

Spiritual Discipline of Fasting

Eternal Life Fellowship Ministries & Global Network

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The Apostolic Thrust

Vision

Building people and Transforming lives!
(LifeShape Skills)

Mission

Deliverance by Evangelism,
Discipleship by Education,
Development by Empowerment &
Deployment by Enterprising.
(Millennium Ministry)

Ethos

Whole life = Whole person
(Mind-Body-Soul)

Assignment

Worshipping God and Serving His people!
(CPR) Consistent-Practical-Realistic

Five Fold Ministry Gifts (Ephesians Chapter 4)

Saints-Work-Edification
Unity-Knowledge-Fullness

Course Objectives

- **LEARN:** The value of modern day Christian Fasting and its Disciplines.
- **DISCOVER:** The importance of fasting & prayer as warfare weapons.
- **EXPLORE:** The impact of fasting on your life. (Mind-Body-Soul)
- **PLAN:** To use hear from God about when and how long to fast.
- **EXECUTE:** Fasting as a part of discipleship living when led by God.

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, with a large rock formation in the center. In the background, there are mountains under a dramatic, cloudy sky. A dark, diagonal shape cuts across the image from the top-left corner towards the bottom-right, creating a sense of depth and contrast. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Spiritual Discipline of Fasting

Unger's Bible Dictionary explains that the word *Fast* in the Bible is from the Hebrew word *sum*, meaning "to cover" the mouth, or from the Greek word *nesteuo*, meaning "to abstain." For spiritual purposes, it means to go without eating and drinking (Esther 4:16).

The Day of Atonement—also called "the Fast" (Acts 27:9) - is the only Fast day commanded by God (Leviticus 23:27), though other national Fast days are mentioned in the Bible. Also, personal Fasts are clearly expected of Christ's disciples (Matthew 9:14-15).

*****WARNING!*****

I encourage those with health problems to consult a qualified medical practitioner before starting and/or ending a Fast.

Why do we Fast?

The Lord did not set up any specific duration that we are to Fast, but from His teachings, we see that he did expect us to Fast.

Luke 5:34-35: “And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride chamber Fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they Fast in those days.”

Why do we Fast?

And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wish not that the skin of his face shown while he talked with him. Exodus 34:28-29

We can see that because Moses was in the literal presence of the Lord, it was that presence that sustained him so he neither needed food nor water. This, of course, is an exceptional Fast.

Why do we Fast?

Jesus Fasted Forty Days and Forty Nights

Jesus, by Fasting, set an example that we might follow in His steps. Matthew 4:1-4: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had Fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

Why do we Fast?

- ❖ Ask for favor
- ❖ Repentance
- ❖ Mourning
- ❖ Intensifies prayer
- ❖ Unites God's people
- ❖ Breaks down flesh
- ❖ Spiritual Cleansing & Spiritual Eyes Opened
- ❖ Breaking Strongholds & Building Faith
- ❖ Ministering Unto the Lord
- ❖ Restoration of the Church
- ❖ Being Lead By the Holy Spirit

Why do we Fast?

The Bible gives examples of God's people occasionally combining Fasting with their prayers so as to stir up their zeal and renew their dedication and commitment to Him. King David wrote that he "humbled himself with Fasting" (Psalm 35:13).

Fasting is a means of getting our minds back on the reality that we are not self-sufficient. Fasting helps us realize just how fragile we are and how much we depend on things beyond ourselves.

Why Do We Fast?

The Bible records that great men of faith such as Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul and Jesus Himself Fasted so that they might draw closer to God (Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Daniel 9:3; Daniel 10:2-3; 2 Corinthians 11:27; Matthew 4:2). Jesus knew that His true disciples, once He was no longer there in the flesh with them, at times would need to Fast to regain and renew their zeal to serve Him (Mark 2:18-20). James tells us, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Constant prayer and occasional Fasting help us to do this. We are not to Fast to have people feel sorry for us or to think we're pious (Matthew 6:16-18). Isaiah 58 gives both bad and good examples of Fasting, contrasting wrong attitudes and actions (Isaiah 58:3-5) with the right approach of outgoing love (Isaiah 58:6-10). Daniel and Nehemiah set the example of having a repentant frame of mind (Daniel 9:3-4; Nehemiah 9:1-2).

