



So I say, live by the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:16

FIVE DAYS OF
Prayer+Fasting

We are calling on everyone to join our annual time of prayer and fasting. This is the time of year when we corporately consecrate ourselves, our families, and ministries to God. Believe God for victories and breakthroughs in every area of your life this year.

Practical Guide to Five Days of Prayer and Fasting

... "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

Joshua 3:5

Throughout history, God has called on His people to humble themselves through fasting and prayer. Fasting is a spiritual weapon God uses to advance His kingdom, change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring victory in people's lives. There is something powerful that happens when we voluntarily humble ourselves, seek God's will, and agree with Him for His purposes to be fulfilled.

As a spiritual family, we begin each new year with a time of prayer and fasting. It is our way of humbling ourselves before God and consecrating to Him the upcoming year. It is also the time when we corporately come into agreement and believe together for breakthroughs in our personal lives, families, finances, and churches.

Over the years, as a result of this time of prayer, we have seen people receive healing, salvation, promotion, direction, family restoration, miraculous provision, and tremendous growth in their discipleship groups and churches. One of the highlights is always seeing and hearing testimonies of how God answers over and beyond what people ask.

As you begin your fast this year, believe in your heart, by faith, that this is your year of miracles and answered prayers.

WHY FAST?

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

Joel 1:14

When a man is willing to set aside the legitimate appetites of the body to concentrate on the work of praying, he is demonstrating that he means business, that he is seeking with all his heart, and will not let God go unless He answers.

• Arthur Wallis

1. Jesus fasted.

¹*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.*

²*After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*

Matthew 4:1,2

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Luke 4:14

Before He began His ministry, Jesus fasted forty days. He knew He was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting makes us physically weak but spiritually strong and prepares us to do God's work.

2. Fasting is an act of humility and consecration.

... I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. . . .

Psalms 35:13

Humility results in the grace of God. When we humble ourselves in prayer, we have instant access to the heart of God. As we deny ourselves as an act of consecration, we are better able to exercise self-control. We can keep our emotions and desires under control.

3. Fasting helps us become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:2

When we deny ourselves of our natural cravings, our spiritual antennas become sharper. We become more sensitive to His voice as we divest ourselves of worldly distractions. We are better able to focus on God and submit to His will. This opens the door for the Holy Spirit into our lives.

4. Fasting brings revival.

²*... in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. ³So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.*

Daniel 9:2,3

Fasting helps us prevail in prayer and intercession. Daniel understood that Israel was headed for destruction. He also knew that in times like these, there is only one recourse—intercession through praying and fasting. Throughout human history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting.

5. Fasting is healthy.

Fasting cleanses your digestive system from toxins. Some consider fasting a cure for certain allergies and diseases. By learning to deny ourselves and exercising discipline, fasting breaks unhealthy addictions in our lives.

PREPARING TO FAST

“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther 4:16

Fasting reduces the power of self so that the Holy Spirit can do a more intense work within us.

• Bill Bright

1. Be in faith!

Prayerfully and thoughtfully fill out the prayer points page of this guide. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Be clear and specific about your faith goals in your personal life, family, finances, and church. These are what you will be believing God for during the fast and the entire year. Expect God to answer. Maintain a thankful heart throughout and after the fast.

2. Commit to a type of fast.

We encourage everyone to commit to a water only or liquid fast. However, we understand that some are unable to do so because of certain circumstances, such as pregnancy, a physically demanding profession, and medical conditions. If you belong to this category, there are alternatives—you may choose to do a combination fast. You may do a liquid fast for two days and then a one-meal-a-day fast for the next three, for example, or any other combination according to your need or situation.

Pray about the kind of fast you will undertake and commit to it. Do not decide on a day-to-day basis. Commit before the fast and be determined. Ask God for grace.

3. Plan your calendar.

Limit your physical and social activities during this period. You need to conserve physical energy and devote more time to prayer and reading the Bible.

4. Prepare spiritually.

More than anything, our annual fast is a time when we believe God for a fresh encounter with Him. Be prepared to have the Holy Spirit put His finger on an area in your life that needs to change. Repentance is the foundation of prayer and fasting. Be ready to repent and change, and be transformed. Surrender everything to Him. Be completely open.

5. Prepare physically.

Be smart as you enter into this fast. Do not go to a buffet restaurant on the eve of the fast, hoping to stock up on food in your body. The key is to gradually prepare your body. Start eating smaller portions and meals seven days before you begin your fast. Avoid food that is high in sugar and fat. Two days prior to the fast, eat raw fruit and vegetables only. Consult a physician if you need to.

DURING THE FAST

16“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:16-18

The record of the whole Bible indicates that prayer and fasting combined constitute the strongest weapon committed to God's believers.

