

Prayer and Fasting Guide

(Matthew 4:4) "People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." - Jesus

1. Set your prayer objectives.

(James 4:2-3) "You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

2. Decide what type of fasting you will do.

(Matthew 6:16-18) "When you fast, do not look somber 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."

3. Make it a heart thing not a food thing.

(Joel 2:12-13) "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God...

4. Put to death the flesh.

(Romans 8:13) "For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live..."

5. Choose a lifestyle change.

(Isaiah 58:3) "Why have we fasted," they say, "and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?" "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please..."

6. Expect results.

(Isaiah 58:8-9) "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I..."

Different Types of Fasts

Normal fast. A person abstained from all food, solid or liquid, but not from water—usually to prepare for some significant event. Jesus fasted for forty days in preparation for his temptations from Satan and the inauguration of his public ministry (Matthew. 4:1-2; Luke 4-1-2).

Partial fast. Sometimes people entered into a partial restriction of diet but not total abstinence. For a 3-week period of mourning, Daniel ate no meat and drank no wine, and applied no lotion to his body (Daniel 10:3).

Absolute fast. During a relatively short, urgent period of time, people could abstain from all food and water to discern God’s leading. Esther neither ate nor drank for three days during a period of national crisis (Esther. 4:16), and at Paul’s dramatic conversion he abstained from eating and drinking for three days (Acts 9:9).

Private and corporate fasts. Fasting is usually a private affair, but at times the people of God came together for corporate or public fasts, such as on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:37), in times of national emergency (2 Chronicles 20:1-4), or for seeking God’s guidance in prayer (Ezra 8:21-23).

Fasting formulas:

1. Juice fast (limits headaches and tiredness)
2. Fast one meal a day (pray at lunch instead of eating)
3. Fast from sun up to sun down (eat dinner with the family)
4. Fast a specific food (like meats, sweets, and bread)
5. Fast a specific activity (TV, social media, or negative talk)

Fasting features:

1. Make prayer the context for fasting.
2. Meditate on the Scriptures regularly.
3. Protect yourself from “worldly” influences.
4. Submit your attitude to the influence of Christ.
5. Let your body rest whenever possible.
6. Fast with a friend for accountability.

Let’s eat the same food that fed Jesus! *(John 4:34) My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work...”*