

## Fasting and Your Health

We recommend that you always consult your doctor/health care provider before beginning any type of fast, regardless of the condition of your health status.

If you have any medical conditions or if you have any concerns about your physical ability to fast, we strongly urge you to consult a physician before you start. Your doctor can advise you on how you can participate in this fast.

## **Fasting**

**Fasting is one of the most powerful weapons God has ever given us for our daily lives.**

We all go through times when we feel like we are not living up to our full potential. Sometimes we lose our energy and our spiritual sharpness. . . this causes us to lose our edge.

What does it really mean to lose your edge?

When a lumberjack keeps swinging away at the tree without sharpening his ax, the ax will soon become dull and ineffective. In much the same way, that can happen to us.

Going through our daily routines in our own strength wears us down. Little by little, we lose our closeness to God. Without that closeness, we become ineffective for the purposes He has for us.

***Fasting can help you get back your passion! It can recharge you!***

Although Fasting lasts for a short season, it brings long-term results, which sharpens us, enabling us to face the challenges of life in His strength. Through fasting, you can experience spiritual renewal and direction for your life . . . restoration of relationship . . . healing . . . release from bondages . . . and so much more!

**We will begin this year with 21 days of fasting.** Fasting in January is much like praying in the morning to establish the will of God for your entire day. I believe that if we will pray and seek God and give Him our first and best at the beginning of the year, He will honor that sacrifice and bless our ENTIRE year! “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

But when you make fasting a way of life, you get even closer to God and grow in your spiritual walk like never before. When you make Fasting a lifestyle, it is like a lumberjack who takes time to rest and sharpen his ax periodically to be able to effectively finish the job set before him.

Fasting can help you Recover Your Passion, Recapture Your Dream and Restore Your Joy!

Fasting is a principle that God intended for everyone to practice. It is not a punishment; it is a privilege!

***You may choose to fast longer than the 21 days. Be directed by the Holy Spirit as to the length of your fast.***

## Fasting Basics

**Simply stated, biblical fasting is a refraining from food for a spiritual purpose.**

According to the Bible, there are three duties of every Christian: give, pray and fast. **Biblical fasting** takes a lot of discipline and strength—strength which you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, says Matthew 6.

When you give God your first through fasting, prayer and giving at the beginning of the year, you set the course for the entire year.

### **Why should I fast?**

1. Are you in need of healing or a miracle?
2. Do you need the tender touch of God in your life?
3. Is there a dream inside you that only He can make possible?
4. Are you in need of a fresh encounter?
5. Do you desire a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord?
6. Are you ready to have heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?
7. Do you need to break away from bondages that have been holding you hostage?
8. Is there a friend or loved one that needs Salvation?
9. Do you desire to know God's will for your life?

### **BIBLICAL FASTING FOCUS**

#### **I Timothy 2:1-2**

*“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made of all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”*

#### **Romans 12:1**

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.”*

#### **Matthew 6:33**

*“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

## **Isaiah 58:6**

*“[Is] not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”*

We want to encourage you to target your prayers during the fast. Two specific areas we will be focusing on together are leadership and finances. The Bible instructs us to continually pray for our leaders (I Timothy 2:1-2). When we lift up our leaders, here in the United States and around the world, we can expect God’s peace in our lives and in our nation.

Another great promise, from the book of Isaiah, proclaims that the chosen fast will “undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free.” We are living in tough economic times and we know that so many people are under a financial burden. As we come together to fast and pray, we believe that your burdens will be lifted and that financial blessings will be released into your life!

We encourage you to see the Lord in prayer and let your decisions about your biblical fasting come from Him. Ask the Lord to show you areas to target during your time of fasting and prayer. We believe that, as we pray and seek God and give Him our best at the first of the year, He will bless our ENTIRE year (Matthew 6:33)!

## **Types of Fast**

**There are several types of *fasting*. The one you choose is between you and God. He will honor your best sacrifice.**

### **Full Fast**

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

### **Partial Fast**

A Partial Fast is from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You can select the type of fast--a Full Fast or a Partial Fast.

### **Scripture References for Fasting**

Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:9-14

### **Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word**

I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, Nehemiah 1:4, Daniel 9:3, 20, Joel 2:12, Luke 2:37, Acts 10:30, Acts 13:2

### **Corporate Fasting**

I Samuel 7:5-6, Ezra 8:21-23, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16, Jonah 3:5-10, Acts 27:33-37

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 14:12, I Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast!

### **Prayer Objectives**

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Favor

Salvation of Souls

Healing

Revival

Great Awakening

Wealth Transference

## Guidelines to Fasting

### Step 1: Be Specific

Daniel was not vague in his objective to the Babylonian diet. He defined the problem immediately.

1. The king's food was against dietary laws.
2. Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine.
3. The king's food had been offered up to idols/demons.

### Step 2: Fast as a Spiritual Commitment

The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself". (Daniel 1:8).

### Step 3: Reflect Inner Desire by Outer Discipline

Many people have an inner desire for better health, but they can't discipline themselves to avoid junk food, and other foods that are not good for their health. The physical health you seek from God may be more than an answer to prayer. Your physical health can be linked to any of the following factors:

1. Your food choices.
2. The level of your spiritual commitment as reflected in constant prayer during the fast.
3. Your time commitment. If you determine to fast for a certain time, keep it. For example, if you determine to fast 10 days, don't stop on Day 9, if you determine to fast for 21 days, don't stop on day 20.
4. Your testimony commitment. Your fast is a statement of faith to God that you want Him to heal your body, and faith is foundational to the Fast.
5. **Only two hours of secular television per day. (This applies to week days only.)**

### Step 4: Pray to Perceive Sin's Role in Poor Health (Notice James 5:13-16).

Sin is something related to the cause of sickness.

Lack of health/healing may be the result of spiritual rebellion.

Lack of health/healing may be due to sin of wrong intake, i.e. drugs, pornography.

Repentance is linked to health according to James.

Elders have a role in healing both spiritual and physical health.

Sick people must desire to be well.

Prayer alone may not gain healing, faith is the major factor.

In Greek there are several words for “sick”. James uses “Kanino”, which not only includes disease, but also means weak or weary.

Attitude is important. James said, “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.” James 5:13 NKJV

### **Step 5: Fast as a Statement of Faith to Others**

Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared the overseer to compare the appearance of the four sons of Israel with the young men who ate the king’s food.

### **Step 6: Learn the Effects of the Food You Eat**

Why are some foods good for us, and other food not? What does certain food do to your body? If we really knew, there would likely be some things we would never eat again.

### **Step 7: Yield All Results to God**

Daniel said, “as you see fit, so deal with your servants”. Daniel 1:13 NKJV

# **Quick Tips**

## **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.

## **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 to Fast**

The type of fasting 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 the only liquid he drank was water. 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 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—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 solid food gradually, eat small portions or snacks.

If you are taking medication, please follow directions. Do not stop taking your medications. If you have any dietary concerns consult your doctor/health care provider before beginning any type of fast, regardless of the condition of your health status.

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[www.rwolfc.org](http://www.rwolfc.org)

856 988 7555

Rhema Word Of Life Fellowship Church

P.O. Box 859

Marlton, NJ 08053