



DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Jan. 12th -Feb. 1st

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What is fasting?

Fasting is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God. One common misunderstanding of fasting is that it is a means to change God's mind or convince him to act on your behalf. The truth is, fasting most often changes us, not God. When done with a heart set on simply seeking the Lord, it can be completely life-changing. You may choose to abstain from all food, certain types of food, or even a habit or activity, for the allotted time period. Fasting can bring great rewards in your spiritual life as you choose to focus more directly on God. As a church, we want to begin our year by designating 21 days to make room for God in our lives and seek his will for us through prayer and fasting. An important note: Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

How do I fast?

A few types of fasts:

Special Food or Activity Fast

Cut out 1 food or activity that is a part of your daily life

Daniel Fast

Eat only fruits and veggies, drink only water,
(*Daniel went on a partial fast for 21 days, see Daniel 10:3*)

Juice Fast

No foods; drink only juice and water

Water Fast

No foods; drink only water

Total Fast

No solids or liquids; not encouraged for long periods of time

Some pointers:

Customize. Work your fast around your life. The types we've suggested are just that, suggestions. They are not the only ways to fast. In short, consider removing something that is a part of your everyday life, something on which you spend time and energy that you could translate to focusing on the Lord and His work in your life.

Ease into and out of your fast, especially with foods. Gradually remove things from your diet, and gradually add them back in. This also helps with the transition concerning activities that you may be cutting out of your life for the fast.

Make a plan. For example, if you choose to eat only fruits and vegetables, plan what you'll eat each day. Keep the foods you'll need handy in your house. This reduces your likelihood of slipping up, and helps relieve stress.

Keep it healthy. When dealing with drastic changes in your diet, you must be smart. If you are cutting out many regular foods, try to still provide yourself with some essentials, like proteins and vitamins. It's simple - eat healthy things. You may even need to increase your rest time. Your body will be dealing with changes, so be sure to take care of it.

Don't quit! Let's go ahead and say it - most of us will slip up at some point during the 21 days. Don't get discouraged. This is not about keeping a perfect record; it's about setting your goal each day and continuing even when you miss it. You don't "pass" or "fail" a fast. God simply says that he rewards those who diligently seek him (Hebrews 11:6). Not perfectly, but diligently.

What about fasting things other than food?

It is important to remember that fasting not only refers to food, but can also involve abstaining from habits or activities that make up your daily life. For some of us, it may be more beneficial to fast something like Facebook, than to fast a meal. Quite possibly, we spend more time and energy using social media or watching television than anything else. You should customize your fast to fit your life by considering what things take up the greatest amount of your time and energy. By removing these things and redirecting your focus to God, you can see amazing changes in yourself and your spiritual life.

So I'm not eating...now what?

As we said, fasting is a tool that disconnects us from our regular patterns and habits, so that we can connect more directly with God. How does that work, exactly? Well, in short, we take the time and energy we would normally put into that meal time or activity, and give it to God.

For example, if you're fasting lunch completely, instead of eating on your lunch break, take that time to pray, read your Bible, and just spend time with the Lord. The same goes with an activity that you're cutting out for the allotted time.

If you are removing only some things from your diet, as in an option like the Daniel Fast, you're still using your regular mealtimes. For this type of fast, it is important to still carve out extra time each day to dive into the Bible and talk to the Lord.

Remember, you don't have to wait until your "scheduled" time with the Lord to connect with him. Fasting not only involves making extra time for God, but also living each day in an attitude of worship. Removing things from your life can serve as a catalyst for an attitude change, and allow you to focus more directly on God all day long.

For more information, check out our website: www.ugclife.com