

Fasting and praying.

What is a fast?

The basis of a fast is found in **James 4:8**. “Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.” NLT.

A fast is a period of self denial especially in the area of food. We in these modern times have added various other things to it like media i.e. tv, social media etc which is not a bad thing.

Here is what Jesus said in **Matt 6:16-18**. “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. NLT.

In fasting we are to set aside time with the Lord that will be different from what we may do normally.

It deals with the flesh and enlarges the spirit.

It creates a sensitivity towards hearing the Lord, it increases our capacity to hear God and releases the power of the Holy Spirit.

Why do we or should we fast?

1. To seek God's face.

Joel 2:12. ““Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”” NKJV.

2. We are to humble ourselves before God.

Ps 35:13. “But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart.” NKJV.

3. To come before God in repentance and to heal the land.

2 Chron 7:14-15. “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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.” NKJV.

4. To loose bonds, undo heavy burdens, give freedom from oppression so that every yoke is broken.

Isa 58:6. ““Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?” NKJV.

5. To see the welfare and salvation of families.

Is 58:7. “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?” NKJV.

6. To help us focus on prayer.

Dan 9:3. “Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.” NKJV.

7. So that we can experience spiritual breakthroughs.

Dan 10:13. “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withheld me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.” NKJV.

8. That we can receive spiritual revelation.

Dan 10:2-5. “In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” “Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!” NKJV.

9. So that we can hear the Holy Spirit's direction.

Acts 13:2-3. “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” **NKJV.**

10. For the raising up of leadership.

Acts 14:23. “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” NKJV.

11. To bring deliverance.

Mark 9: 28-29. “And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”” NKJV.

12. To train the body.

1 Cor 9:25-27. “And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” NKJV.

13. For the building of the church.

Ps 69: 9-13. “Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach. I also made sackcloth my garment; I

became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, And I am the song of the drunkards. But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.” **NKJV.**

14. To bring us understanding.

Dan 9:22. “And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.” **NKJV.**

15. To train us in living lives of purity.

Dan 1:8. “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” **NKJV.**

What we need to remember as we are fasting!

1. We are to pray and fast.

There is little point in fasting if **prayer** is not part of it.

2. It’s to deal with our flesh.

For some of us fasting food may come easy but there are other areas of the flesh that we need to address.

God speaks of the fast of pointing the finger or the bondage we can put on people with gossip and negativity.

Gal 5:19-21. “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” **NKJV**

If we don’t fast these areas any other fasting would be pointless.

3. It’s by faith. You will think at times “what is the point of this?” I can’t say I have ever seen instant results from fasting! We have to leave the results up to God. He is the rewarded of those who diligently seek Him!!

Always review why are we doing this and read through the notes.

What are the benefits of a fast.

1 to increase the anointing.

Is 59:6. Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? **NKJV.**

2. To prosper you so that you can share with others.

Isa 58:7. “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?” NKJV.

3. To be healed.

Isa 58:8. “Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.” NKJV.

4. To receive answers to prayer.

Isa 58:9. “Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am. ‘If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,’ NKJV.

5. It's to increase the life of God within your own being.

Isa 58:10. If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

6. To refresh you and strengthen you.

Isa 58:11. “The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”

7. For you to enjoy your inheritance in God.

Isa 58:14. “Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.” NKJV.