

FASTING AND PRAYER GUIDE

(Adapted from Susan Gregory's Guide: <http://daniel-fast.com/>)

Church fasting in January is similar to praying in the morning to seek the will of God for the entire day. God will bless our entire year!

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Fasting is a principle that God intended for everyone to be able to enjoy. **It's not a punishment; it's a privilege!** By making fasting a way of life, you can get closer to God and grow in your spiritual walk like never before. Fasting is one of the most powerful weapons God has given us for our daily lives. Through fasting, you can experience a release from the bondage of sin ... restoration in your relationships ... financial blessings ... spiritual renewal ... supernatural healing and much more!

Another reward of fasting has to do with your future. God has given you a vision, a divine dream for your life. When you fast, you open up the blessings and opportunities He has provided for you to pursue that dream. As you fast, pray for God's direction and guidance. Focus your faith on your dream and God will show you how you can turn your dream into a reality.

When you fast and pray, you will see amazing results from God. You will see godly changes in your life, home/family, prayers answered in incredible ways, wisdom gained about hard issues, and in it all, you will mostly appreciate that your own desires become secondary to God's. It's all about putting God first, and letting Him (our Shepherd) lead the way all year long. Without a doubt, fasting sets you on a great course every year. Psalm 37:23 says, "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way" (NASB).

Many people believe the first week is the hardest during a fast. Symptoms like grumpiness, sleepiness, headaches, and cravings are all normal because your body is detoxing. The detox part can last for as few as 3 days, but it normally takes a week to feel refreshed (and stronger than ever).

Fasting is a joy! It's only our flesh that complains, but the joy you can find in fasting can even show your children and people around you how good and pleasant it is to serve God.

Don't expect that every single one in the church will join in the fast but you can join by praying using the 30 day prayer points. So if you can't fast, you can join, with equal impact, by praying for God's grace and strength for those who do! Take this time and pray for TWT. Pray for God to move with divine direction and that in 2017 He will give us dreams, revelation, and visions both TWT corporately and individually, resulting in a divine breakthrough as He has promised us this year.

James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." He has amazing things in store for us, and I am encouraged and excited about the times ahead.

Types of fast and what they require

Broad Types

1. Corporate: This is a church fast called by the Pastor or Leader of a church or group of people. (see 1 Kings 21:9, Ezra 8:21, Ester 4:16). This type of fast requires that the people are in one accord about the fast and will be in compliance to what the Pastor, by the leading of Holy Spirit, has called them to do.

(PLEASE NOTE: Corporate or Church fasting is more about everyone participating (unity of purpose) for effectiveness, than the type of fast you do. So we expect that everyone join and will do SOME TYPE OF FAST, even if not for the full 30 days.)

2. Private: This is a personal fast for an individual or husband and wife; led by the Lord. (Matthew 6:18)

Specific Types

1. Daniel Fast: No meat, sweet foods, or strong drinks (see Daniel 10:2-3). This can be done for an extended period of time. This could also be considered a vegetarian/vegan diet because there is no meat intake.

2. Partial Fast: Skipping one main meal of the day, such as breakfast, or lunch, or dinner. This meal would be skipped everyday until the fast was over.

3. Partial Fast (2): Another type of partial fast is to avoid the food or beverage that your body craves most during the fasting period. Fasting such items may appear easy but can be hard on our flesh. Items that make the top of the list are 1) your most favorite food (e.g. rice); 2) coffee, ice-cream, chocolate, cakes, etc. (see "foods to avoid" below for more). **If, for instance, you do not like coffee so much, then avoiding coffee is not fasting. Fasting is to sacrifice something your body wants, in order to focus on prayer and the word of God.**

4. Half-Day: Fast until 3 p.m. (the ninth hour) every day. This is the fast John Wesley participated in. (Acts 10:30-31)

5. Complete Fast: This would require you to abstain from all solid foods and take liquids only. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the Bible says, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry." This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty. (see Luke 4:1-2)

6. Total Fast: This is a full and complete fast, no food or drink. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a total fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16. This type of fast should be done with extreme caution and not for extended periods of time.

7. Juice Fast: Only fresh fruits and vegetables are used. If you can't juice your own fruits or vegetables, try buying juices without sugar or additives. When using fruits that are acidic, such as lemons, oranges, and even tomatoes, dilute them with water for your stomach's sake.

Lengths of Fast

1. **Half-Day** – see Judges 20:26, Acts 10:30
2. **One (1) Day**
3. **Three (3) Days** – see Acts 9:9, Esther 4:15-16
4. **Seven (7) Days** – see 1 Samuel 31:13
5. **Fourteen (14) Days** – see Acts 27:33
6. **Twenty-one (21) Days** – see Daniel 10:3
7. **Forty (40) Days** – see 1 Kings 19:8, Luke 4:1-2

NOTE: The length of your fast should be dependent on three factors – 1) Your health, 2) God's leading, and 3) Type of fast. USING WISDOM IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT IN FASTING.

Other activities for fasting

Although not mentioned in the Bible, we as Christians can also fast by avoiding activities such as:

- a) Electronics
- b) Computers
- c) TV; Video games
- d) Limited use of Mobile phone (if possible)
- e) Surfing of the internet
- f) Certain entertainment like sports and movies.

We should focus more on prayer and studying the Word of God during the times we do some of the activities mentioned above.

Daniel Fast: Foods to avoid

Daniel avoided the king's food (Daniel 1:8). To avoid the king's food means that we are definitely avoiding all those things that the Jews couldn't eat. We're also avoiding foods that only royalty in ancient days could afford. It wasn't until recent history that most people in several countries could afford to eat meat. Today, in most of the world, very few people can afford to eat any kind of meat or processed foods, like the foods in the list below:

- meat, because Daniel didn't want to take the chance of eating non-kosher meat and/or meat that was offered to idols.
- white flour and all products using it
- rice, white bread, hominy and pasta
- fried foods
- caffeine
- carbonated beverages, including diet sodas
- Wine or any other alcoholic drinks
- foods containing preservatives or additives
- refined sugar

- high fructose corn syrup
- chemical sugar substitutes
- margarine, shortening, animal fat, high fat products

Daniel Fast: Foods to eat

Daniel seemed to eat only things planted and harvested from the farm, and drank only water. You may want to keep it simple and eat only vegetables and drink only water.

1. Whole Grains - brown rice, oats, rolled oats, oatmeal, barley, corn, popcorn, wheat

2. Legumes - dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, green beans, green peas, peanuts, etc. Grain legumes include beans, lentils, lupins, peas and peanuts.

3. Fruits - apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, berries, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, breadfruit, cantaloupe, cherries, coconuts, cranberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, grenadine, guava, honeydew melons, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, melons, mulberry, nectarines, oats, olives, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon, etc.,

4. Vegetables - artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, gingerroot, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, any peppers, any potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, etc.

5. Seeds - all nuts, natural peanut butter, natural almond butter, sprouts, ground flax, etc.

6. Liquids - spring water, distilled water, filtered water, 100% all natural fruit or vegetable juices

Other Food items to Avoid during Your Fast

a. Avoid caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, certain types of green tea and herbal teas).

b. Avoid chewing gum and mints even if your breath is bad. Drink decaffeinated mint tea to assist with your breath.

These items stimulate digestive action in your stomach and may make you feel hungry.