

# Fasting for a CHANGE – 21 Days

*Is this not the fast that I have chosen . . . then your light shall break forth (Isaiah 58:6-8)*

As 2025 begins, we are setting aside 21-days to seek the Lord with prayer and fasting. It is in times like this that He shares His heart with us and changes our lives.

## THE PURPOSE

Do you have a need for spiritual renewal or realignment? Do you need healing, a breakthrough, direction, or do you simply want to grow closer to Jesus? Then join us in this 21-days of prayer and fasting.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- The Upper Room (above the gym) will be open for prayer on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from 7:00-9:00 PM. You may come and go as you feel.
- Tuesday Night Prayer is in the gym at 7:00 PM.
- Meet with friends or church family who are also fasting. Take turns hosting a worship and prayer time in your home.

## WHAT IS FASTING

A biblical fast is simply abstaining from food to give priority to the nurturing of your *spiritual* health and sensitivity. There is what the Bible refers to as a **chosen** fast (Isaiah 58:6) - a season in which God calls His people to fast and pray for specific matters. There is also what I call a **cultivated** fast – regular times of fasting and prayer for sustained spiritual growth. It is the discipline of cultivated fasts that empower us to respond when God calls His people to a chosen fast.

Jesus encouraged and expected His followers to fast (Matthew 6:17-18; 9:15). That can include abstaining from food, television, and other forms of entertainment to spend time drawing closer to Him instead. What makes this time so rich and rewarding is joining it with prayer, meditation, Bible reading and worship. If these resources are not incorporated with fasting, the whole exercise is simply a diet.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR FAST

## ANSWER YOUR 'WHY?'

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, guidance, healing, the resolution of a problem, or for grace to navigate a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His desires for you. This will help you to pray more specifically and to gain a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit can stir our hearts, awaken our church, and heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14). Make this a priority in your fasting.

## MAKE A PRAYERFUL COMMITMENT

Pray about the *kind* of fast you should undertake. Before you do, ask the Lord the following, and then record/journal His response to you:

- How long will you fast – one meal each day, one day per week, one week, twenty-four days? If this is your first time, you may want to build up to longer periods of time.
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (water only, water and juices, soup broth; what you will drink and how often).
- 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 or life's pressures tempt you to give up.

## PREPARE YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY

The foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder any progress you are hoping to see. There are a few ways that you can prepare your heart:

- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with expectancy (Hebrews 11:6)
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a detailed list of your sins. This will require a place of unhurried solitude so you can commune with Him.
- Confess every sin the Holy Spirit reveals to you and accept His forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Ask forgiveness from anyone you have hurt and forgive anyone who has hurt you (Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).

- Ask Jesus to fill you with His Spirit according to His command (Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 5:14,15).
- Surrender to Jesus every area of your life where darkness has control. Open your heart fully to where He wants to work (Romans 12:1,2).
- Think about Jesus - His love, power, faithfulness, grace, gifts – and make it your goal to know Him better.
- Expect spiritual opposition. Demons will try to intensify the natural battle between your body, mind, and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17).

## PREPARE YOURSELF PHYSICALLY

If you take medication or have a chronic ailment, it is wise to consult your doctor before beginning a prolonged fast.

Preparing yourself physically will help to guarantee success in areas where you can be easily distracted or derailed. Preparation will make what might be a drastic change in your diet a little easier so you can give your full attention to nurturing your spirit.

- Prepare your body by eating smaller meals a few days leading up to your fast. Avoid fatty foods and sugar. This is where many fail in their fast, giving in to the hunger pangs that heavy eating produces or thinking headaches due to sugar withdrawal are a sign that fasting is not for them. Eliminating these foods will help you to succeed.
- Reduce your daily activity. Exercise moderately and rest as much as your schedule will allow; especially during a prolonged fast.
- Don't be surprised if you feel some physical discomfort or fatigue, or if you seem to be more impatient or irritable than usual.
- Withdrawal from caffeine or sugar usually cause headaches. Don't be discouraged as it will usually pass in a day or two. It has been my experience that these things usually begin on the second day.
- Expect hunger pangs, dizziness, fatigue or sleeplessness the first few days. As you continue to fast, however, you will begin to experience the benefits of toxins being cleansed from your body, as well as increased spiritual clarity and sensitivity.
- If you feel hunger pangs, increasing liquids will help.

