

A Call to Biblical Fasting

Disciplined Abstinenes

Daniel 10:2-3

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. 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.

The purpose of the fast is to humble oneself before God. It is limited in time and duration. It is meant to draw us near to God, so he will draw near to us. It is to purge oneself of leaven, or ferment that pollutes, poisons, or taints the mind and body. Our challenge is to engage in an extended fast that is **four to six weeks** of seven days, which is **28 or 42 days**, whichever you choose. It is not a marathon or a spiritual competition. There are no prizes or spiritual trophies given out at the end except for the satisfying notion that “I sought the Lord!” It is an offering to God. It is done willingly and joyfully. I recommend you start fasting with one week every quarter during the year.

To avoid the marathon mentality we deliberately do not fast without food for 40 days, lest pride enter our hearts and ruin the God-seeking. It is not about extreme asceticism. It’s about seeking God. We will therefore vary the fast from week to week. Each week we will fast from something different not just food. It needs to be emphasized that these fast weeks do not need to be taken consecutively. It is not a marathon. You can try fasting a week every quarter, that is every 13 weeks. That will give you four weeklong fasts in one year.

Each week of your fast will be different. They will include abstinence from such things as entertainment (TV, radio, magazines, novels, videos, etc), caffeine or soft drinks, candy and sweets, no meat or all vegetarian week. Meals will be sparse such as a week of bread and water or juices, soup and salads, fruit and vegetables, or a no fat Atkins week, etc. The purpose is to discipline the soul as a reminder to seek God and not pleasure.

Study Fasting in the Scriptures

Most of us have lived our lives fairly inoculated from fasting. Both our religious culture and our society are not into fasting. We live in a consumer culture. Everything is to be consumed upon our pleasures. Our cultural philosophy is that every desire should be met. We are Epicureans with an “eat, drink, and be merry” attitude about life. Yet the Bible does not teach us to live self-indulgent lives. Self-discipline is a virtue. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.

Part of our fast should be a diligent study of fasting and pray in the Scriptures. The Word is filled with teachings, examples and reasons for fasting. Let us be like Mary who chose the best thing, which was to sit at the Master’s feet and learn from him.

When Did People Fast?

Three times a year men were to do a pilgrimage and appear before the Lord.

We are suggesting that three times a year everyone ought to appear before the Lord in fervent prayer with a broken and contrite heart. Fasting helps us remember the broken, contrite heart.

Exodus 23:14 [Three times](#) you shall keep a feast unto me in the year.

Exodus 23:17 [Three times](#) in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

Who Fasted and Why

- Esther fasted when Mordecai heard the Jews would be exterminated ... (Esther 4:16)
- David fasted and prayed all night for his dying child (2 Samuel 12:16)
- Israel (Gibeah in Benjamin committed a horrible act, Israel twice defeated in battle) Judges 20
- Ezra fasted when raising funds for the rebuilding of the Temple... (Ezra 8)
- Nehemiah wept fasted to know the mind of God for rebuilding the wall... (Nehemiah)
- Jehoshaphat declared a fast when the enemy came in like a flood... (2 Chronicles 20:3)
- Jeremiah when the people did wickedly (Jeremiah)
- Joel called for the people to fast to avoid God’s judgment on the nation (Joel 1:14)
- Jonah & the people of Ninevah fasted in repentance and brokenness (Jonah 3:5)
- Daniel fasted to know the vision God sent... (Daniel 9:3 & 10:2)
- Jesus fasted 40 days before beginning his ministry (Matthew 4)
- The church fasted and ministered to the Lord before Saul and Barnabas were sent out. (Acts 13)
- Jesus said his disciples would fast... (Mark 2:20)

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
– Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Spiritual Disciplines of a 40-Day Fast

These are only suggestions for disciplines. Choose what you want, leave the rest.

Disciplines	42 Days of Disciplined Prayer
Rise every day an hour earlier than normal. Rise at 6 a.m. to pray	7-Days of Praise & Thanksgiving (5-7 times a day)
Read Bible an 45 minutes daily	7-Days of Solitude and Silence (a week sabbatical)
Read through Psalms	7-Days of Sacrifice (a week of service to others)
Study the Prayers of the Bible	7-Days of Walking Alone with God in Prayer
Memorize Scripture Portions	7-Days of Writing Conclusions & Observations
	7-Days of (Anything you choose)
Keep a Daily Prayer Journal	
Pray for your family	Declared Purposes:
Pray through church family	1. To seek to draw near to God.
Pray each of God's Promises	2. To purify the life of impurities, pollutions of world.
Pray ½ hour each day (15 am + 15 pm)	3. To seek understanding God's vision for the church.
Walk and Pray an hour a day.	4. To wait on God for His word to you.
Read through the New Testament.	5. To seek God for miracles of deliverance(s).
	6. To seek God for revival in others.

