



A PERSONAL GUIDE TO

Prayer & Fasting

In the Bible, prayer and fasting are often mentioned together. Throughout history, God’s people have made fasting part of their worship. Fasting is God’s way of helping us take our focus off the physical and place it on the spiritual.

◆ **WHAT IS FASTING?**

Fasting is so foreign to most of us in the global west, it seems like a strange and ancient practice. To fast primarily means “not to eat.” Yet, biblical fasting has a broader application. It has a spiritual purpose, in an act of the will through which the Christian exerts spiritual control over the flesh with a view to a more personal and powerful experience with God through prayer.

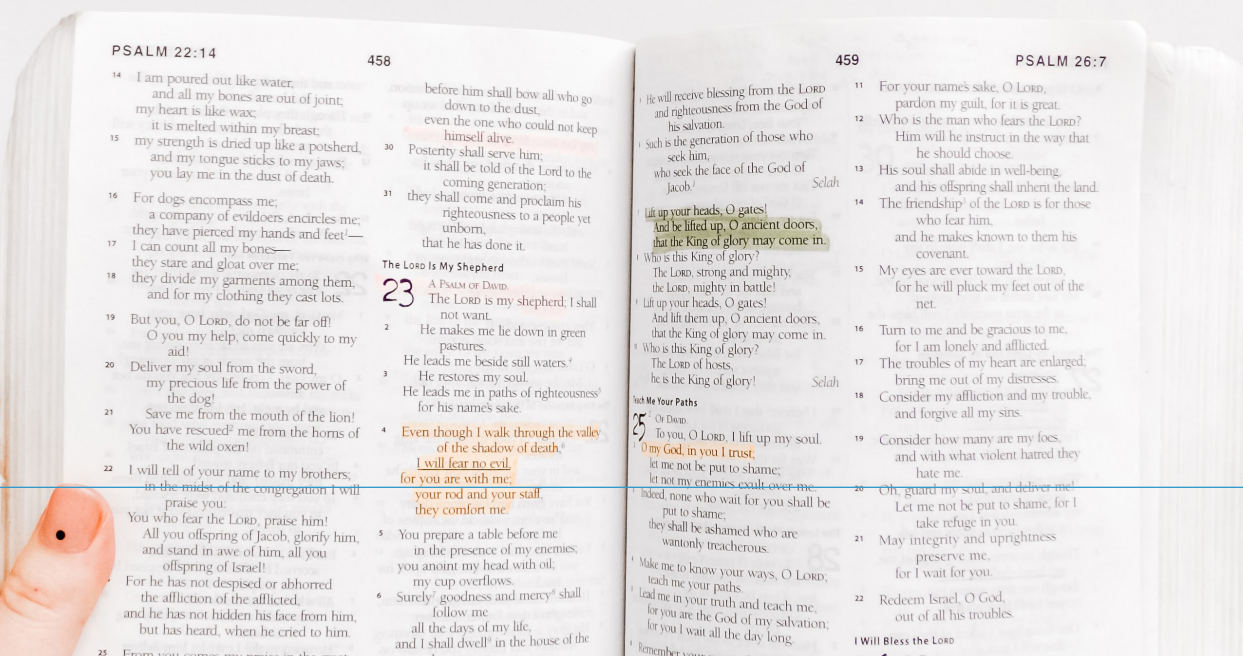
◆ **IS FASTING RELEVANT TODAY?**

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus said, “When you fast...” He makes the assumption that fasting is a normal part of the Christian’s walk. He doesn’t say, “You must fast” or “If you fast,” simply “When you fast.” In Matthew 9:15, Jesus says, “The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they will fast.” This is perhaps the most important word about fasting for our day. The most natural interpretation of the days when Jesus’ disciples will fast is in the present Church age. In fact, this is how the disciples understood Him as well because it was only after His ascension to the Father that we read of them fasting (Acts 13:2). It is this age of the Church to which our Master referred when He said, “Then they will fast.” The time is NOW!

◆ ASSESS YOUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION

This is the most critical question of the fast. Preparation for a meaningful fast begins with repentance and confession. If you have unconfessed sin, you must confess it. (Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:2)

- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit brings to your attention.
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. (Mark 11:25, Luke 11:4, 17:3-4)
- Ask God to fill you with His Spirit so that He will be your sustenance. (Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 5:14-15, John 4:32-34)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart. (Hebrews 11:6)
- Hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. (Galatians 5:16-17)
- Remember that fasting is feasting as you “feed” on His presence and His will.



WAYS TO FAST

There are many ways to fast. The purpose of fasting is to give up in order to have more focus on God in prayer. Several types of fasting are appropriate:

◆ **MEDIA FAST**

Spend less time on your phone. Designate hours, days, even weeks to be off of social media. Don't start your day on your phone. Monitor the amount of time on your phone, screens, playing games or watching movies.

◆ **A PARTIAL FAST**

Refrain from certain types of food such as soft drinks, coffee, sweets, desserts, and only eat fruits or vegetables. A partial fast can also include a liquid diet during which time the individual drinks only fruit drinks and water. A partial fast could also mean that you have only water. Make sure you are in a healthy physical state for this kind of fasting.

◆ **AN ABSOLUTE FAST**

During an absolute fast the person has no food or water. Make sure you are in a healthy physical state for this kind of fasting.

◆ **OTHER FASTS**

Any activity that takes time and keeps you from having time to focus on God in prayer can be sacrificed for Him. Focus on prayer during the time you would ordinarily spend with these activities.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR FASTING SCHEDULE BE?

During your fasting period, you could follow a daily schedule. A routine that could look like this:

◆ **MORNING**

Begin the day with prayer and fasting. Don't look at your phone and get lost in the news, social media, or e-mails. Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees. Invite God's Spirit to fill you with His presence. Let Him know that all you desire in life is His good pleasure. Pray for vision for your life, your church, country, and beyond.

◆ **NOON**

Return to prayer and God's Word. Take a short prayer walk. Spend time in intercessory prayer for our church, our country, and our world. Pray for our church staff. Pray for the lost people you know.

◆ **EVENING**

Seek a quiet place alone with the Lord. If others are fasting, join them in prayer. If you are married, pray with your spouse for God's will to be done in your marriage and in your family. Pray that God alone would be your one desire.



Be encouraged as you pray and fast.

Remember to focus completely on God and use this time to enjoy His presence. Outwardly you may be doing the same things you would normally do, but inwardly you are rejoicing and praising God that He is your sustenance. You will be surprised at how fasting will draw your attention to God. As you step out in faith and try it, you'll learn how to grow in prayer and fasting. Surrender your will to Him.

