



## What is Prayer & Fasting?

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Prayer and Fasting is a time of consecration unto God. It is also a self-discipline that allows us to crucify our flesh, humble ourselves before God, and receive spiritual insight beyond our natural senses in order that we may hear and obey God's voice. We can enter into fasting and prayer about most things in our lives - wisdom and direction, healing, breakthrough, deliverance and so much more.

### **What is Fasting?** (Christianity.com)

Fasting is Biblical. Throughout the Old and New Testament eras and during the last 2,000 years, fasting has been a primary means of humbling ourselves before God. Fasting is a widespread practice that can be found in Scripture. It is voluntary and total abstinence of food for a specific amount of time or days, and its aim is to devote oneself through prayer and seeking God. Jesus' fasting can be read in one major occasion in Matthew 4:1-11. The ancient practice of fasting is a natural way to express your faith with your whole being - body and spirit together - whenever you experience a sacred moment that compels you to respond. Your spirit's hunger for God can find fulfillment when you fast with your body.

Fasting is a way for us to reconnect and be with the Lord. So, below are a few reasons why prayer comes highly recommended with fasting — as it should be:

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## 1. Fasting and Prayer are Mentioned Together in Scripture

Both the Old and New Testaments feature multiple instances of believers practicing fasting and prayer together. Here are a handful of the examples I found:

The Israelites fasted and lifted up prayers of praise and confession after sinning against God ([Nehemiah 9](#)).

Esther fasts with Israel and prays for the strength to ask her husband to spare Israel from Haman's plot of genocide ([Esther 4:16](#)).

David mentions praying and fasting for his enemies ([Psalm 35:12-14](#)).

Daniel fasts and prays to lament Israel's disobedience while exiled in Babylon and asks God to have mercy on His chosen people ([Daniel 9](#)).

The prophet Anna fasted and prayed regularly for Israel, then prophesied to Mary and Joseph about Jesus ([Luke 2:36-38](#)).

Paul and Barnabas pray and fast to ask for guidance in appointing elders over the first-century church ([Acts 14:23](#)).

According to Biblestudytools.com, "The Hebrew word for fasting is *Kana*, and it means to subdue or to bring low. It is the scriptural word for either bringing down an enemy in combat or subduing your own soul in an act of humility. The combination of fasting and prayer can bring powerful results.

Fasting is not just abstaining from food. It can be taking a break from a leadership position or giving up simple pleasures. Today, many people fast from social media as a means to find focus and prioritize their time in prayer. The immediate benefit of fasting is that it serves as an instant reminder of the reason you are fasting. Every time you feel sharp hunger or a pull to check your social media, it serves as a call to pray and focus on the vision or goal. Fasting through abstaining from food twice a week was a regular practice in the first century. There were minor fasts (from sunrise to sundown) and examples in both the Old and New Testaments of fasting for many meals and even days. Jesus Himself fasted in the wilderness for 40 days (Luke 4:2).

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Jesus tells us how to pray and fast in Matthew 6 - instructing us to do so quietly, humbly and without any pride.” *(End of quote reference from Biblestudytools.com)*

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### **Additional Scripture References on Prayer & Fasting:**

- For spiritual power - Mark 9:14-29
- In times of grief - 1 Samuel 31:13
- To set aside yourself for holiness - 1 Corinthians 7:5
- When facing danger - Ezra 8:21, 23
- To overcome and deny the flesh - 1 Corinthians 9:27
- As an act of repentance - Jonah 3:5-10
- When we need courage and wisdom - Esther 4:3,16;9:31
- In times of war - Judges 20:26
- In times of distress - 2 Chronicles 20:3

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