A Fast From The Normal

A fast is a time to do things differently, to break out of the mold and establish new patterns. Each week of the 42 day fast will be different. They will include an abstinence from such things as entertainment (TV, radio, magazines, novels, etc), caffeine, candy and sweets, covenant with the eyes (Job 31:1) to turn away from lust.

Simple Meals

Meals will be sparse such as a week of soup and crackers, water or juices, soup and salads, fruit and vegetables. Have a no fat week. The purpose of the fast is to discipline the soul as a reminder to seek God and not pleasure.

Fasting Does Not Impress God

We do not fast to be seen of men, nor do we do it to impress God. God cannot be enticed to answer our prayers because we fast or practice any self discipline. The discipline is for us. The fast is for us, so that we can return to the priority of putting God in first place in our live.

Fasting Should Not Be Painful

Extreme fasting can be physically dangerous. For people with diabetes or hypoglycemia it can be harmful or fatal. If fasting from food is dangerous, fast in other ways, such as from caffeine, sweets, media, entertainment, etc.

Planned Abstinenances of a 40 Day Fast

Abstinenances:

A fast is abstinence. An abstinence is a deliberate rejection of something good, to seek something else even better. Fasting or abstinence, in and of itself has no spiritual value. The value comes when we insert God into the place of something we enjoy, rather than the contrary of filling our lives with enjoyments instead of God.

Each Week's Focus

At least one day in seven give yourself to fasting from some pleasure to seek after God. It can be as simple as rejecting the comfortable or customary prayer position for another, such as kneeling, or bowing before the Lord.

Week	Daily Focus	Prayer Disciplines	Diet Restrictions
Week 1	Praise & Worship for Who He is. Behold His beauty.	Early rising, Scripture reading, hourly prayers, singing to God, thankfulness in everything.	<u>Juice Fast</u> at least one day during the week.
Week 2	Thanksgiving for all things and everyone God puts in our lives.	Keep a journal of prayers of your thanksgiving prayers to God for every good thing he has given and done.	<u>Caffeine Fast</u> at least one day during the week. Soda pop fast.
Week 3	Confession of sin and prayer of forgiveness and renewal of the Holy Spirit.	Change from your normal and customary prayer position to one of humility and repentance. Try on your face bowing before His throne.	<u>Full meal Fast</u> at least one day during the week. Cut food intake by half
Week 4	Clothe yourself in God's promises and protection.	Pray God's word back to Him. Pray and claim all of God's promises for yourself, your family, your church, your nation.	<u>Sweets & Sugar Fast</u> at least one day during the week.
Week 5	Cast Your Care. Tell God everything on you heart.	Pray frankly, honestly, let it all hang out. Pour out your heart and mind.	<u>Media Fast</u> , no TV, radio, Internet, , at least one day during the week.
Week 6	Wait on God. Be still before His throne to hear his voice.	Get alone, Be still, in solitude, wait on the Lord with your Bible open and your mouth shut. Listen!	<u>Go away from comfort</u> at least one day during the week. <u>Retreat</u> to God. Withdraw self.

Mark 1:35 *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

Mark 6:31 And he said unto them, Come apart by yourselves into a desert place, and rest a while:

Luke 5:16 *Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."*

Fervent Church Prayers

During this 40 Days or six weeks of prayer

Give yourself to corporate prayer with a friend or group of friends.

If you cannot or dare not attempt a weeklong fast then try a fast one day each week for six weeks. At least one day in seven give yourself to fasting from some pleasure to seek after God.

1. **Worship Warrior**: Pray all through a worship service in our prayer room. Pick up our prayer guide to help you pray during worship.
2. **Altar Prayers**: The church will be open for prayer at the altar from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Try doing it daily for a week with a prayer partner.
3. **24/7 Prayer Chain**: 24 hour prayer vigil - known also as the unbroken chain. Sign up for a half hour period in which you will pray for your church, nation, and world. The 24-Prayer Chain lasts for seven days.
4. **Prayer Shield**: Become a prayer shield for one of your pastors by agreeing to pray for him each day for a week, morning and evening.
5. **Prayer Walking**: Alone or with a friend take a time each day of one week to walk the circumference of your church property praying God's promises, protection, and provisions. Or systematically walk your town or neighborhood.
6. **Prayer Concert**: Join us in our final day of this 40-days of prayer adventure for an hour of powerful prayer, praise and celebration.
7. **Pray For and With People**: Refuse the temptation to tell people you are praying for them or that you will pray for them. Do it, then and there. Don't put off praying for a later time. Pray for them on the street. Pray for them on the telephone. Pray for them in the foyer of the church. Pray for them and with them in their pew. Whenever you hear someone ask for prayer – Pray!

