



P R A Y E R
& F A S T I N G

EMBRACE THE PRESENCE AND POWER
OF GOD IN AN EXTRAORDINARY WAY

FASTING GUIDE

Dear Friend,

We are so glad you have decided to participate in an extended time of prayer, fasting, and consecration. There really is no better way to reset our spiritual compass and bring about refreshing in every area of our lives than through prayer and fasting.

This fast was intentionally designed to be flexible so that you can participate at any level. Whether you have done a season of prayer and fasting before or if this is your first time, you can start where you are and experience what God has in store for you in a powerful way.

This guide provides practical tools to help you navigate your personal journey. As you read over the information, please consider how it applies to you and your personal circumstances and convictions.

We pray that you will embrace and experience the presence and power of God in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to Him during this time. May God continue to bless you as you seek Him first!

Matthew 9:15b (NLT) But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

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FASTING

Important Note: Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician before beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

As you prepare to fast, it is important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. While this section provides some general information about different types of fasts, as well as some suggestions on how to create your own fasting plan, it is important to mention that there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do.

Do not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. Keep the main thing the main thing, which is drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God. Here are a few tips to keep in mind before getting started:

1. Start Where You Are

We are all at different places in our walk with God. Likewise, our jobs, daily schedules, and health conditions are all different and place various levels of demands on our energy. So most importantly, whether you've fasted before or this is your first time, start where you are. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but it's very important to know your own body, know your options and, most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Remember, the goal of fasting is not just to do without food. The goal is to draw nearer to God.

2. Find Your Fast Zone

When most people start fasting, there is typically some level of discomfort. However, it is possible to get used to the fasting routine pretty quickly. Quite simply, you must learn to fast in a way that works for you.

While any true fast does involve abstinence from food or at least certain types of food, typically, different fasting combinations work better for different people. The key to having a successful fast is all about finding what we like to call your Fast Zone, and that is different for everybody and can change depending on the season you are in.

The best way to describe your Fast Zone is that it's the place where you feel light and spiritually in tune. Your mind is easily focused on God and spiritual things. You have increased spiritual energy—you can feel the fast working. Just like runners know what their target heart rate is to see the benefits of their physical training, the Fast Zone is similar in a spiritual sense.

Finding your Fast Zone helps you choose both the type and length of fast. Let's say you choose to go on a Daniel fast (only fruits and vegetables). Should you eat beans? If you can eat beans and stay in your Fast Zone, go ahead. But for some people eating beans takes them out of the zone. Should you eat peanut butter? Probably not. Peanut butter is more of an indulgence, and not many people can stay in a Fast Zone while enjoying indulgences.

Should you completely cut out caffeine? It depends. The great thing is, when you fast, your body automatically craves less caffeine. If you can stay in your Fast Zone with a little caffeine, great. If you are going on a longer fast and want to cut it out of your diet completely, that's great too. But ease yourself off and make it your goal to be completely caffeine-free about two-thirds of the way into your fast.

If you drink coffee regularly, one of the worst mistakes you can make is to fast for one to three days and cut caffeine out abruptly and completely. Please don't do that, or you will spend this time grumpy and in withdrawal instead of enjoying God's presence.

Mixing things up a bit during a fast may help. For example, do a fruits and vegetables fast for a time, then do all liquids for a while. Maybe even mix in a day of only water if you think you are ready for that. Then go back to fruits and vegetables.

There isn't one approach that works the same for everyone. Follow the Holy Spirit, mix it up, find what works for you, and stay in your Fast Zone!

Some people can't stay in a Fast Zone eating any type of solid food, so they prefer all liquids. With today's protein drinks and juicing machines, it is so easy to get a healthy dose of all your nutritional needs even while taking in only liquids. Certain people can't do anything other than drink only water. If they eat a salad or drink a glass of juice, they get out of their zone. Or if they allow themselves to eat cantaloupe, they will end up eating twenty cantaloupes a day!

