

Message - "How To Fast" (various scriptures)

Man's first sin was to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:1-6). Fasting is abstaining from food (and sometimes drinks) for a **spiritual purpose or goal**. "Faith needs prayer for it's development and full growth, and prayer needs fasting for the same reason" [Dakes bible, p1043]. ***NOTE: No regulations are given as to how long to fast or how often to fast.***

FASTING: Humbles the soul before God (Psa 35:13), chastens the soul (Psa 69:10), and denies appetites so as to give the entire time to prayer (2 Sam 12:16-23).

REASONS TO FAST:

- When under chastening (2 Sam 12:16-23)
- Under judgment (1 Kings 21:27-27)
- In need (Ezra 8:21)
- In danger (Esther 4)
- When worried (Dan 6:18)
- In spiritual conflict (Matt 4:1-11)
- When desperate in prayer (Acts 9:1-21, emphasis on v9)
- Making important decisions (Acts 13:2-3)

GUIDELINES FOR FASTING:

- Do NOT fast unless you have a clear spiritual purpose or goal. Prepare your heart by prayer (is God calling you to fast or do you have a reason listed above?) (Joel 2:12-13)
- Keep your fast a secret and tell only those who need to know (eg. spouse) (Matt 6:17-18)
- Temporarily abstain from marital relations for an agreed upon time (1 Cor 7:5)
- Determine a length of time for fasting. The seriousness of the need usually determines how long to fast. If you have never fasted before, begin slowly such as one meal or a much lighter meal. Graduate to longer times as your health allows. You will likely fast more frequently as you move closer to God and mean business. Fasting is a learned discipline! Never stuff yourself BEFORE a fast. ☺
- Determine how you will fast. Will you abstain from ALL foods and drinks, food only, or eat only vegetables or grains (Dan 1:12), or no pleasure foods (Dan 10:3)? Learn to fast gradually by limiting the amount and type of foods until you can fast completely.

UNACCEPTABLE FASTS:

- Not ready to humble yourself before God (Joel 2:12-13)
- You pursue your own interests and not God's (Isa 58:3)
- You act cruel. Mistreat others (Isa 58:4)
- You fast to make an impression on others (Matt 6:16)

IMPORTANT: If you do NOT succeed in your fast, don't give up. It's a learned discipline.

BILL BRIGHT: <http://www.ccci.org/growth/growing-closer-to-god/how-to-fast/index.aspx>