• Dr. Mary Ruth Swope

1. Seek the Lord.

Commit to prayer and Bible reading the times you usually allocate for meals. Join at least one prayer meeting in your local church. Call your local church for the scheduled prayer meetings during the fast. Be ready to respond when you hear from God.

This guide also has a devotional that we encourage you to go through during the fast.

2. Commit to change.

Whatever God tells you or puts His finger upon, apply it immediately. If you need to make restitution, immediately contact people you have broken relationships with. If there are habits that need to change, make the adjustment immediately. Ask a trusted leader or friend from your church to hold you accountable.

3. Practical tips

- a. Avoid medical and even natural herbal drugs. However, if you are under medication, these should only be withdrawn upon the advice of your doctor.
- b. Limit your physical activity and exercise. If you have a workout routine, adjust it accordingly. A daily two to five kilometer walk should be your maximum amount of exercise during an extended fast.
- c. Rest as much as you can.
- d. Maintain an attitude of prayer throughout the day. Intercede for your family, pastors, church, nation, our missionaries, world missions, etc.
- e. Drink plenty of water.
- f. As your body adjusts, be prepared for temporary bouts of physical weakness as well as mental annoyances like impatience, irritability, and anxiety.

BREAKING THE FAST

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 14:23

If our fasting is not unto God, we have failed. Physical benefits, success in prayer, the enduring with power, spiritual insights—these must never replace God as the center of our fasting.

• Richard Foster

1. Reintroduce solid food gradually.

You should break your fast the same way you prepared for it. It will take your body just as many days you fasted to adjust to a normal diet. Begin eating gradually. Don't eat solid food immediately after your fast. Start with fruits, juices, and salad. Then, you can begin adding vegetables and boiled potato. Take it slowly from there. Eat small portions spread throughout the day.

2. Continue praying.

Don't let your prayer life end on the day you finish the fast. Build from the momentum you gained during the fast. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Carry the newfound passion with you throughout the year.

3. Be expectant.

Be in faith and believe God to answer your prayers soon! Don't give up, persevere in prayer even if you don't see the answers immediately. Make sure you keep the copy of your prayer points. You can check it at the end of the year and see how God has answered your prayers. It can be your thanksgiving list at the end of the year.

CONCLUSION

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us . . .

Ephesians 3:20

Fasting in the biblical sense is choosing not to partake of food because your spiritual hunger is so deep, your determination in intercession so intense, or your spiritual warfare so demanding that you have temporarily set aside even fleshly needs to give yourself to prayer and meditation.

• Wesley Duewel

Our annual time of prayer and fasting gives us the opportunity to realign our lives according to His will and consecrate the coming year to Him. As we humble ourselves corporately to Him in prayer, we can expect Him to move mightily in our midst. God's will is for all of us to experience breakthrough and victory in our lives. Be in faith for God to move miraculously in your life this year beyond what you can ask or imagine. You have a fresh mandate. Be ready to accomplish greater things for God this year!

PREPARING FOR THE FAST

Live by the Spirit

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.
GALATIANS 5:16

“Live by the Spirit!” This exhortation is both inspiring and challenging to us today. We all desire to grow in our relationship with God and live a life of victory over sin. Yet, how exactly can we do this? The Apostle Paul addresses this very issue in his letter to the Galatians.

Paul had just found out that there were false teachers who infiltrated the church, questioned Paul’s authority as an apostle, and were teaching that the Galatians needed to adhere to certain Jewish laws and traditions in order to ensure their salvation. This teaching was totally contrary to the gospel that Paul and the other apostles preached. Paul wrote to oppose the false teaching and appeal to them to keep their relationship with God centered on Christ alone, trusting in His finished work.

Paul’s deep concern over the state of the young church, as well as his frustration over their lack of discernment, permeates his words. This false “gospel,” if left unchecked, threatened the very life of the young church. The Galatian issue is still significant for us today: What does it mean to be a Christian and how do we live out our Christianity? Is it a matter of observing laws and regulations or receiving His power to live righteously?

As we seek God in this season of prayer and fasting, may we grasp the liberating message of the gospel of Christ, learn what it means to live by the Spirit, and bear the fruit of true freedom and grace in our lives.

REFLECT

The same matter that Paul wrote about in Galatians was addressed at the Jerusalem Council and recorded in Acts 15:1-35. Read the chapter and consider the following:

1. What teaching was Paul disputing (v.1,5)?

2. According to Peter, how are we saved (v.7-11)?

3. How did James and the other apostles describe the effect of the false teachings (v.19,24)?

RESPOND

Get a prayer partner. Pray for God’s Word to illuminate your hearts and minds. Believe that God will enable you to walk in His ways.



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