3. Choose Your Type of Fast

When preparing for your fast, it is important to choose ahead of time what type of fast or what combination you will pursue. Not only will this help with making the necessary preparations to implement your plan, but as you commit to a specific fast ahead of time and know-how you're going to do it, you will position yourself to finish strong.

On the following pages, we've listed some options and variations of fasts you can choose from. As you read over the information, please consider how it may or may not apply to your personal circumstances and convictions.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FASTS

In the Bible, we find various kinds of fasts and lengths of fasts. You can fast one type of food or all food or some combination of foods. For example, Daniel followed a partial fast for 21 days that brought great spiritual breakthroughs in his life.

Daniel 10:2-3 (NLT) When this vision came to me, I, Daniel, had been in mourning for three whole weeks. All that time, I had eaten no rich food. No meat or wine crossed my lips, and I used no fragrant lotions until those three weeks had passed.

In addition to the food fast, many people choose non-food fasts to intensify their focus on God. Non-food fasts can also be good for those who are on very strict diets due to medical conditions and are unable to fast any kind of food or liquid.

Non-food fasts can include refraining from luxury or pleasure items—things that take our time from or distract us from time with God.

A Media/Entertainment Fast is a specific kind of non-food fast that involves abstaining from any kind of media, including radio, newspapers, internet, video games, television, and related media except for those required to carry out your job-related duties.

The decision as to what kind of fast you choose is yours. You may choose to fast one day a week, one meal a day, or whatever way you feel led. Simply ask the Lord for guidance, and if health issues are a concern, consult your doctor.

Specific Food or Activity Fast

In this type of fast, you omit a specific item(s) from your meal plans. For example, you may choose to eliminate all red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. Most people can incorporate this type of fast relatively easily. It can also prove to be a great solution for people with specific dietary needs or medical conditions that may cause certain limitations.

While fasting typically refers to refraining from specific food items, you may also find it extremely beneficial to fast from a regular activity or habit. This might include things such as television, social media, and the like.

Prayer and fasting are not just about connecting to God but also about disconnecting from the world. Try to tune out some of the regular distractions from your day as much as possible. Replace that time with things that will nourish you spiritually.

Daniel Fast

The Daniel Fast is a great model to follow and one that is extremely effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline, and purification for the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred to fasts; however, within the Daniel Fast, there is room for broad interpretation.

In the book of Daniel, we find two different times where the prophet Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he only ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods, as well as no meat or wine. So based on these two verses, we can see that either of these or combinations of the two constitute a Daniel fast.

Again, it is important to mention that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Just remember: find your personal Fast Zone.

Juice Fast

A juice fast is simply consuming vegetable and fruit juices and water instead of solid food. Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan as well. This is one of the most popular and effective fasts. Even if you choose not to make your entire fast liquids only, substituting one or two meals for liquids is a great alternative.

Water Fast

A water-only fast is the normal fast referred to in the Bible. This is how Jesus and the New Testament church fasted. A water fast is just that—no eating of any food or drinking of any liquids except water. Periodic water fasts can be very beneficial, but extreme precautions should be taken. For some people, it is hard to perform effectively at their jobs and have energy for their families while drinking only water.

We recommend consulting your physician first and water fasting only for a day or two unless you can get away to really disconnect so you can give your best energy to the fast. Remember, when Jesus went on His forty-day fast, He went by Himself out into the wilderness.

Having said all that, there are some people who can water fast and work, and they function fine without much fatigue and are able to work well. You are blessed if you are one of these people.