Tips For Fervent Prayer

1. **Unbreakable Appointment**: Set a time for daily prayer. Consider it an unbreakable commitment. Keep your set appointment every day for one week. For one solid week, let your scheduled prayer time be the centerpiece of your day. Arrange everything else to fit around it. *"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen" (Matt. 6:5-6).*
2. **A God Place**: Find a place in your home where you can be alone and undistracted during your prayer time. Keep your Bible, prayer journal, pen, and whatever tools you use in that place so that everything is ready. During your prayer time each day, this is a sacred place. *"Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." (Luke 5:16)*
3. **First Thing**: Give God the first fruits of your day. For one week, give the very first 30 minutes of your day to prayer. *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." (Mark 1:35)*
4. **Focus On The Lord**: As you start your prayer time, before you say anything, let your mind's eye see Him, high and exalted, and yourself in a position of worship before Him. Stay in that inner posture until His glory fills your thoughts as the train of His robe fills the temple. *"I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1).*
5. **Word of God Speak!** Read your Bible with the awareness that you are listening to the words of His mouth. Stop at the first word, phrase, or thought that captures your attention and let the Father speak to you about it and let it shape your prayers. *"O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth" (Ps. 78:1).*
6. **Postures and Positions**: This week, during your prayer time, use different worship postures: kneel, lift your hands, and fall on your face before Him. You may do this outwardly, or inwardly—in the inner sanctuary of your own soul. *"I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land" (Ps. 143:6).*
7. **United Prayer**: Join someone else for agreement in prayer. *"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18: 19-20)*

Scriptural Prayers

to Memorize During A Prolonged Fast

Six weeks - Memorize the Scriptures

Soak in and Meditate on and if possible commit to Memory.

If you're not given to much memory work then make it your goal to read Psalm 121 twice every day aloud and try to commit it to memory. Write the passage out on a 3x5 card and carry it with you everywhere. Or print it out on a business card and carry it with you in your wallet or purse. Don't leave home without it.

Psalms and Psalm Portions

- 1. Psalm 121 - from whence comes my help**
- 2. Psalm 46 - The Lord is our refuge and strength**
- 3. Psalm 37 - Trust in the Lord**
- 4. Psalm 20:1-9 - May the Lord hear and answer you**
- 5. Psalm 91 - The secret place of the Most High**
- 6. Psalm 27 - The Lord is my stronghold**

Psalm 121

"I will lift up my eyes to the hills-

From whence comes my help?

My help comes from the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

He will not allow your foot to be moved;

He who keeps you will not slumber.

Behold, He who keeps Israel

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;

The Lord is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,

Nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;

He shall preserve your soul.

The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in

From this time forth, and even forevermore" (Psalm 121).

More Great Scriptures to Memorize

Psalm 121

*"I will lift up my eyes to the hills-
From whence comes my help?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.
The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore" (Psalm 121).*

Numbers 6:22-27

The LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,
Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying,
On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

*The LORD bless you, and keep you:
The LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you:
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

*And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel;
and I will bless them.*

Psalm 46:4

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. *Selah.*
There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,
the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall help her, and that right early...
Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the heathen,
I will be exalted in the earth.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah.*

Psalm 37

*Do not fret because of evil men
or be envious of those who do wrong;
For like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.
Trust in the LORD and do good;
Dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
Delight yourself in the LORD and
He will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.
Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
Do not (worry) fret when men succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.
Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
Do not fret (worry) -- it leads only to evil.*

Psalm 20:1-9

*May the LORD answer you when you are in distress;
May the name of the God of Jacob protect you.
May he send you help from the sanctuary and
May He grant you support from Zion.
May he remember all your sacrifices and
May he accept your burnt offerings. Selah
May he give you the desire of your heart and
May he make all your plans succeed.
We will shout for joy when you are victorious and
We will lift up our banners in the name of our God.
May the LORD grant all your requests.*

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

O LORD, save the king! Answer us when we call!

Psalm 23

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Psalm 91

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."
Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
Nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.
You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.
If you make the Most High your dwelling—
even the LORD, who is my refuge--
Then no harm will befall you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
They will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
You will tread upon the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
He will call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."*

Psalm 19

*The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.
The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.
They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.
By them is your servant warned; In keeping them there is great reward.
Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.
Keep your servant also from willful sins; May they not rule over me.
Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.
May the words of my mouth and
The meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Psalm 27

*The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid?*

*When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh,
When my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.*

*Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear;
Though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.*

*One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
To gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.*

*For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
He will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set me high upon a rock.
Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me;*

*At his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
Hear my voice when I call, O LORD;
Be merciful to me and answer me.
My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.
Do not hide your face from me,
Do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior.
Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.*

*Teach me your way, O LORD;
Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.
Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
For false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.
I am still confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*