

Individual Prayer and Fasting Guidelines

Fasting

In over fifty references to fasting in the Old and New Testaments, there is no specific command to fast, with the exception of the Day of Atonement for the Jews. In the New Testament it was ASSUMED that fasting would be a part of the normal devotional life of the believer.

Jesus said: "When you fast, do not look sober as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you're the truth; they have received their reward in full". Matthew 6:16

The length of a fast varies from one meal, one day, one week to 40 days. We are asking each person to pray and fast for at least one hour a day covering any one of the mealtimes.

What is a Fast:

Fasting is the voluntary self denial of food or other things in order to intentionally seek God.

Types of Fasts:

- Absolute (no water or food - NOT RECOMMENDED)
- Normal (water only)
- Partial (e.g., fruit juice and water only)

Preparation:

Spiritual Preparation: In for this special time with God, examine your heart, and detect any unconfessed sin. Scripture records that God always requires His people to repent of their sins before He will hear their prayers (Psalm 66: 16-20).

Physical Preparation: Resist the urge to have that "last big feast" before the fast. Eat normally before and after your fast. You may also want to wean yourself off of caffeine and sugar products before you start the fast.

While Fasting:

- Drink plenty of fresh, pure water (especially when you get a hunger pang)
- Pray often (especially when you get a hunger pang)
- Avoid chewing gum (triggers digestive system) and caffeine - it is a drug (cut down prior)
- Remember to keep your fast God-centered (especially never focus on the fast itself; it is a vehicle only)
- Seek, experience, and enjoy God's presence
- Consider taking an easy walk while you fast, observing God's Creation and praising Him for it)
- Appreciate the fact what you are doing will benefit your physical body
- Don't think "oh poor hungry me"; instead, praise God that He has given you the honor of fasting unto Him!

Remember, the body can go without food for weeks; you will not starve. Remember you must have water (unless you hear an audible voice from God telling you not to drink) and plenty of it. Also remember that everyone cannot fast. If a person is on medication, has an eating disorder, is chronically underweight, or has some other compelling reason, he should "fast" from something else, such as TV or the radio (I believe this keeps the integrity of 1 Corinthians 7:5-6). God honors the desires and actions of our hearts.