Total Fast

A total fast is where nothing—neither liquid, solid food, nor even water—is consumed for a very short period of time. There are examples of this type of fast in the Bible. It was an Old Covenant type of fast associated with mourning, or deep grief, such as when David engaged in a total fast for a week, hoping that God would spare the child he had with Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 12)

Under the New Covenant, we do not fast or mourn or seek forgiveness. God has already forgiven us, and we are commanded to celebrate Jesus because He is alive. Plus, complete abstinence of food and water can be very dangerous to our health. Attempting to go without water for any period of time can be extremely harmful to the body. **We strongly discourage the total fast.**

FASTING WHILE NURSING OR PREGNANT

Strict fasting while pregnant or nursing also is not recommended. If you are in this incredible season of life but would like to participate in the fast, here are some great options for you to consider—with the approval of your physician:

- a modified Daniel fast including whole grains, legumes, whey protein, calcium, and iron supplements
- fasting sweets and desserts
- fasting red meat
- fasting certain diversions (television shows, movies, social media—such as Facebook/Twitter, video games, and so on)

If you are a pregnant or nursing mother, your priority is the health and the development of the baby God has entrusted you with. Make that your guideline and go from there. And please consult your doctor.

FASTING AND EATING DISORDER

If you have struggled with an eating disorder, this situation is a battle of the mind you can win through Christ. (Philippians 4:13) Remember, fasting is a tool used to get closer to God, and it actually should keep us from being preoccupied with food. If your method of fasting is going to cause you to obsess about what you eat in any way, you will need to change either your approach or your mindset.

If giving up food is a stumbling block to you, then consider fasting of television, reading (other than the Bible, of course), social media, or shopping. There are many distractions and ways that we use to stay in control that we could eliminate from our daily routine. We do these things to distract ourselves from the real issues hurting us. If you can identify such other things, maybe you can give those up instead of food. Remember that you are covered by God's grace. God will show you what to do. His "yoke is easy," and His "burden is light." (Matthew 11:30) His way will bring rest to your soul.

4. Begin and Break the Fast Well

Depending on the type of fast you choose, it is very important to prepare your body ahead of time before beginning the fast. Take a week or so to transition into your fast; otherwise, you could get sick. For example, if you would like to go on a fruits and vegetables or juice fast, start eliminating meat, white grains, and refined sugars from your diet the week before. Also, start to cut back quite a bit on dairy products and some of your caffeine intake.

The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that.

There are also several supplements you can take that will help support the detox process during your fast. Your health-food store can give you recommendations.

5. Creating Your Personal Fasting Menu

On the following pages, we will share a few simple menu options for your use. Your plan could include one of these menu ideas or even a variation of all of them. You could even mix it up, doing something different food-wise on the weekends or on certain days of the week. Again, pray about this and find what works for you.

To keep your energy up throughout the day, it's important to eat or drink every two and a half to three hours. If you go longer than that, you can experience an energy lull and be tempted to overstuff yourself at your next meal. Even if you're fasting on fruits and vegetables, overstuffing is never a smart thing to do.

It is very important to drink lots of water while fasting. Drinking about one hundred ounces of water per day will help to support your critical liver function.

The liver is the filter for the body, so when you don't drink enough water, the liver doesn't function at its highest capacity.

Select your food items wisely. We will not be listing specific ingredients you "should" or "should not" include in your plan. The key is to prepare a plan ahead of the fast, to not get legalistic about it, and to choose menu items well. For example, if you prefer dressing on your salads, choose a healthy, organic option with natural ingredients—and don't pour a gallon of it on your plate. If you're drinking fruit juices, try to go as natural as possible and don't drink ones heavily processed and laden with sugar. Remember not to let food become the focus of your fast, but make wise eating choices.

6. Final Fasting Tips

Here are some other ideas that can help make your fasting experience more pleasant and helpful:

- As you select your type of fast, make a fasting calendar that fits your plan. Determine what each day and week will look like.
- Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with the items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give in to temptation. Choose well when selecting products, stick to raw food as much as you can, and limit artificial ingredients.
- Make it a priority to attend church during your fast. Being around other believers will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.
- If you mess up, don't get discouraged. Just get right back on track and keep going. God's mercies "are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:22-23) He wants you to finish, and He will give you the grace and strength to do it.

God be with you as you begin your fasting adventure!

