

Types of Fasts

Specific Food or Activity Fast: This type of fast refers to omitting a specific item(s), activity(ies) or habit(s) from your time of prayer and fasting. For example, you may choose to eliminate red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. It could also involve fasting from an activity or habit, such as television watching, or social media.

Daniel Fast: The Daniel fast is a great model to follow that proves to be extremely effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline and purification in the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred to types of fasts, however within the term “Daniel Fast”, there is room for broad interpretation. In the book of Daniel, we find two different times where Daniel fasted, once in Daniel 1 and again in Daniel 10. Daniel 1 states that he ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that Daniel ate no rich (or choice) foods as well as no meat or wine. So based on these two verses, we can see that either of these, or any variations in between constitutes a fast.

Juice Fast: A juice fast is when no solid food is consumed and instead involves the intake of vegetable juices, fruit juices and water.

Water Fast: A water fast is eating no foods and drinking no liquids except water for a period of time. It is recommended that this type of fast be done with caution and under the direction, supervision and monitoring of your physician.

Absolute Fast: A total fast is where nothing – neither liquid, solid food or even water is consumed for a period of time. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus. Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16. It is recommended that this type of fast be done with extreme caution and not for extended periods of time.

What is a Fast?

Biblical fasting in the Old Testament always involved the denial of food—either all-together or only certain types of foods. It also could involve the denial of liquids—some or all.

Paul reveals in the New Testament that fasting can also involve the denial of activities. 1 Corinthians 7:5 instructs married couples to not deny the sexual part of their relationship except when agreed upon for a fast.

Whatever type of fast God leads you into, it is designed to make us more aware of our bodies, souls and our spirits. Hunger (physical, emotional and/or spiritual) is heightened during a fast. We also become aware of the weakness of the flesh and we can take the opportunity to become stronger in spirit. This comes through a deepening of our relationship with God during a fast. The denial of food is not a Biblical fast without seeking God and walking with Him in it—that’s just going hungry.

“A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians.

“It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honour you for your faithfulness.” (Dr. Bill Bright)

May your time of fasting be filled with answered prayer, spiritual might and deep relationship with God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FASTING

As we begin a fast at Freedom Centre Church, this guide will help you with understanding Biblical fasting and in choosing the best fast for you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. There are many more fasting resources available on the Internet. We have some links on our website.

The late Dr. Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, wrote the following:

“Fasting is the most powerful spiritual discipline of all the Christian disciplines. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life.

“Fasting and prayer can also work on a much grander scale. According to Scripture, personal experience and observation, I am convinced that when God’s people fast with a proper Biblical motive-seeking God’s face not His hand—with a broken, repentant, and contrite spirit, God will hear from heaven and heal our lives, our churches, our communities, our nation and world. Fasting and prayer can bring about revival - a change in the direction of our nation, the nations of earth and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.”

We hope you will find this to be more than a guide for an event. Fasting is now a part of the fabric of Freedom Centre Church—we will be doing this again. We also hope fasting will become a regular part of your personal spiritual walk with Christ.

7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting & Prayer (Abridged) by Dr. Bill Bright

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these seven basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

STEP 1: Set Your Objective

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

STEP 2: Make Your Commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- ✠ How long you will fast
- ✠ The type of fast God wants you to undertake
- ✠ What physical or social activities you will restrict
- ✠ How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- ✠ Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- ✠ Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4). Make restitution

as the Holy Spirit leads you.

- ✠ Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15.
- ✠ Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2).
- ✠ Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).
- ✠ Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17).

STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment or are pregnant. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- ✠ Do not rush into your fast.
- ✠ Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- ✠ Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a water fast or absolute fast.

If you are abstaining from all solid foods and have begun to seek the Lord, here are some helpful suggestions to consider:

- ✠ Avoid drugs, even natural herbal drugs and homeopathic remedies. Medication should be withdrawn only with your physician's supervision.
- ✠ Limit your activity.
- ✠ Rest as much as your schedule will permit.
- ✠ Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety.

- ✠ Expect some physical discomforts. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness, or the "blahs." Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches.

The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

A dietary routine is vital as well. Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints, even if your breath is bad. They stimulate digestive action in your stomach.

STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

STEP 7: Expect Results

If you sincerely & humbly follow the Lord's call, He will reward you (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.