

January 2-22, 2021

WOWC Prayer and Fasting

What does the Bible teach about fasting?

Biblical fasting involves abstaining from eating (and/or drinking) for spiritual purposes.

In the Old Testament, Israel celebrated certain annual fasts, the most prominent being the Day of Atonement. There were also occasional fasts tied to specific historical events, sometimes individual and sometimes corporate. Here are a few of the occasions for fasting: at a time of grief (I Sam. 31:13; Nehemiah 1:4), at a time of repentance (I Sam 7:6; I Kings 21:27), as an expression of humility (Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10), and as an expression of a need for God's guidance and help.

What all of these fasts share in common is that they were an expression of dependence on God. Several New Testament passages give us insight about fasting. Fasting teaches us that God's Word nourishes us. Matthew 4:1-4 records the only example of Jesus fasting, just prior to His being tempted in the wilderness. He faced temptation with these words, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3-5 which talks about the 40 years Israel spent in the wilderness, depending daily on manna to sustain them. He says that God humbled them and let them be hungry in order to teach them to depend on God's Word to sustain them. By His example of fasting, Jesus reminds us that food alone can't sustain us. We need to be nourished by God's Word.

Fasting teaches us that doing God's will sustains us: John 4:31-35 records Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. When the disciples return, they encourage Jesus to eat. He responds by saying, "I have food to eat that you know not of." Then He adds, "My food is to do the will of the Father." Again, Jesus reminds us that food alone is not enough. We are sustained by doing God's will.

Fasting teaches us that Jesus Himself sustains us: In John 6:48-50 Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die." We see this pictured symbolically in the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper. Jesus is the source of eternal life. Fasting is feasting on Jesus. Jesus assumed that fasting would be a part of His disciple's spiritual life. In Matthew 6:16-18, He says, "when you fast," not "if you fast."

He warns us not to fast to impress people, but to be near to the heart of God.

What is the purpose of fasting? Fasting is designed to intensify our dependence on God by weakening our dependence on food/flesh and other things. How does it do that?

Fasting reveals and heals our dependence on food (and other things) to fill the discomfort caused by low self-esteem, unfulfilling work, unloving relationships, uncontrollable circumstances, etc. It removes the false peace derived from the pleasure of eating. Richard Foster says, "More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. David writes, "I humbled my soul with fasting" (Psalm 69:10). Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear—if they are within us, they will surface during fasting."

Fasting teaches us that we can go without getting what we want and survive. Fasting can free us from having to have what we want. Therefore, fasting can teach moderation or self-control, not only in relation to food, but in other areas as well. It teaches contentment. (I Timothy 6:6)

Fasting expresses and deepens our hunger for God. Richard Foster says, “Fasting reminds us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God:” (Matt. 4:4). Food does not sustain us; God sustains us. In Christ, “All things hold together” (Colossians 1:17). Therefore, in experiences of fasting, we are abstaining from food or other activities and feasting on God’s Word.

Fasting must always, first and foremost, center on God. It must be about Him.

Step 1: Clarify the purpose of your fast. Why are you fasting? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Fasting is God-led and God-initiated. That means that He fuels a desire to fast and pray. He loves it when we fast.

Step 2: Specify the kind of fast you will do. Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast. (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15) For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it.

Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast - one meal, one day, one week, several weeks, certain days?
- Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake - discussed in the “Types of Fasts” section below.
- 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 and life’s pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Step 3: Prepare your heart, mind, and body for fasting.

Fasting is not a spur-of-the-moment thing. It is planned. We must prepare. The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Un-confessed sin can hinder your prayers. There are several things you can do to prepare your heart.

- **Fasting requires reasonable precautions.** Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.
- **Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body.** Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high fat and sugary foods. Eating raw fruit and vegetables prior to your fast is helpful. Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.
- **Prepare your heart and mind:** Remember that God is your Father and He loves you and is for you.
- **Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God’s forgiveness** (1 John 1:9). Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3, 4). Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- **Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ** (Romans 12:1, 2). Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others. (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13)
- **Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart.** (Hebrews 11:6) Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit. (Galatians 5:16, 17)
- Finally, and of great importance, **Jesus instructs us in Matthew to not let others know about your fasting. Let it be done as much as possible to the Father in secret and He will reward you openly.** Yet there are times in corporate fasting that we are sharing the burden together.

