

Whether you are considering your very first fast, or you desire to take your fasting experience to a deeper level, God's Word is full of practical insights to help you make your fasting journey successful.

What is fasting?

Biblical fasting is giving up specific food and drink for a specified number of days for a specific purpose. The type and length of the fast you choose is between you and God, and should not be determined by what anyone else is doing.

Fasting, prayer and reading God's Word go hand in hand. When you fast, also pray for God's purpose and plan for your life to be revealed. Fast and pray about every major decision in your life.

Simply put, fasting is a way to conquer the physical and open the door to the supernatural

in your life. When you deny your body, you feed your spirit and grow closer to the Lord.

Why fast?

In Matthew 6, Jesus gave us specific direction on how to live as a child of God. That pattern addressed three specific duties of a Christian: Giving, Praying and Fasting. Jesus said, "When you give" . . . "when you pray" . . . "when you fast." He made it clear that fasting, like giving and praying, was a normal part of Christian life.

Types of fasts

Be sure to consult your doctor before beginning any fast, especially if you have any type of medical condition.

FULL FAST Drink only liquids – especially water. On this type of fast you may also take in clear broth and 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices in order to maintain your strength. You establish the number of days for your fast in your prayer time.

PARTIAL FAST. There are many options for partial fasts. Below are just a few for you to select from.

Daniel Fast : The most frequently used example of a partial fast is found in Daniel chapter 10. The Daniel Fast is a fast from meats, sweets, breads and any drink, except water, for a specific time period (Daniel 10:2-3). The easiest way to think of this fast is eating only vegetables and fruits, and drinking only water.

>The following are examples of other types of partial fasts.

>>give up one item of food or drink such as caffeine, coffee, soft drinks or sweets

>>give up one meal a day for a specific amount of time, one meal a week, etc.

>>fast for a specific number of days

. . . one day, three days, so on.

>>choose to fast from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

or from sun-up to sundown. When doing this type of fast, consider your work and sleep schedule. The hours that you sleep should not be considered part of your fasting period, so the timeframe for this type of fast may vary.

CORPORATE FAST vs PRIVATE FAST

A Corporate fast is a joint fast of believers for a specific purpose that can yield powerful results. Although this fast involves others, it is also very much a "private and personal experience between you and God." Esther called all of her people to fast for protection against danger (Esther 4:16). Samuel declared

a fast for national revival (1 Samuel 7).

Other common questions

> *What if I have a medical condition?*

Consult your doctor before starting any fast. Decide together what is possible. If your health condition prohibits you from fasting food, try fasting something else and concentrate

on prayer and Bible study. God knows your heart.

> *I forgot and ate something that wasn't on my fast; do I need to start again?* No, think of fasting as a marathon, rather than a sprint. Don't give up! If you fall down, get up and keep trying. Conquering "king stomach" is difficult, but you'll make it.

> *Do I continue to exercise while fasting?*

For most people moderate exercise is OK.

But it is best to always consult a doctor about fasting and exercise. If you are on a complete fast, you may not have the energy for exercise.

> *What if I have a manual labor job?* If

you have a job that requires you to expend a lot of physical energy, you may want to consider

a full fast for one to three days or make your fast a partial fast that allows you to receive

enough nutrition to perform your job.

> *Can my husband and I be intimate*

during our fast? Read I Corinthians 7:2-5, especially verse 5, which says, "do not deprive one another (of sexual relations) EXCEPT WITH CONSENT, for a time; that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer." So the answer is yes. Scripture allows

this for the purpose of fasting and prayer, BUT only with mutual consent.