

Simple Guide to Fasting

By James Rene

I. Why should you fast?

Fasting was a common practice for the people of God both in the Old and New Testament.

- 1 Sam 7:5-6 *And Samuel said, Gather all Israel... and they gathered... and fasted...*
Ezra 8:21-23 *Then I proclaimed a fast... So we fasted, so we might humble ourselves before our God...* Jonah 3:5-10 *They declared a fast... from the greatest to the least of them...*
- **Jesus spoke of a day when there would be a place for fasting.**
Matthew 6:16-18 (not if, but when you fast...) *Moreover when you fast do not be like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting...*
Matthew 9:14-15 *Jesus answered.... The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.*
- **Apostle Paul instructing husbands and wives.** 1 Corinthians 7:5 *Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer...*
- **The church in Acts:** Acts 13:2 *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said...* Acts 14:23 *And when they appointed elders for them in each church, and with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord*

Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the “first love” for God and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.

- Joel 2:12 *“... turn to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and weeping, and with mourning.”*

Fasting is a way to truly humble yourself before God.

- Psalm 35:13 King David said, *“I humble myself through fasting”,* Ezra 8:21-23 *Then I proclaimed a fast... So we fasted, so we might humble ourselves before our God...*

Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, freedom, and a transformed life.

Isaiah 58:6-12

Fasting and prayer is a powerful way to seek God for His direction, will, protection, and provision for you and your family.

- Ezra 8:21-23 *“Then I proclaimed a fast... that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance... The hand of our God is upon those for good who seek him... Se we fasted and prayed our God for this...”*

Fasting and prayer can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life and make you a channel of revival to others. Isaiah 58:6-12

I. What are the guidelines set forth in the bible concerning fasting?

It is to be done in a manner of humility with a right heart onto Father God, not for public display and seeking the approval of man.

- Matt 6:16-18 *Jesus said, When you fast do look somber like the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting... But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your father who is unseen; and your father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
- Luke 18:9-14 *... For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*
- Psalms 51: 17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—These O God you will not despise...*

II. How should you fast?

There are different types of fasting:

- **Absolute fast-** No water, liquids or food. Ex: Acts 9 The Apostle Paul went on an absolute fast for three days after his encounter with Jesus. Esther 4:16 The Jews went on an absolute fast for three days/nights. Moses and Elijah went on absolute fasts for 40 days enabled totally supernaturally by God.
- **Water only fast-** The max duration seen in the bible is 40 days. Water only fasts that last more than several days should be undertaken with plenty of rest and under medical supervision.
- **Water & juice fasting -**This type of fasting will provide you with more energy, especially if you are going to fast for an extended period of time.
- **Partial fast-** Denying yourself certain foods. An example we see in the bible is Daniel who did not eat bread, meat, or drink any wine for three weeks eating only vegetables and drinking water.

IV. How to fast safely.

Start slowly. Fast for one meal a day, or one day a week, or one week a month. Build up your spiritual muscles so that you able to extend your fasting as the Lord leads you.

In spite of the absolute safety and benefits of fasting, there are certain persons who should NEVER fast without professional supervision: For example:

- Persons who are physically too thin or emaciated.
- Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia, or other behavioral disorders.
- Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- Persons with medical issues—tumors, blood diseases, cancer, chronic problems with vital organs.
- Individuals who take Insulin for diabetes.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing.

Final thoughts- There is no formula to fasting. Fasting is about the condition of the heart and being obedient to God’s leading. Devote yourself to seeking God, mediate on Him, worship and praise Him, read His word, pray as often as you can, and **God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him in a special way!**