

# THE GIFT OF FASTING

## An Extra-Super Super Bowl Weekend

For much of the country, Super Bowl Sunday is a weekend to gather with friends and be a fan of the team they hope to win the game. For WellSpring, Super Bowl Sunday can be that, and a whole lot more.

This year, Super Bowl weekend (January 30 - February 1) is a chance to start on a path that moves you from being simply a fan to a committed follower of Jesus. We all know that fans can be fickle, but committed followers stick through the wins and losses.

Super Bowl weekend will be a unique one for WellSpring, because it is also the launch of Not A Fan February. The Lord is inviting you, along with all of WellSpring, to a party that is more exciting than the Super Bowl game, because His party will super charge your life. Let me explain...

Starting Thursday evening, January 30, @ 10p, WellSpring will join our hearts together to set aside food in order to pursue Jesus Christ, who sustains us more than food ever can. We will fast from Thursday evening until Sunday morning, February 1.

Then, wear your favorite team jersey to Sunday's celebration service - Super Bowl Sunday - as we end our fast together with a continental breakfast during service.

And if you still haven't had enough, you can stay to watch the commercials - opps, I mean the game - with even more food, in CoolBeans with other WellSpringers.

God is up to something powerful! Don't miss it (Him) for any reason. If you've never experienced the power of fasting, make sure this year you do. Press through any fear or opposition you might have personally to lean in to the Lord through fasting and the Not A Fan journey.

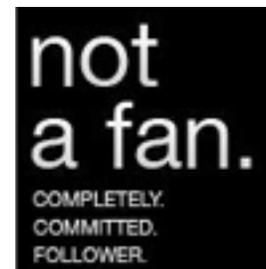
Let me encourage you to step out in faith and trust Jesus, who is the Lord of the fast. Learning to trust Him as we do this will move us from

being just a fan to being a committed follower!

For some, fasting is a new concept. On the pages following, you can read the how-to's on fasting.

Becoming a Completely Committed Follower,

Pastor Scott



## What is fasting?

Is fasting a foreign concept to you? Have you struggled with fasting in the past for one reason or another (you like to eat)? Then keep on reading. Fasting might just be what you need in your life. Fasting might be the tool of obedience the Lord is asking you to follow Him into so that you can have breakthrough in your life.

Fasting is more than going without food. Fasting should be done in connected with:

- Confession of sins (Nehemiah 9:1-2; Psalm 35:13; Isaiah 58:3, 5; Daniel 9:2-20;
- 10:2-3; Jonah 3:5; Acts 9:9)
- Laying some special petition before the Lord, sometimes out of anguish, danger, or desperation (Exodus 24:18; Judges 20:26; 2 Samuel 1:12; 2 Chronicles 20:3; Ezra 8:21-23; Esther 4:16; Matthew 4:1-2; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23).
- Reading of the scripture (Jeremiah 36:6)
- Prayer (Daniel 9:3; Matthew 17:21)

No matter the specific reason of a fast, one thing all fasts should have in common is humility before God.

- God is not impressed with outward expression of piety
- God is not impressed with fasting when you have un-dealt with issues with others
- God is not impressed with our fasting when we don't control our conversation

What He is moved by is people who humble themselves, pray and fast in an all-out effort to draw near to Him. God is impressed with a heart that is willing to pursue Him at all costs, even with the neglect of sustenance. Fasting is not a way to engender God's favor so that He will do something for you. Rather, fasting is an expression of our faith in Him,

understanding that all good things come from the Father in Heaven, including hope, joy, love, peace, freedom and breakthrough for our lives.

Join me in the following...

- Fast at least two meal a day (if you can, fast from Thursday 10p to Sunday 10a.)
- Fast and pray for personal breakthrough, for freedom from the entanglements of sin, for bigger picture perspectives, for faith to grow in your life, for specific direction, for greater spiritual vitality, for your family and to become a committed follower of Jesus
- Fast and pray for great unity in the church body of WellSpring.
- Fast and pray in faith. Without faith, you might as well eat! Go into this time of fasting with expectant attitude. God will do great things in and for you and our church if we believe without wavering.
- Share what God is doing in your life.

Remember, this is not the same old season. Enter into **Not A Fan February** with a heart of expectation because you're growing from a fan to a follower of Jesus.

## What are the different ways to fast?

Fasting is done for a variety of reasons. At the center of any fast is prioritizing God and tuning your heart to His. Fasting isn't complicated, so keep it simple and be faithful in your approach.

The following is a listing of different kinds of fasts. As you seek the Lord, He will direct your fast. If your fast is different from those listed here, let me know...maybe you'll start a new fast with great meaning and blessing!

### The Disciples' Fast

*...this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting.*  
*Matthew 17:21*

Jesus delivered a boy from a demon, which the disciples could not loose. He clarified there are times freedom won't come, apart from prayer and fasting. If you yearn to be set free from besetting sins that have chronically plagued, haunted, and tormented you then, be free in Jesus name, as you embrace this fast.

Isaiah Basis: loosing the chains of wickedness (Isaiah 58:6)

### The Ezra Fast -

*So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.*  
*Ezra 8:23*

The challenges were mountainous and filled with difficulty. Ezra faced problems to which God brought solutions. If you are buckled over from problems and desire for God to lift heavy burdens off of you, then march into this fast.

Isaiah Basis: untie the cords of the yoke (Isaiah 58:6)

### The Elijah Fast -

*Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.*  
*1 Kings 19:8*

Elijah was a blues traveler as he fled from the vengeful threats of Jezebel. Though mightily victorious, now he wanted to die. We ALL face emotional depletion, despondency, and degrees of depression at times in our life. Lift yourself up, ask someone to

partner with you and saddle up your horses to ride this fast through to breakthrough!

Isaiah Basis: break every yoke (Isaiah 58:6)

### The Nehemiah Fast -

*When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned, fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.*  
*Nehemiah 1:4*

Nehemiah loved his fellow Jews. They were displaced from their homeland. Their distress was his distress. He mourned for them. He also took the initiative to do the best thing for them he could do...he went before God on THEIR BEHALF in fasting and prayer! Are loved ones of yours suffering? Fast and pray.

Isaiah Basis: set the oppressed free (Isaiah 58:6)

### The Daniel Fast -

*But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the king's food and wine...*  
*Daniel 1:8*

Daniel forsook the king's table to feast upon God's provision. God has designed our bodies to benefit from periods of abstinence from food (What the Bible Says About Healthy Living, by Rex Russell, M.D.). Your body could feel and function better if you implement this fast.

Isaiah Basis: your healing will appear quickly (Isaiah 58:8)

### The Paul Fast -

*Paul was without sight for three days and neither ate nor drank,*  
*Acts 9:9*

Paul had a radical conversion on the Damascus Road. He was going one direction and Jesus had in mind for him to go another. You may have it in your mind to go a particular direction, but is that God's mind also? If you are weighing important decisions and need clear insight for directional purposes, "see" your way into this fast.

Isaiah Basis: your light will break forth like the dawn (Isaiah 58:8)

## Which fast will you choose?

