

WHEN YOU FAST

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

I. FASTING IS AN EXPECTED SPIRITUAL PRACTICE.

A. Just as Jesus assumed that His followers would give to the poor and pray, He also assumed that they would fast. Matthew 6:2; 6:5; Matthew 6:16-18

B. Jesus assumed that after He left, His disciples would fast. Matthew 9:14-15

C. First Century Christians fasted two days a week.

II. FASTING IS A SIMPLE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE.

A. Fasting as used in the Bible means 'not to eat' or 'self-denial.'

B. A normal fast involves fasting from all food, but not from water. Matthew 4:2

C. A partial fast is the restriction of one's diet as opposed to complete abstention. Daniel 10:3

D. Typically, biblical fasting went for one complete 24-hour period, usually from sundown to sundown.

E. In the Bible, there are individual and corporate fasts. Acts 13:1-4; Jonah 3; Esther 4; 2 Chronicles 20

III. FASTING IS A POWERFUL SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Why Fast?

1. Fasting held back God judgment. (Deut. 9:18-26).
2. Fasting with desperate prayer gave Hannah a stunning answer to prayer (1 Samuel 1:7ff).
3. Fasting brought about unexpected victories. (Judges 20:26,35; 2 Chron. 20:3,4,12,15).
4. David regularly humbled himself through fasting. (Psalm 35:13; 69:10).
5. Fasting provided God's protection. (Ezra 8:21-23).
6. Fasting yielded a plan and provision. (Nehemiah 1:4).
7. Fasting rescued a nation. (Esther 4:3-16).
8. Fasting has the power to please God and to do great things! (Is. 58:6-9).
9. Fasting purifies soul and body. (Daniel 1).
10. Fasting makes prayer more effective. (Daniel 9:3- 10:3-14).
11. Fasting brought a nation back to God (Joel 2:12).
12. Fasting prepares us for the return of Jesus, the Bridegroom (Joel 2:15-18; Luke 2:57; 5:33-35).
13. Fasting is an expression of repentance. (Jonah 3:5-9).
14. Fasting is a spiritual service. (Luke 2:23,37).
15. Fasting increases spiritual power and prepares for greater impact. (Luke 4:1-14).
16. Fasting is a secret service to God that leads to open rewards. (Matthew 6:4,6,18).
17. Fasting obeys the implied command of Jesus. (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15)
18. Fasting is a powerful aid in spiritual warfare. (Matthew 17:21).
19. Fasting aids decision-making. (Acts 13:1-4; Acts 14:23).

“Why don't I fast? Why don't I fast more often?”