Why Do We Fast?

Fasting also helps us learn the lessons of the Day of Atonement: forgiveness, reconciliation to God and the need to resist Satan and pray for the time of his removal (Revelation 20:1-3), which was portrayed in type by the Azazel goat on Atonement. (Leviticus 16:20-22)

Why Do We Fast?

- ❖ Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras. For example, Moses Fasted at least two recorded forty-day periods. Jesus Fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to Fast, "when you Fast," not if you Fast.
- ❖ Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the "first love" for your Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.
- ❖ Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through Fasting."
- ❖ Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.

Why Do We Fast?

- ❖ The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you!
- ❖ Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience.
- ❖ Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life-and make you a channel of revival to others.
- ❖ Fasting and prayer are the only disciplines that fulfill the requirements of II Chronicles 7:14 *"If my people, who are called by my name, will 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."*

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Fasting

Scripture on Fasting

Matthew 6: 16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18: 9-14.

Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word:

1 Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, Nehemiah 1:4, Daniel 9:3,20, Joel 2:12, Luke 2:37, Acts 10:30, Acts 13:2, & 1 Corinthians 7:5.

Fasting

Corporate Fasting:

1st Samuel 7:5-6, II Chronicles 20:34,
Ezra 8:21-23, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16,
Jonah 3:5-10, & Acts 27:33-37

Fasting

Corporate Fasting:

1 Samuel 7:5-6, II Chronicles 20:34, Ezra 8:21-23,
Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16, Jonah 3:5-10, &
Acts 27:33-37

Repentance

Fasting

Intercession

Shows God and us that we're serious

To focus God's Power

For unity with God!

**For includes peace &
justice issues**

A Fast from Heaven

To sharpen the spiritual mind

Fast from...

- ❖ Television
- ❖ A favorite game
- ❖ Reading fiction
- ❖ A Hobby
- ❖ Sexual activity
- ❖ Silly jokes
- ❖ Pointless chatter
- ❖ Sarcasm
- ❖ Criticism
- ❖ Video games
- ❖ Naps
- ❖ The comics page
- ❖ Other?

Fasting

What Should You Expect?

Results depend on the type of Fast.
Most of all, results depend on God!

When you Fast, you will find yourself being humbled.
You will discover more time to pray and seek God's face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent from sin, you will experience special blessings from God.

Fasting

Types of Fast

A Full Fast: These Fasts are complete - no food and no drink. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full Fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus: "For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything." Esther also called for this type of Fast in Esther 4:15-16: "Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and Fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will Fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'" It is recommended that this type of Fast be done with extreme caution and not for extended periods of time.

Fasting

Types of Fast

A Partial Fast: This type of Fast generally refers to omitting a specific meal from your diet or refraining from certain types of foods.

Daniel 10:2-3 says, "At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over."

In Daniel 1:12, they restricted their diet to vegetables and water: "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink."

Fasting

Types of Fast

A Regular Fast: Traditionally, a regular Fast means refraining from eating all food. Most people still drink water or juice during a regular Fast. When Jesus Fasted in the desert, the Bible says, "After Fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty.

Fasting

Types of Fast

A Sexual Fast: 1 Corinthians 7:3-6 says, "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband.

In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer.

Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of a lack of self-control."

Fasting

Types of Fast

To sum up the different types of Fasts:

- ❖ **Normal Fast** – No food, water only.
- ❖ **Absolute Fast** – Absolutely no food or water (Caution: Should not be undertaken over 3 days and only then if you have a clear directive from the Lord and are in good health).
- ❖ **Partial Fast (Daniel Fast)** – Abstinence from certain kinds of foods (i.e.: No meat or sweets, soup only, fruit and vegetables only, etc. In **Daniel 10:3**, Daniel ate no pleasant bread).
- ❖ **Juice Fast** – Fruit and vegetable juices only.