How to Fast Effectively:

Matt 6:16-18: “When [not if] you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Fasting is the putting away of things you have pleasure in for the sake of God.

Fasting shows God how much you love and appreciate Him by pushing away the things that are pleasant for you to seek God’s face.

We are doing a 21 day corporate fast where you ask God what type of fasting He wants you to do.

Most will be doing a non-solid food fast where we deny ourselves the greatest pleasure of life, which is to eat food.

This fasting will allow for the discipline of the physical appetites of the flesh to be brought under the control of the spiritual desires.

When you fast – you are increasing your control over your life – your spirit man.

You are a spirit but you live in a body and most of the time our bodies control us. Fasting puts the control of the body back in your hands.

Your body becomes a servant to the Lord and spiritual issues and a master of your spirit.

During the fast time, your regular times for meals should be spent in prayer and Bible study.

Fasting will save you time:

- The time spent thinking about meals.
- The time spent shopping for meals.
- The time spent preparing the meals.
- The time spent eating the meals.
- The time spent in cleaning up after the meal.
- As much as 3-5 hours a day is spent on our food consumption.

Just think about the value of your spending 3-5 hours a day feeding your spirit with God’s Word and prayer and how strong and refreshed you will be.

If you eat breakfast regularly:

- If you are a breakfast person, now you have extra time to spend with the Lord in the morning during the fast.
- This is what God has been trying to get you to do for a long time.
- Intimacy will begin to develop.

Lunch time:

- Slip away on your lunch break and read the Word.
- You could read as much as five books of the Bible in a week, depending on your lunch schedule.

Evenings:

- If you are fasting and the family is not; you may have the responsibility to prepare their meals.
- Prepare their meals and spend time sitting with them and bless them.
- Then use your own time to spend with the Lord.

Starting the Fast:

1. Commit yourself to the Lord for the 21 day period of fasting:
2. Drink plenty of water at room temperature:
 - After a few days of no eating, cold water will be a shock to your system/ can cause cramping.
 - Avoid ice in your drinks.
3. Drink a minimum of 8 glasses of water [and some juice] per day.
 - Water should be the main source of hydration.
 - Recommended juices are Apple and Cranberry juices due to being low in acidic nature.
 - Other juices are not advised due to the high acidic & sugar content.
 - Hot tea [Herbals] are good. Coffee is not good; your body needs to detoxify from caffeine.
4. Your stomach gastric juices are going to cause acidic reactions in your stomach.
 - The way to dilute acid is to drink water; so drink plenty of water.
 - When your stomach starts to rumble, groan and ache – **DRINK MORE WATER.**

Day 1 of Fast:

- Your body and stomach will begin to rest from food intake.
- You will experience hunger but you won't die.
- Eating food is habitual and you are breaking a habit.

Day 3:

- You will begin to experience gastric irritation.
- Your body – tongue and rectum are the same organ tied together – it's one big pipe!
- Everything in your system is in your tongue.
- That's why the doctor checks out your system by looking at your tongue.
- When food is in the stomach, the brain tells the stomach to produce gastric juices to digest and assimilate the food.
- These acids are enzymes created by God to breakdown the food and cause it to be digested.
- The stomachs gastric juices/acids when breaking down food produce gases.