SAMPLE MENU 1: FRUITS, VEGETABLES, JUICES, AND WATER

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Breakfast | • Fruit smoothie with whey protein |
| Mid-Morning Snack | • Fresh fruit or fresh vegetables |
| Lunch | • Raw vegetable salad with light, organic dressing and vegetable broth soup |
| Mid-Afternoon Snack | • Fresh fruit or fresh vegetables |
| Dinner | • Fresh salad with light, organic dressing and steamed or grilled vegetables |

SAMPLE MENU 2: LIQUIDS ONLY

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|---------------------|---|
| Breakfast | • Fruit smoothie with whey protein |
| Mid-Morning Snack | • Herbal tea or vegetable broth soup |
| Lunch | • Raw, juiced vegetables |
| Mid-Afternoon Snack | • Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with whey protein |
| Dinner | • Vegetable juice or vegetable broth soup |

SAMPLE MENU 3: MODIFIED DANIEL FAST

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|---------------------|---|
| Breakfast | • 1-2 servings whole grains with fresh fruit juice |
| Mid-Morning Snack | • Fresh fruit or fresh chopped vegetables |
| Lunch | • 1-2 servings whole grains; fresh salad with legumes and light, organic dressing |
| Mid-Afternoon Snack | • Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with whey protein |
| Dinner | • 1-2 servings whole grains; fresh salad with legumes and light, organic dressing |

PERSONAL BIBLE READING

Just like prayer and fasting, reading your Bible is about connecting to God in a more powerful way. It's not about duty but about relationship. When we engage through reading His Word, we engage the very presence of God. His Word is living and active! As we read our Bible, we are drawing closer to God and positioning ourselves to hear from Him in particular ways.

Once again, as with prayer, choose the time and the place where you are going to read your Bible every single day and come prepared to hear what He wants to tell you.

Each month we provide a Personal Growth Plan (PGP), which is a daily Bible reading guide. This is a great place to start reading the Word. You can also choose a book of the Bible or a certain devotional to help guide your Scripture reading. Here are a few quick tips when reading your Bible.

Read Consistently

It is better to read a little every day than to try and knock out two hours of Bible reading in one sitting. It is important to digest the Word in absorbable chunks. If you miss a few days, pick up at the next reading, but stay with it and don't give up.

Read Prayerfully

Talk to God as you're reading. Don't rush through. If you come across something you don't understand, pause for a moment and ask God about it. Reading prayerfully is making space and time to talk to God and giving Him time and space to talk to you. Taking time to meditate on God's Word is just as important as reading it.

Read Expectantly

Believe God is going to speak to you through His Word. Write down notes you learn or thoughts God speaks to your heart, then be prepared to do something with what He shows you.

AFTER THE FAST

We want to encourage you to be just as intentional about your spiritual life after this fast as you are during it. Remember, keeping the fire and zeal for God burning in your heart is what will keep your relationship with Him fresh and new. It will allow you to continue serving and obeying Him from a position of want to, and you will experience the joy of your salvation every day--regardless of what life brings your way.

The principles you have practiced during your fast are very easy to sustain long-term. Prayer, fasting, and Bible reading are all quite simple to incorporate into your everyday life. Over these last several days, you've created space for God to fill. The best way to continue in these same practices is to keep that space open indefinitely. Don't allow it to close up! Protect that time and space with God and make it your priority each day.

Just like reading your Bible, praying, and attending church, fasting is also a lifestyle. We encourage you to establish a frequency and consistency of fasting in your life. Remember, this is not a legalistic thing. This is an "I get to experience God" thing. It is like going into heaven for a tune-up so we can keep our passion for God and enjoyment of Him at a high level. We encourage you to do the same. Figure out what works for you, commit to it, and make it a part of your life.

Don't ever settle for anything less than a life full of passion and spiritual zeal for God. Keep the fire for God burning in your heart and do whatever it takes to feed your spiritual hunger for God.