Fasting

Types of Fast

- ❖ **Corporate Fast** – A church or group of people who feel God has called them to Fast together for a certain period of time.
- ❖ **Chain Fast** – A church or group of people who commit to Fasting for a long period of time and each individual commits to Fast for a day or longer and signs up for so many days so that the entire period is covered for the designated Fasting period. (Our church did this for an entire year at one time.)
- ❖ **Jewish Fasting Period** – The Jewish Fast began at 6:00 P.M. in the evening and ended the next day at 6:00 P.M. (Some people follow this time period to begin and end Fasts.)

Fasting Fasting Plus Prayer is ESSENTIAL!

- ❖ **Fasting should always be accompanied with prayer.** God called us to Fast and pray, not Fast and preach, nor Fast and work. God did not call us to Fast and do hard physical work. Although some work and certain responsibilities cannot be avoided while Fasting, accounts in the Bible reveal that they arranged times to Fast and pray when they did not have to work so they could make seeking God the focal point during the Fast, especially when the Fasts exceeded 3 days. Giving up our free weekends and vacations to Fast, is one way we can sacrifice to the Lord.
- ❖ **Fasting and Abstinence** – Although the word “Fast” is used as abstaining from food in the Bible and does not refer to giving up other things, during a Fast one can practice abstinence from other pleasures as well, such as entertainment, TV, hobbies and sex, as spoken about in **1 Corinthians 7:1-5**.

Fasting

Kinds of Fast

1. **THE FAST GOD CHOOSES:** *The biblical base, varieties, benefits and background of the kind of Fasting that pleases God.*
2. **THE DISCIPLE'S Fast:** *Fasting for freedom from addiction (Matthew 17:20,21). If we Fast, we can break the besetting sins that limit a life of freedom in Christ.*
3. **THE EZRA Fast:** *Fasting to solve problems (Ezra 8:21-23). If we Fast for a specific purpose, we may solve a debilitating problem.*
4. **THE SAMUEL Fast** *Fasting to win people to Christ (1 Samuel 7:1-8). If we Fast and pray for revival, God will pour Himself on His people.*

Fasting

Kinds of Fast

5. **THE ELIJAH Fast:** *Fasting to break crippling fears and other mental problems. (1 Kings 19:2-38) Through Fasting, God will show us how to overcome negative emotional and personal habits.*
6. **THE WIDOW'S Fast:** *Fasting to provide for the needy. (1 Kings 17:12) When we sacrifice our own physical needs, God enables us to focus on and provide for the needs of others.*
7. **THE SAINT PAUL Fast:** *Fasting for insight and decision making. (Acts 9:9-19) If we Fast to subject our will to God's, He will reveal His will to us.*

Fasting

Kinds of Fast

8. **THE DANIEL Fast:** *Fasting for health and physical healing. (Daniel 1:12- 20) When we Fast for physical well-being, God will touch our bodies and enrich our souls.*
9. **THE JOHN THE BAPTIST Fast:** *Fasting for an influential testimony (Matthew 3:4; Luke 1:15). If we Fast for the influence of our testimonies, God will use us.*
10. **THE ESTHER Fast** *Fasting for protection from the evil one. (Esther 4:16) If we Fast for protection and deliverance from Satan, God will deliver us from evil.*
11. **THE HEAVENLY Fast** *Fasting as a means of ministering unto the Lord and receiving the Holy Spirit.*

Fasting

Should we make fasting a practice in our lives?

What does the Bible say about fasting today?



Fasting

IS FASTING FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

YES! Jesus taught Fasting!

- ❖ Jesus taught His disciples how to fast. (Matthew 6:16-18 & Matthew 4:2)
- ❖ Jesus taught that when He would go away, His disciples would fast. (Matthew 9:14-15)
- ❖ Jesus taught that certain occasions called for prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17:18-21)

Fasting

IS FASTING FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

YES! Because of examples of the church!