- When you intake food at regular times of the day, your brain has developed a system of communicating with your stomach to produce the gastric juices to go to work on the food in the stomach.
- That's why you feel hunger – gases are being produced and go to work before you eat and they come to work on the food. They are looking for the food.
- The pain comes from the acids working on the stomach lining with its nerve endings.
- **THIS IS HEALTHY BECAUSE THE STOMACH LINING HAS BEEN COATED WITH FOOD AND IT BUILDS UP.**
- The gastric juices/acid begins to clean the stomach lining.
- Colon cancer comes from rotting food that has never been cleansed from your system.
- The pain you feel is the gastric acids working on your stomach beginning to burn off all the layers coating your stomach lining.
- You feel pain because the juices are working on the nerve endings: this is not demons coming to attack you and saying you better eat something quick!
- **DRINK MORE WATER - THE PAIN WILL STOP!**
- The acids will come out of your system through your urine.
- A benefit of the acids working on your stomach is its cleaning agency.

Day 4-5 You will think you are dying!

- You will think demons are in your system.
- The gastric juices are working on their highest level.
- The brain is sending messages – “There has to be food there, keep looking!”
- You are going through food withdrawals and addiction.
- Your body begins to scream for food – it's a habit. It screams to be satisfied.
- When you make it through the 4-5 days the brain starts telling the stomach “Don't bother anymore – nothings coming!”
- **THIS IS THE PLACE YOU WANT TO GET TO.**
- Really a three day fast doesn't have much value because you never really get to this place where your body starts to obey your spirit.
- A three-day fast is when you experience the most pain.
- A 7-day or longer fast is the better fast to clean out your system.

Day 6

- Could possibly be your worst day?
- Six is the day of man/flesh. You're not quite free from the food addiction yet!
- You can still see food and smell it and identify with it.
- Your body will talk to you and the wrong people will show up offering to take you to lunch or bringing you goodies to eat – it never fails.
- When you cross over to day 7, you are in deliverance from food.

Day 7

- You cross over into deliverance from food and its temptation.
- You will smell and see food but the interest is no longer there.

Day 8

- The day of new beginnings and renewal.
- Eighth day is when Christ rose from the grave. – Day of Resurrection.
- Your system is just beginning to be purified.
- The first 7 days were days of flushing out.
- From day 8 onward, you are in the process of healing.
- Your body throws off the junk and you can see and feel it.
- Your eyes turn white; red eyes are a sign of dirty blood.
- Scientifically, it is toxic blood.
- Your skin changes on the 8th day. Smooth complexion.
- Toxins are coming out – your skin is an organ excreting poisons – you may even smell interesting to others. Take baths or showers more often!
- Your body inside and out begins to renew itself.
- Organs – heart rests, lungs revitalize because they are not carrying weight of helping the digestive system work.
- **DRINK LOTS OF WATER – THIS HELPS IN THE PURIFICATION PROCESS FROM DAY 8-13.**

Soul Cleansing:

- Once your body becomes purified, it affects your soul – The Mind – Will – Emotions.
- On days 12-13 – Emotions can be healed, you are at peace.
- When your body is pure; your mind becomes sober – heightened in its sensitivity.
- Your memory will become sharper - You will read & comprehend things at a higher level.
- At 14 days, you enter the second level of sevens.
- You become clear in your system and there is nothing to interfere with the work of the Spirit - You will enjoy prayer more.
- You will experience more energy! Surprising, but it happens.
- Your body can now give you all the energy it was previously spending on digesting food.
- The energy comes from your body living on the fat it has stored up.
- It converts the fat back into carbohydrates – making energy for the body.

14-20 Days

- Your body will increase in both energy and spiritual sensitivity.
- You reach a zone where you detest food and want nothing to do with it.
- I have actually realized that this is where a person would have to convince themselves to begin eating again.
- You just lose interest in eating.

Benefits:

- From 20-21 days – your ability to hear God increases about 75%.
- Your capacity for communion and worship increases 60%.
- Because when you are at that level of purification – your spirit has no resistance from your body.
- The ease of worshiping in His presence is heightened.