## MAKE A SCHEDULE

For the greatest spiritual benefit, set aside a meaningful amount of time to

be alone with the Lord. The more time you spend with Him, the more fruitful and fulfilling your fast will be.

If you have no other goal over this 24-day period, consider this one – *I will learn to sit and to listen*. Allow this to be a time for Jesus to re-teach you what it means to commune and to walk with Him. The goal is not to *fulfill a duty* but, rather, to grow in *faithful devotion* to Jesus.

Learn to be still (Psalm 46:10); to be slow to speak and willing to listen (James 1:19). Learn to record what Jesus says to you (Habakkuk 2:2) so you can act on it and see the transformation that you desire.

Learn to read large portions of God's Word, rather than 'a chapter a day.' The goal is not Bible reading for its own sake but for cultivating a new hunger for the Words of Life that flow from scripture as you simply relax in God's presence and commune with Him through the written Word.

Your schedule should include two to three times of solitude and prayer each day. As lunch hour can sometimes be a challenge depending on your work environment, the more productive times may be the morning or evening. Regardless, your quiet time should include some of these elements:

- Worship – sing a song or recount reasons for thankfulness and praise.
- Read and reflect on scripture.
- Journal/record what the Lord is showing you – anything from the simplest of thoughts to the more profound. Use the SOAP method to journal – **S**cripture (write out a verse that spoke to you), **O**bservation (what is that verse saying to you), **A**pplication (how can you put that truth into action), **P**ray (talk to the Lord about what He has spoken to you).
- Ask the Lord to use you and to show you how you can influence those around you.
- Take a short prayer walk. A good option for getting away from work.

Different stages in life - children, aging parents, work, and so on - will often determine which time of the day is best for an unhurried time with the Lord. Sacrifices will likely be required regardless, but a good start is to avoid television and electronic devices that constantly distract and dampen your spiritual focus.

If it is not your practice, this is also a good opportunity to begin a regular time of thanksgiving and prayer with your spouse.

## **FASTING AND JUICES**

Fruit juices, preferably fresh or bottled without sugar or additives, can help decrease your hunger pangs and give you some natural energy. The best juices are fresh fruit and vegetables. Avoid or water down juices that are acidic. If you have a juicer, there are ample recipes online.

Herbal tea with a drop of honey is good, but caffeinated teas should be avoided unless you have chosen to drink caffeine/coffee during the fast. A warm vegetable broth is also a nice addition.

## **ENDING YOUR FAST**

Though it may be tempting at the end of a prolonged fast to eat a large meal, it is wise to gradually reintroduce solid food to your stomach over a period of a few days. Start with smaller meals and snacks such as a salad, soup, or steamed vegetables.

This is also a great opportunity to reintroduce healthy eating to your diet for the remainder of the year. Keep off the pounds you lost, if need be, and enjoy a new year of increased health, energy, and self-discipline.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY**, take advantage of this time to make fasting a regular part of your spiritual life and development. Incorporate the *cultivated fast* into your lifestyle – such as a 24-hour fast one day per week.

A single fast is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit on a regular basis, we also need times of fasting to draw closer and closer to God. He will honour your faithfulness and determination.

Remember, it takes time to grow spiritual muscle, so don't be discouraged if you '*fall off the wagon.*' Just pick up where you left off and continue on.

## **HOW TO SUSTAIN PERSONAL REVIVAL**

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal hidden sin in your life, to cleanse your heart daily, and to replace complacency with expectation and faith.
- Worship the Lord regularly, expressing appreciation and praise.
- Surrender your life to Christ's lordship each day. Resolve to love Him with all your heart (Matthew 22:37)
- Be regularly renewed with the Spirit's fullness (Ephesians 5:18)
- Read, reflect on, and memorize God's Word (Colossians 3:16)
- Cultivate a *lifestyle* of fasting and prayer.

- Decide to share your faith with others as a way of life.
- Gather with believers of like faith and passion.