- ❖ The early church was active in fasting as they sent out missionaries.
(Acts 13:1-3)
- ❖ The church saw a need to fast when appointing elders in the church.
(Acts 14:21-23)
- ❖ We want to pattern everything we do after the early church...what about fasting?

Fasting

IS FASTING FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

YES! Because of Paul's Example!

- ❖ Paul listed fasting among many things that He did as a minister.
(II Corinthians 11:23-28)
- ❖ Paul encouraged Christians to imitate him in his faith (I Corinthians 11:1)
- ❖ If fasting was practiced by the man who by inspiration wrote the majority of the NT, we should consider fasting?

Fasting

IS FASTING FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

YES! Because of all of the Biblical examples!

- ❖ **Hannah fasted and prayed that she might have a son...God granted it...What do you think she would say about a fast?**
- ❖ **Esther and Mordecai fasted and prayed for victories ...they were victorious at God's hand... was fasting important to them? (I Corinthians. 10:11)**
- ❖ **Ezra was given safety in fasting (Ezra 8:23)**

Fasting

WHY SOME CHRISTIANS DO NOT FAST...

- ❖ Some new versions of the Bible have excluded the word fasting in many important passages.
- ❖ This is based on which Greek texts they relied upon in their translation. (*νηστεια*³⁵²¹)
- ❖ "My Bible doesn't say anything about fasting"

**Matthew. 17:21; Mark 9:29; Luke 2:37; Acts 10:30; 14:23; 27:9;
I Corinthians 7:5; II Corinthians 6:5; 11:27 are examples...**

Fasting

WHY SOME CHRISTIANS DO NOT FAST... “Food is abundant and fasting is irrelevant...”

When people fail to know the reasons for having food they would tend to believe that fasting is not important.

- ❖ **Enjoyment (Eccl. 2:24-26; 5:18)**
- ❖ **Sustenance (Gen. 1:30; 9:3)**
- ❖ **Sharing (Gen. 18:1-8; Acts 2:43-47)**
- ❖ **Praise (Matt. 6:11; I Tim. 4:3-5; Acts 27:35-36; Deut. 8:1)**

Fasting

WHY SOME CHRISTIANS DO NOT FAST... “I am too busy to spend time fasting...”

- ❖ **Anybody that is too busy to spend time with God in prayer while seeking His favor through fasting is failing to seek a right relationship to God.**
- ❖ **When we realize how important our spiritual life truly is, we will put our relationship with God first and spend time drawing closer to the Father.**

Fasting

APPLICATION

As you now see what the Bible says, consider

- ❖ Fasting is for those who need to draw closer to God as they deal with the issues of life.*
- ❖ Fasting is intended to have spiritual benefits, in afflicting the soul and entreating God's favor.*
- ❖ Fasting should be taken seriously and practiced without hypocrisy before other.*

Fasting

APPLICATION

Some guidelines for fasting are:

Study fasting for yourself and seek its truth...

Make sure you are medically cleared to fast...

Begin fasting slowly and gradually increase as you have needs in life...

Be prepared for physical hunger etc.

Enter a fast with a positive faith that God rewards openly those who fast secret.

Seek the Lord not fasting...

Fasting

SEEK THE LORD!

- ✦ **HEAR** John 12:48
- ✦ **BELIEVE** John 8:24
- ✦ **REPENT** Luke 13:3, 5
- ✦ **CONFESS** Matthew 10:32-33
- ✦ **BAPTISM** Mark 16:16
- ✦ **FAITHFUL** Revelations 2:10

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, with a large rock in the center. In the background, there are mountains under a dramatic, cloudy sky. A dark, diagonal shape cuts across the image from the top-left corner towards the bottom-right, creating a sense of depth and contrast. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Spiritual Discipline of Fasting



ETERNAL LIFE FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES & GLOBAL NETWORK

2022 VISION

“REFOCUS – RENEW – RESTORE – RECLAIM – RELEASE – REJOICE”

2022 ANNUAL SCRIPTURE

ROMANS 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].”

2022 ETHOS

“MILLENNIUM MINISTRY & THE APOSTOLIC THRUST”

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