

Fasting and Prayer Guide

What is fasting? Fasting is voluntarily going without food, or any other regularly enjoyed gift from God, for the sake of growing closer to Christ.

Why do Christ followers fast? Christ followers fast from what we can taste and see, because we have tasted and seen the goodness of the invisible and infinite God and are desperately hungry for more.

Is fasting Biblical? Absolutely. Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testaments. For example, In Exodus 34:28 Moses fasted for forty days on Mount Sinai. Jesus also fasted 40 days as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus specifically taught about fasting in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:16-18) and had the expectation that his followers would fast as evidenced by his use of the language of “when you fast,” not if you fast.

Can everyone fast? Yes, but not necessarily from food. It’s important for anyone with any ongoing medical issues or any past struggles with eating disorders to be extremely cautious with fasting from food and to only do so with medical permission from their doctor. They are encouraged to consider other types of fasts.

What are some different types of fasts?

- **Juice fast** - In this type of fast you set aside a specific amount of time to not eat any food and only drink liquids. For an extended fast it is recommended that in addition to drinking at least 8 cups of water that you also drink 100% fruit and vegetable juices.

- **Daniel Fast** – In two instances (Daniel 1 and Daniel 10), the prophet Daniel restricted his diet for a period of time (10 days and 21 days). In chapter 1 we learn that Daniel ate only fruits and vegetables and drank only water. That means he ate no processed or artificial foods. In chapter 10 we see that he ate no animal products, sweets, alcohol, or bread. Therefore, the Daniel Fast is a set amount of time in which people eat only plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, lentils, and beans) and drink only water.

- **Partial Fast** – There are many ways to practice partial fasting. A partial fast can include restricting when you eat (ex. not eating from sun up to sundown). It can also include when a person chooses to give up a type of food (ex. meat or sweets). It can also mean fasting for a specific meal (ex. not eating lunch for a set amount of time) or fasting for a specific day (ex. not eating on Thursdays for a set amount of time).

- **Media or Social Media Fast** – The purpose of fasting is growing closer to Christ. Therefore, if you are not in a position to fast food then you can fast from TV, YouTube, social media, or any other digital content that you typically engage. This is not saying that those things are bad. It’s saying that you are letting them go for a specific season so that you can spend more time pursuing Jesus.

What Do I focus on During a Fast? – Fasting isn't just about letting go of things. It's also about taking things up. Therefore, if you are fasting from food, spend the time you would typically be cooking or eating in Bible Study, personal worship, or prayer. If you are fasting from media or social media, spend the time you would normally watch shows or scrolling, serving other people. The key is to spend more time focusing on growing closer to Christ.

How do I begin Fasting? The key is to remember that it's less about what you are doing and more about why you are doing it. It's not about what you are not eating or not watching, it's about what you are focusing on instead of doing those things. Therefore, keep these things in mind:

- **Start small** – Trying to go from never fasting to attempting a 21-day juice fast would be tough. Instead, start by fasting one meal and then work your way up to a daylong fast. If you plan on fasting from food for several days, you will find it helpful to begin by eating smaller meals before you abstain altogether. Resist the urge to have that “last big feast” before the fast. Cutting down on your meals a few days before you begin the fast will signal your mind, stomach, and appetite that less food is acceptable.
- **Plan what you'll do instead of eating** - Before diving headlong into a fast, craft a simple plan. Connect it to your purpose for the fast. Each fast should have a specific spiritual purpose. Identify what that is and design a focus to replace the time you would have spent eating, watching, or scrolling.
- **Prepare for how you will feel** - Fasting doesn't give you a license to be unloving (no matter how hungry or screen-deprived you may feel). It would be sad to lack concern and care for others around us because of this expression of heightened focus on God. Love for God and for our neighbors go together. If anything, others should even feel more loved and cared for when you're fasting so pay attention to your emotions throughout your fast and have someone you can talk to about how you feel.