Suggested Prayer Points

2021 WOWC Prayer and Fasting: Jan 2-22, 2021

1. Prayer for the Nation –

- Pray for the U.S., which is in a moral & national crisis.
- **Truth** and **Justice** be established throughout all branches of government – and a return to righteousness. Father, give us men and women who have a fear/reverence for the Lord and His ways.
- Understanding among race, gender, political issues – bring peace and patience to our hearts.
- A just settlement in the Presidential election – all corruption exposed and judged – peace in the streets.
- Covid be eliminated from effecting people – safe vaccines created and administered.
- Recovery of those having lost loved ones, jobs/incomes.
- Pray the Body of Christ can meet without restrictions.
- Pray against anti-Christ movement effecting the educational systems of the U.S.
- Pray all forms of media give true unbiased news.
- Pray the spirit of fear and deception is broken off Americans and Truth is established.
- The Church/Ecclesia wake up to fulfill the Great Commission of reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Pray the spirit of mammon/materialism is broken off the government, education, media and the church.

2. Prayer for those who don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord yet –

- This will involve your family members, neighbors, work associates and those the Lord gives you as you do life.
 - Acts 26:18 “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith...”
 - Col. 1: 12-13 “Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of saints in light; who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

3. Pray for the Nation to be humbled before the Lord – He is our only hope for salvation and restoration.

- We have never been where we are today as a nation. While division abounds in almost every segment of America, it is time to cry out to God in prayer for America. No longer can the people of God be silent before the Lord. We need to call out to God passionately and urgently until the glory of God is experienced in every corner of our nation:
 1. **Pray for the leaders of America to come together to provide strategic leadership that will lead to righteous and peaceful living in America.**
“First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” 1 Timothy 2:1-2
 2. **Pray for unity in the church of America.**
“Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.” 1 Corinthians 1:10

3. Pray for every town, city, and county in America to have at least one prayer observance on the national day of prayer on May 6, 2021, resulting in a mighty move of God.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

3. Pray for WOWC to receive the direction of the Holy Spirit to know and to do God’s will for 2021.

Six Prayers for Leadership Guidance:

1. Galatians 6:9

Eternal Father, I pray that You will give every leader strength, so they do not grow weary in their leadership role. Father, the tasks may seem overwhelming and exhausting but I pray that every leader will recognize that they are assigned to do Your will. Therefore, I know that at the right time, they will reap the harvest/rewards if they do not give up. Lord, I pray for divine strength for every leader and that they will not rely on self but on You. Amen.

2. Isaiah 41:10

Heavenly Father, Your Word declares that we will not be afraid nor dismayed because You are our God. Right now, Lord, we pray for leadership guidance for every leader in Jesus Name. I pray that they will exercise faith, knowing that You will strengthen them and help them; You Lord, will uphold them with Your righteous hand. Thank You in advance for Your divine strength for our leaders and thank You for Your guidance in Jesus Name, Amen.

3. Philippians 2:3

Dear Father, I pray that as leaders, lead your people, I pray that they will not do it selflessly, for personal ambition or vain conceit. I pray that You help leaders to realize that leading is really a task that requires them to serve. So, Father, raise up servant leaders in Jesus Name. Help them to work in humility and we pray that You will remove any selfish desires, Amen.

4. Philippians 2:4

Heavenly Father, thank You for our leaders and right now we pray for leadership guidance. Let every leader not seek to pursue their own interests but to look at the interests of others. I pray that You help our leaders to identify the needs of Your people through divine wisdom and understanding. Lord, help them to not be an ineffective leader, but to act to the betterment of Your Kingdom, Amen.

5. Philippians 4:13

Righteous God, I thank You for who You are. Lord, I thank You because Your Word reminds us that we can do all things through You who strengthens us. Therefore Lord, we trust not in ourselves, but instead we pray that every leader will lean on You because You understand and see things better than they do. We pray for leadership guidance because being a leader may be hard, but through You it can be done, Amen.

6. Proverbs 27:23

Oh Lord, Your Word declares that You are our Good Shepherd. Just as a shepherd provides guidance for their sheep, we pray that You Lord we provide guidance for every leader. I pray that You help them to be more like You and that they will know the condition of their flock. I pray that every leader will give careful attention those they lead and the relationship between those they lead will flourish; this is the prayer of our heart, Amen.