

FASTING INFORMATION

What is fasting?

Fasting is a practice and spiritual discipline that has existed for thousands of years. In the first century, the people Israel fasted as part of a normal weekly rhythm. In a Biblical fast, people abstain from solid foods, for a set period of time, to intentionally concentrate on prayer, reading the Bible, and worship. Over time, as life has become increasingly complicated and distractions abound, fasting has taken on a new meaning where it is the choice to set aside anything that hinders our communion with God or anything we may use for comfort instead of seeking the face of God – in the form of technology, social media or certain foods.

Why fast?

While people all over the world may choose to fast for various reasons, the fast of Christ-followers includes prayer, which cultivates and deepens our relationship with God. We fast because it is the call of Jesus for our lives (“And **when** you fast...” Matthew 6:16, emphasis added), but there are other benefits to fasting. Fasting can restore our relationship with God and bring us back into alignment with Him (Joel 2:12-13). Fasting is a way we can worship God (Luke 2:36-38) and it intensifies the power of prayer (Nehemiah 1:2-8). Fasting creates space for increased clarity of communication with God (Ezra 8:21-23) and it is a vital part of discerning the will of God (Acts 13:1-3). Most importantly, when we choose to set aside food or things we enjoy doing, fasting highlights what matters the most in our lives as Christ-followers – our relationship with the Living God.

How should we fast?

Throughout Scripture, we see many examples of men and women who fasted different lengths of times and from different things. If you have health concerns, abstaining from food should always be done with the approval of a medical professional. Fasting from technology, social media, and the like can provide equally fulfilling opportunities to encounter God through fasting.

Here’s some ideas on how to join us as we fast:

1. Plan to fast (at least) one day per week
 - a. Sunday, February 2 – Saturday, February 8; Sunday, February 9 – Saturday, February 15; and Sunday February 16 – Friday, February 21.
 - b. Start by choosing a 24-hour period that you will be fasting – i.e. you may choose to start in the morning, afternoon, or evening.
2. Decide the “kind” of fast you’ll be doing
 - a. “Full Food” or “Absolute” Fast: Abstaining from food and only drinking water during specific hours (i.e. sunrise to sunset) while dedicating time to prayer and scripture
 - b. “Partial Food Fast”: Deciding to cut out specific things from your diet – i.e. (e.g., sweets, meat, caffeine) or skip one meal daily. This approach helps to cultivate discipline and mindfulness in everyday choices.
 - c. Daniel Fast:” Follow a plant-based diet of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, inspired by Daniel 1:12. This fast encourages simplicity and a focus on spiritual nourishment.
 - d. Soul Fast: Step away from distractions like social media, television, or unnecessary activities to focus on spiritual renewal. This fast is ideal for those seeking mental and emotional clarity.
 - e. “Activity Fast”: Deciding to Pause non-essential activities (e.g., shopping or hobbies) to dedicate time for prayer and connection with God. This fast helps prioritize spiritual growth over daily routines.
3. Plan the times you will pray
 - a. Prayer is an essential component of fasting. It may be helpful to choose to spend the time you would normally be eating or doing an activity in prayer. You can also choose a particular time in your day to find a quiet place and pray. Intentionality is key.

- b. The “Renew” resources have scripture passages, devotions, and prayer prompts to help you structure your time.
4. Pray passionately AND listen.
- a. This season of prayer and fasting for our church family is called, “Renew: 20-Days of Praying for a Fresh Move of God.” We are praying that God would pour His Spirit out on our church family in a fresh way so that we would experience three themes: a fresh love for God, transformed lives, and that we would be a powerful witness for Jesus with our unity and love for one another.
 - b. Spend time praying through the “Renew” resources and the prayer prompts focused on our three prayer themes. There may be specific ways God speaks to you and asks you to pray. These are perfect opportunities to write in a journal and pray as He leads.
5. Be expectant.
- a. Pray with boldness knowing that Our God hears and answers prayer. Expect that God will meet with you and speak to you. Enjoy those sweet moments with Him. Record these special moments and answers in a journal.
 - b. Plan to attend our prayer and worship gathering on Friday, February 21 at 7:00 p.m. to thank the Lord for the way He has moved in our midst and to pray for Him to continue to move and renew our church family and the Church around the world.