

prayer & fasting

What you need to know about Fasting

Fasting has been an important practice since the beginning of time as demonstrated throughout the Bible. Scripture reminds us: "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12, NKJV). "Give yourselves to fasting and prayer" (1 Corinthians 7:5). Jesus Himself said "When you fast . . .", not "if" you fast, therefore implying how important this practice was for all His followers.

At Celebration, we are beginning a week-long Fast starting January 2nd and going until January 6th. This is a great opportunity for us to give a "first fruits offering" of ourselves to the Lord by beginning the New Year with prayer and fasting. We will break our Fast at Friday Fire with a potluck dinner at 6pm, followed by the Friday Fire Service at 7pm.

Fasting is a voluntary, private, and Spirit-led separation from one's usual activities of life. It is intended to heighten focus, intensify fervor and dependence on God's strength, and to gain control over one's fleshly cravings and human will. You will find that fasting is the fuel to your prayer life. Because of removing the many things that get in the way spiritually, through fasting you will sense a closeness to God like never before. The following information will help you in making your decision as to how the Lord would like you to participate.

Biblical and Spiritual Reasons to Fast

- **For consecration, self-evaluation and surrender to the Lord** (Acts 13:2 "While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart Barnabas and Saul of the work to which I have called them.'")
- **For answered prayer** (Ezra 8:23 "So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.")
- **For deliverance from sin, addictions and temptation** (Mark 9:29 "This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting," Luke 4:1-14)
- **For revival** (1 Samuel 7:16 "And they fasted that day and said 'We have sinned against the Lord.'")
- **For breaking negative emotions** (1 Kings 19:4,8).

- **For meeting of needs** (1 Kings 17:16)
- **For direction with major life decisions** (Judges 20:18-29, Daniel 9:3, 10:2-3,12, Acts 9:9)
- **For health and healing** (Daniel 1:8, 10:2-3)
- **For influence and impact** (Luke 1:15 "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink . . .")
- **For protection against danger and help in crisis** (Esther 4:15-16, 5:2 "Fast for me . . . and my maids and I will fast . . . And I will go to the king . . . And she found favor in his sight.")
- **Other Scriptures:** Matthew 6:16-18, 9:14-15, Luke 2:37, 18:9-14, Acts 10:30, 13:2

Guidelines

Set reasonable goals for fasting. Consider these types of fasts:

- **Full fast** (Going completely without food for a full day or longer) Drink plenty of water. Remember that some medications should not be taken without food.
- **Partial Fast**-one or two meals per day
- **Daniel Fast**-eat only fruits and vegetables, no meat, no sweets, and no bread. Drink water and juice.
- **21 Day - 6am-6pm Daily Fast** - Eat nothing during day hours, but end every day with a light meal.
- **21 Day Daniel Fast** - eat only fruits and vegetables, no meat, no sweets, and no bread. Drink water and juice.

Considerations

As you contemplate a food fast, it may be necessary to consult your doctor before you begin to make sure there are not medical reasons why it would be harmful to radically change your diet short-term.

Persons who should not fast without professional supervision are those who:

- Are too thin or prone to anorexia or bulimia
- Suffer weakness or anemia
- Have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood disorders or heart disease
- Have chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, or heart
- Are on insulin for diabetes or are hypoglycemic
- Are pregnant or nursing

How to Begin: Start with a clear specific goal. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible.

Preparing Spiritually: Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Rom.12:1-2).

Deciding What to Fast: The type of fast you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats and bread. Or you may fast certain things in your life that consume a lot of your time and attention. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

Deciding How Long: You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from 1 to 3 days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom (health/medical considerations) and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

What to Expect: When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

How to End: Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating snacks or small portions of solid food.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 432-5662. Visit our website for other fasting resources, such as, meal and menu ideas at mycelebrationchurch.com under the Grow Tab. Look for the section called All Church Fast. May God bless you as you follow Him!

The logo for "prayer & fasting" is displayed within a white rounded rectangular box. The word "prayer" is in a dark red, sans-serif font. The ampersand "&" is a large, stylized, orange-colored symbol with a decorative flourish. The word "fasting" is in an orange, sans-serif font. A thin orange horizontal line runs beneath the text.