

Frequently Asked Questions

Like prayer and Bible reading, fasting is one of the spiritual disciplines of followers of Jesus. Are you wondering what fasting is about or just how you can get started? Here are answers to some frequently asked questions to help you get your mind around fasting, and help you begin this powerful experience.

What is Fasting? Biblical fasting is, very simply, denying oneself food for the sake of seeking God and drawing closer to Him. Pastor Stovall Weems says that “prayer is connecting with God; fasting is disconnecting ourselves from the world.” That’s a great way to describe how prayer and fasting work so powerfully together.

Why should I fast? Fasting is like hitting a reset button, both physically and spiritually. As we go about our daily lives, there are things that can build up over time and we can start to lose our spiritual focus. Fasting is like a deep cleaning both spiritually and physically that helps us take our minds off the things of this world and instead gives us a fresh spiritual focus. It’s all about drawing closer to God.

How do I fast? There are several different ways that you can fast. For the most part, fasting involves abstaining from food or certain types of foods. You can also fast from specific activities or habits, or from other things that keep you connected to the world. Things like TV, social media, news, video games, shopping etc.

How should I prepare to fast? It’s important to choose ahead of time what type of fast you will participate in. Not only will this help you prepare, but when you commit to your plan ahead of time, you’ll set yourself up to finish strong. Choosing your fasting plan is a very personal decision. We are all at different places in our relationship with God and we shouldn’t compare our fasting plans to other people. Pray and ask God to show you what He wants you to do, and then commit to your plan.

What should I do while fasting? Do more of the activities that draw you closer to God. Pray. Read your Bible. Worship. Get alone with God.

Do I have to fast the entire 21 days?

You should fast as many days as you feel God is asking you to fast. You could give up certain things like bread and dessert throughout the week, and then eat only fruits and vegetables on the weekends, just an example. Ask God to show you how many days to participate and during the 21 days be sure to set aside time each day to pray and read your Bible.

What kind of fasts are people doing?

There are a variety of fasts that you can choose to participate in. There is a specific food/activity fast, the Daniel fast, juice fast, water fast or a total fast. Choosing your fasting plan is a very personal decision. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but know your body, know your options, and most importantly, seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. It’s important to not let what you eat or do not eat

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

become the focus of your fast. This is a time to disconnect with your regular patterns or habits in order to connect closer to God. For more information, check out our "Types of Fasts" resource.

What about caffeine?

Some people feel led to cut caffeine out of their diets entirely during the fast. Nothing says you "have to". But the great thing is, when you fast, your body automatically craves less caffeine. If you are wanting to cut it out of your diet completely, ease yourself off and make it your goal to be completely caffeine free by about two-thirds of the way into your fast.

What about eating disorders?

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 either change your approach or mind-set. Either way, remember this situation is primarily a battle of the mind you can win through Christ. (Phil 4:13)

If giving up food is a stumbling block to you, then consider fasting from television, reading (other than the Bible, of course), social media, or shopping. There are too 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.

What if I stumble?

If you "mess up" during your fast, 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.

Check out our "How To Get Started" guide to help you start and finish strong. Here are two additional great tips that can also help to keep you on track:

- 1.) Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with the items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give into temptation.
- 2.) Make it a priority to attend church during your 21 day fast and consider getting in a group. Being around other believers will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.

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