

# When you fast...

Matthew 6:16-18

“When you fast...”

## What is the purpose of fasting?

Fasting is a voluntary of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ (and sometimes water) for a period of time in order to declare and realize your dependence upon God.

## Fasting in the Old Testament:

1. **Mourning & \_\_\_\_\_** - Fasting was a declaration of mourning, or repentance and sorrow for sin, often with the hope that God would withhold judgement.
  - *2 Samuel 12:16-18, Ezra 9:5, Nehemiah 9:1, Leviticus 23:27*
2. **Desperate \_\_\_\_\_** - Fasting was an appeal for God to rescue the nation or person from an impossible situation.
  - *2 Chronicles 20:3, Ezra 8:22-23, Esther 4:16*
3. **The \_\_\_\_\_ of Fasting** – fasting is not about food, it’s about the heart.
  - *Isaiah 58:1-14, Is. 58:3-9*
4. **\_\_\_\_\_ Fasting:** God sustains people physically with His intimate presence.
  - *Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9, Matthew 4:2*

## Fasting in the New Testament:

5. **Fasting and prayer to seek \_\_\_\_\_ from God.**
  - *Acts 9:9, Acts 13:2, Acts 14:23*
6. **\_\_\_\_\_ fasting**
  - *Luke 18:9-11.*

*Colossians 2:21-23, Matthew 6:17-18*

## Next Steps for Growth:

I want to begin to follow Jesus today.

I want to be contacted by a pastor.

I want to be baptized.

I want to become a member.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  Change my contact info

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a:  1<sup>st</sup> time guest  2<sup>nd</sup> time guest  Regular Attendee  Member (taken membership class & committed to membership covenant)

## Should I fast?

- A) Fasting can be used as a way to \_\_\_\_\_ from sin - Joel 2:12-14** “Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; **13** and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.
- B) Fasting can be used as a means of seeking God in an \_\_\_\_\_ situation -**  
Do you have a problem that is beyond you?
- C) Fasting can be used as a means of seeking \_\_\_\_\_ from God -** Do you need direction?
- D) Fasting can be used as a declaration of \_\_\_\_\_ up God.**

### Practical Suggestions for Fasting:

- Start Slow: fast and pray through a meal or Do a *Yom Kippur* type - fast from dusk to dusk
- Fast on days when you are not busy and have time to pray or plan a day-long personal retreat.
- Drink lots of fluids or allow yourself some juice.
- Beginning and ending a fast: eat lightly at the beginning and end of your fasts so that you don't upset your stomach. Don't eat large amounts of food before a fast or after a fast.
- Check with a Dr. before attempting a long fast (more than three days)

**What about health risks?** People with diabetes, eating disorders, or pregnancy etc must be cautious. Spiritual fasting is not a diet plan, remember this is about focusing on God, not the body.

**Have a plan:** Why are you fasting? Which of the biblical purposes for fasting are you hoping to see in your life? How long will you fast? Where? When?

### Relax in your freedom:

- This is a discipline not a command, I know people who suffer miserably and cannot concentrate

### Dangers of Fasting:

- Spiritual Hypocrisy – looking pious before others
- Legalism – feeling superior to others
- False spirituality – equating self-denial with spiritual maturity

### For Further Reading:

- *A Hunger for God* – John Piper
- *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough* – Elmer Towns
- *Celebration of Discipline* – Richard Foster

**Some Scriptures on Fasting:** Exodus 34:28, Leviticus 23:27, Deuteronomy 9:9, Judges 20:26, 1 Samuel 14:24, 1 Samuel 20:34, 1 Samuel 31:13, 2 Samuel 1:12, 2 Samuel 3:35, 2 Samuel 12:16, 2 Samuel 12:21-23, 1 Kings 13:8-22, 2 Chronicles 20:3, Ezra 8:21-23, Ezra 9:5, Ezra 10:6, Nehemiah 1:4, Nehemiah 9:1, Esther 4:3, Esther 4:16, Esther 9:31, Psalm 35:13, Psalm 69:10, Psalm 109:24, Isaiah 58:1-14, Jeremiah 14:12, Jeremiah 36:6, Jeremiah 36:9, Daniel 9:3, Daniel 10:2-3, Joel 1:14, Joel 2:12-15, Jonah 3:5, Zechariah 7:5, Zechariah 8:19, Matthew 9:14-15, Mark 2:18-20, Luke 2:37, Luke 5:33-39, Luke 18:11-12, Acts 9:9, Acts 13:1-2, Acts 14:23, Colossians 2:16-23

Prayer Requests/Praise Items: \_ Put this on the prayer chain.