

# GUIDE TO FASTING

The noise and the busyness of daily life can keep you distracted from praying and hearing from God. Both prayer and fasting are powerful ways to draw closer to Him, be in His presence, and discover His plans for your life. Honestly ask yourself, “What am I allowing to come between me and God’s presence?” Imagine the blessings He has for you when you prepare your heart and surrender!

## What Is Fasting?

Fasting is voluntarily going without Food and/or Drink, for a limited period of time, in order to experience God (“Food” and “Drink” can represent anything that may be holding you back). What do you consume in terms of social, intellectual, and emotional “food?” What things distract or numb you from feeling or talking with God?

Are you relying on things that have nothing to do with God to get you through your day? You may not even know you are addicted. How many times a day do you check social media? Do you think you must have coffee to survive each day? Anything you cannot or are not willing to give up is an addiction. Ask God if your fast needs to be food, or simply about coffee, social media, or something else you feel you “must” have.

## Why Should You Fast?

- To strengthen your personal prayer life and increase your intimacy with God (Ezra 8:23, Nehemiah 1:4, Acts 13:3)
- To seek God’s direction (Judges 20:26-28, Act 14:23)
- To express grief (1 Samuel 20:34, 2 Samuel 1:11-12)
- To show your heartfelt repentance (1 Samuel 7:6, Joel 2:12, Jonah 3:5-8)
- To intercede for others (Daniel 9:3)
- To align your heart with God and His purposes (Nehemiah 1:3-4)
- To depend on God’s strength to overcome temptations (Matthew 4:1-11)
- To express your love and commitment to God (Luke 2:37)

Fasting humbles us before God and reminds us of both our physical and spiritual need for Him. That humility and focus on Him causes our prayers to change and transforms our lives.

Through fasting we can experience God’s gentle grace and see answered prayer.

## Types of Fasting

- **Regular Fast:** abstaining from eating, only drinking liquids (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:2)
- **Partial Fast:** removing certain elements from your diet (Daniel 1:12)
- **Partial Fast (aka The Jewish Fast):** fasting during specific times of the day (i.e. from sunrise to sunset)
- **Soul Fast:** good for those new to fasting or those who have health issues preventing them from fasting from food. Also a good way to refocus specific areas that are out of balance.
- **Absolute Fast:** no food or drink (Ezra 10:6)
- **Supernatural Fast:** (Deuteronomy 9:9)
- **Private Fast:** (Matthew 6:16-18)
- **Congregational Fast:** (Joel 2:15-16)
- **National Fast:** (2 Chronicles 20:3)
- **Periodic Fast:** (Leviticus 16:29-31)

## How to Safely Fast

- Fast only as the Spirit directs you.
- Before starting a fast, consult your doctor to ensure you are in good health.
- If you have never fasted, initially start with a 1 or 2 day fast.
- People who are diabetic, pregnant or nursing, on medication or have a physical condition that depends on a regular diet, should NOT fast without proper medical supervision.
- Drink plenty of fluids unless God is clearly leading you to abstain from liquids.
- Prepare your schedule. Decide where you will meet with God and how you will spend your time differently.

## Questions to Ask

- How can I experience God's grace through fasting?
- What fears of fasting do I need to confess and release to God?
- What will obediently following the Spirit's leading to fast look like for me?
- How can I separate myself from the world to spend quality time in prayer and truly listen to Him?

*"Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, and confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the Kingdom of God."*

- Andrew Murray