God. We are letting God know that we need to hear from Him. What we are praying and fasting for is important because we are not just praying for it with our usual expectation from our Father. It's not prayer business as usual - we are willing to sacrifice a part of ourselves to show God that we are serious about this need.

Fasting is not like a spiritual 'hunger strike' because by fasting we do not and cannot compel or obligate God to act on our behalf. God remains sovereign and independent. Hence, we fast to seek God, not to manipulate God.

Therefore, I urge you, brother's and sisters, in view of God's Mercy to offer yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Roman's 12:1

A Guide To Biblical Prayer & Fasting PT 2

Matthew 17:20-21

²⁰ So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief;^[a] for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”²¹ However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”^[b]

Mark 9:29 **New King James Version (NKJV)**

29. So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

The disciples were unable to cast out this demon, so they asked Jesus why. He pointed to their little faith which was small even in comparison with a mustard seed. The Mustard Seed produce a great plant. But their Faith produce little. Perhaps they had tried to cast out the demon with their own ability rather than God’s. There is Great power in even a little faith when total trust and reliance in what Christ did for us on the Cross. If we feel weak or powerless as Christians, we should examine our faith, making sure we are trusting not in our own abilities to produce results, but in God’s.

How long you will fast – one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, forty days (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)

- 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.

- Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety.
- Expect some physical discomforts, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness, or the “blahs.” Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches, this is because toxins in your body is being stirred up. Begin to drink water to flush it out, (preferably distilled or Volvic water). Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness.

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

- Try and wake up a lot earlier than usual to spend more time with God and to be focus for that day.
- Begin your day in praise and worship.
- Read and meditate on God's Word.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to **Philippians 2:1**
- 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.
- Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

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.

How to Experience and Maintain Personal Revival

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any unconfessed sin in your life.

2. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you. Make restitution where God leads.
3. Examine your motives in every word and deed. Ask the Lord to search and cleanse your heart daily.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to guard your walk against complacency and mediocrity.
5. Praise and give thanks to God continually in all ways on all days, regardless of your circumstances.
6. Refuse to obey your carnal (worldy) nature ([Galatians 5:16,17](#)).
7. Surrender your life to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Develop utter dependence on Him with total submission and humility.
8. Hunger and thirst after righteousness ([Matthew 5:6](#)).
9. Love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind
10. Appropriately the continual fullness and control of the Holy Spirit by faith on the basis of God's command ([Ephesians 5:18](#)) and promise ([1John 5:14,15](#)).
11. Read, study, meditate on, and memorize God's holy, inspired, inerrant Word daily ([Colossians 3:16](#)).
12. Pray without ceasing ([1Thessalonians 5:17](#)).
13. Fast and pray one 24-hour period each week.
14. Seek to share Christ as a way of life.
15. Determine to live a holy, godly life of obedience and faith.