What should I physically expect when I fast from food? Throughout a fast from food, you may feel somewhat weaker than normal. During the first few days, you may feel tired and irritable. Lightening your workload and cutting down on strenuous exercise is important. You may also experience hunger pangs in the first few days because your body adjusts from using the food in your digestive tract to consuming stored fats. During a fast, your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and body aches.

How should I end a fast from food? Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually and try to stick to foods that are not processed. Smaller portions will ease your digestive tract back into eating.

FASTING GUIDE – MAKING ROOM FOR JESUS *(March 9 – April 4)*

DAY 1 – Fasting reveals our true hunger

Scripture reading – Matthew 6

Key passage – Matthew 6:16–18

Fasting thought – We often don't realize what controls us until we try to live without it. Fasting exposes misplaced dependence and redirects our hunger toward God.

Prayer – Father, reveal the things that have quietly taken your place in my life. Teach me to hunger for you more than comfort, noise, or entertainment. Amen.

DAY 2 – God fills what we empty

Scripture reading – Psalm 63

Key passage – Psalm 63:1

Fasting thought – When we remove lesser things, we create space for greater communion with God. Emptiness becomes expectancy.

Prayer – Lord, as I lay aside distractions, fill the quiet with your presence. Let my soul be satisfied in you. Amen.

DAY 3 – Renewal begins in the mind

Scripture reading – Romans 12

Key passage – Romans 12:2

Fasting thought – What we consume shapes how we think. Fasting from the noise of our culture allows God to renew our minds.

Prayer – Oh Lord, transform my thinking. Replace the voices of culture with the truth of your Word. Amen.

DAY 4 – Abiding over activity

Scripture reading – John 15

Key passage – John 15:5

Fasting thought – Productivity is not the same as fruitfulness. Fasting slows us down so we can abide.

Prayer – Jesus, teach me to abide in you. Apart from you I can do nothing. Amen.

DAY 5 – Draw near

Scripture reading – Hebrews 10

Key passage – Hebrews 10:22

Fasting thought – The goal of fasting is not self-denial but God-nearness.

Prayer – Lord, grant me a sincere heart that seeks you above all else. Amen.

DAY 6 – Replace distraction with delight

Scripture reading – Psalm 37

Key passage – Psalm 37:4

Fasting thought – We don't just remove something; we replace it with delight in and desire for God.

Prayer – Father, rewire my desires so that I delight in you more than any habit. Amen.

DAY 7 – True rest is found in God

Scripture reading – Isaiah 30

Key passage – Isaiah 30:15

Fasting thought – Silence is not empty; silence is the starting point of trust.

Prayer – Lord, teach me to be still and trust you. Amen.

DAY 8 – Doers, not just hearers

Scripture reading – James 1

Key passage – James 1:22

Fasting thought – Fasting without obedience becomes spiritual theater.

Prayer – Merciful God, may this fast produce action and obedience in my life. Amen.

DAY 9 – Freedom from slavery

Scripture reading – Galatians 5

Key passage – Galatians 5:1

Fasting thought – Anything that controls us is a form of bondage. Christ came to set us free.

Prayer – Loving Father, please break every unhealthy attachment in my life. Amen.

DAY 10 – Set your mind above

Scripture reading – Colossians 3

Key passage – Colossians 3:2

Fasting thought – Attention is a spiritual currency. Where we focus, we follow.

Prayer – Lord, fix my thoughts on things of eternity, not of earth. Amen.

DAY 11 – Choose the better portion

Scripture reading – Luke 10:38–42

Key passage – Luke 10:42

Fasting thought – Busyness is often the enemy of intimacy with God.

Prayer – Mighty God, Please help me choose your presence over performance. Amen.

DAY 12 – Joy in surrender

Scripture reading – Philippians 3

Key passage – Philippians 3:8

Fasting thought – We count things as loss so we can gain Christ.

