

FRESH AIR

FASTING GOD'S WAY

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is giving up food or another source of personal gratification for a determined period of time in order to focus on God. Fasting allows us to take our focus and our reliance off earthly things to focus and rely on God. Fasting is powerful when it is combined with other spiritual disciplines: prayer and Bible reading.

WHY FAST?

Across INC, we begin each year with prayer and fasting to create space in our lives to seek God for the New Year. When we deny our physical needs, we feed the spiritual and grow closer to God.

Biblical fasting heightens our awareness of God's presence and power, feeds our faith and empowers our spirit. Fasting opens the door to the supernatural power of God in our lives. You can pray and fast for a number of reasons: to dedicate the year to God, increase faith, family and financial breakthrough, guidance, spiritual breakthrough, deliverance, salvation, healing and more.

You may choose to make a plan for regular fasting throughout the year. For example: one day a month, one meal a week, etc. There may also be unexpected times when you feel led to fast.

HOW TO BEGIN

Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Pray daily and read the Bible. We suggest reading a fasting devotional. There are resources to help you on the INC website: inc.org.au

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 (Romans 12:1-2).

DECIDING WHAT

The type of fast you go on is between you and God. 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 the only liquid he drank was water. It is important that the fast you choose will physically challenge you, but is also realistic based on your fasting experience, physical and medical needs. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

DECIDING HOW LONG

Most people can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom 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. Naturally, you will have hunger pains. When you feel hunger pains, spend time praying or reading the Bible. Limit your activity. 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 often throughout the day.

Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God.

HOW TO END

Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.

God will honour your best. You may want to include a combination of fasts. For example, you may want to participate in full fast for 1-3 days and then continue with a Daniel fast.

TYPES OF FASTS

FULL FAST

Drink liquids only (you decide the number of days).

Please consult your doctor before beginning the fast.

DANIEL FAST

Detailed information on the Daniel Fast is included in this booklet.

3-DAY FAST

This fast can be any type of fast that lasts for three days.

PARTIAL FAST

This can be any type of fast that gives up a limited number of food or drink items or lasts for a portion of each day only.

For example, fast from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. or sun-up to sun-down, fast caffeine, coffee, soft drinks, sweets, etc.

Matthew 6:16-18

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and dishevelled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”

THE DANIEL FAST

- The Daniel Fast is longer than one day. These men fasted for ten days.
- The Daniel Fast is a partial fast. Only vegetables and water (no meat and junk foods).

GUIDELINES FOR DANIEL FAST

Foods We May Eat

Whole Grains: Brown Rice, Oats, Barley

Legumes: Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas

Fruits: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Oats, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon

Vegetables: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gingerroot, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Liquids: Water

Foods to Avoid

Meat, White Rice, Fried Foods, Caffeine, Carbonated Beverages, Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives, Refined Sugar, Sugar Substitutes, White Flour and All Products Using It, Margarine, Shortening, High Fat Products.

*This information was adapted from Jentezen Franklin's 'Fasting God's Way.'

FASTING FAQS

CAN CHILDREN FAST?

If children would like to fast or if you want to participate in a family fast, you could consider giving up dessert, soft drinks or lollies together. You may also choose to give up television and spend that time instead doing family devotions or discussing Bible stories.

I HAVE A MEDICAL CONDITION. CAN I STILL FAST?

It is important you consult your doctor before starting a fast. If your medical condition does not allow you to fast food, you could fast something else (such as television) and use that time instead for prayer and Bible study.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I START FASTING, BUT CANNOT COMPLETE IT?

Any time fasting and seeking God is valuable. If you cannot complete a fast you could try modifying the type or length of a fast next time.

CAN I EXERCISE WHILE FASTING?

It is best to consult your doctor about fasting and exercise. If you are doing a complete fast, moderate exercise might be more appropriate than a high level of exercise. It is important you have adequate rest while fasting.

I HAVE A PHYSICALLY DEMANDING JOB. CAN I STILL FAST?

If you have a physically demanding job, you may consider doing a partial fast, rather than a complete fast, so you are able to still perform your duties.

WHERE CAN I FIND RESOURCES TO HELP ME FAST?

Prayer and fasting resources are available through our website: inc.org.au

FRESH AIR

MY COMMITMENT

I will begin my fast on: / /

I will end my fast on: / /

Who I will ask to fast with me:

My reason/s for fasting:

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Signed:

Date: / /