Prayer – Gracious God, Please make Jesus my greatest treasure. Amen.

DAY 13 – Run with endurance

Scripture reading – Hebrews 12

Key passage – Hebrews 12:1–2

Fasting thought – Distractions are weights that slow our race.

Prayer – Almighty God, Please help me lay aside anything that hinders my pursuit of you. Amen.

DAY 14 – All things for God's glory

Scripture reading – 1 Corinthians 10

Key passage – 1 Corinthians 10:31

Fasting thought – Our habits should reflect God's glory.

Prayer – Holy Father, allow all of my daily choices to honor you. Amen.

DAY 15 – Weakness creates space for grace

Scripture reading – 2 Corinthians 12

Key passage – 2 Corinthians 12:9

Fasting thought – Fasting reminds us to depend on the savior more and ourselves less.

Prayer – Almighty God, be strong where I am weak. Amen.

DAY 16 – The gospel reshapes desire

Scripture reading – Mark 8

Key passage – Mark 8:34

Fasting thought – Denying ourselves and picking up our cross is the pathway to following Jesus.

Prayer – Loving Father, teach me to take up my cross daily. Amen.

DAY 17 – Redeem the time

Scripture reading – Ephesians 5

Key passage – Ephesians 5:15–16

Fasting thought – Time is sacred. Fasting reclaims it for God.

Prayer – Holy Spirit, Please help me steward my time wisely. Amen.

DAY 18 – Craving spiritual milk

Scripture reading – 1 Peter 2

Key passage – 1 Peter 2:2

Fasting thought – We were made to crave God’s Word more than constant stimulation.

Prayer – Gracious God, please grow my appetite for holy Scripture. Amen.

DAY 19 – Guard what matters most

Scripture reading – 2 Timothy 1

Key passage – 2 Timothy 1:14

Fasting thought – Attention is a treasure worth protecting.

Prayer – Good and Gracious God, guard my heart and mind. Amen.

DAY 20 – Simplicity leads to clarity

Scripture reading – Ecclesiastes 3

Key passage – Ecclesiastes 3:11

Fasting thought – When life slows down, we are able to notice God’s eternal work.

Prayer – Lord, please help me embrace a slower, God-aware life. Amen.

DAY 21 – Wisdom in restraint

Scripture reading – Proverbs 25:28

Key passage – Proverbs 25:28

Fasting thought – Self-control enables us to experience spiritual strength.

Prayer – Matchless God, strengthen my discipline through your Spirit. Amen.

DAY 22 – Power through prayer

Scripture reading – Acts 13:1–3

Key passage – Acts 13:2

Fasting thought – The early church fasted to hear God clearly.

Prayer – Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening. Amen.

DAY 23 – First love restored

Scripture reading – Revelation 2

Key passage – Revelation 2:4–5

Fasting thought – Fasting helps us return to our first love.

Prayer – Rekindle my love for you, Jesus. Amen.

DAY 24 – What God requires

Scripture reading – Micah 6

Key passage – Micah 6:8

Fasting thought – True fasting leads to justice, mercy, and humility.

Prayer – Holy Spirit, may this fast shape my character, not just my habits. Amen.

DAY 25 – Sowing in tears

Scripture reading – Psalm 126

Key passage – Psalm 126:5

Fasting thought – What feels costly now will produce joy later.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, grant me perseverance in this season. Amen.

DAY 26 – Seek the Lord and live

Scripture reading – Hosea 10:12

Key passage – Hosea 10:12

Fasting thought – Fasting breaks up the hard soil of our hearts.

Prayer – Loving Lord, cultivate a soft and responsive heart in me. Amen.

DAY 27 – The Lord is near

Scripture reading – Joel 2:12–13

Key passage – Joel 2:13

Fasting thought – God is responsible for outcomes. We are responsible for obedience.

Prayer – Gracious God, draw me back to you so that I may love you with my whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. Amen.