

crisis and is entered into by an entire congregation. In scripture, God without exception, always responded in deliverance.

The Personal fast is as David said “I humbled my soul with fasting – Ps 69:10”; and then naturally moves to the mourning of repentance and contrition, and consecration to God.

Jesus, the best example of consecration to God, undertook a 40 day fast before going into public ministry. Though He received the Spirit in all his fullness at His baptism in the Jordan, the power was not operative until He returned from His wilderness testing. By accepting the fasting, He was reaffirming His determination to do the will of His Father. It was His final preparation and consecration for His heavenly mission. As He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, the works of God were manifested in Him.



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House of Praise International Church Fasting Series

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*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to
loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the
heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go
free, and that ye break every yoke?*

- Isaiah 58:6

FAS 104

God's Chosen Fast

WHY FAST?

The Spirit of God is stirring the Church. In New Testament times, fasting was a channel of power. As spirituality waned and worldliness flourished in the church, the power and gifts of the Spirit were withdrawn. With the loss of inner power, men clung to what was an outward accompaniment and placed more emphasis on the act of fasting, though bereft of the inward spirit that alone could give it value. Hence, we see Paul's prediction fulfilled from 2 Tim. 3:5 “having the form of religion but denying the power.”

But, Glory to God, a new thirst for the Spirit is awakening the church, a day of spiritual renewal. There is heart felt searching, burdens and longings everywhere and they are ascending to heaven. The Spirit of God is stirring. God is determined to have a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, a bride fit for His beloved Son. It is my conviction that as we travail before God, we will rediscover the New Testament power that is released through the biblical practice of fasting unto God.

The two main categories of fasting are public and personal (as described inside and may have differing needs and circumstances that move men to fast).

KINDS OF FASTS

Fasting is defined as simply “not eating food.”

It is true many things hinder our communion with God, and we do need to commune with God, and we do need to practice self-denial in general, but the fact still remains that “to fast” means primarily “not to eat food (solid or liquid).”

3 Main Kinds Of Fasts

- The Normal Fast – Matt. 4:2
- The Partial Fast – Dan. 10:3
- The Absolute Fast – Acts 9:9

The Normal Fast, the first mention of fasting in the new covenant “Jesus fasted...and afterwards he was hungry.” It meant abstaining from all food, solid or liquid, but not from water. We are told Jesus ate nothing, not that he did not drink. Satan also tempted Him to “eat” not to “drink”. Therefore we can conclude Jesus' 40 day fast was a “normal fast.”

The Day of Atonement, was the only regular fast under Mosaic Law (Lev. 23:27).

The Partial Fast, is a restriction of diet rather than complete abstention. Dan. 10:2-3 At the end of Daniel's fast he was physically better on a diet of vegetables and water. Dan. 1:15. The partial fast allows a great many variations which have been tried with blessing. This is the method of living exclusively on one type of food for the duration of the fast. It is of great value especially where circumstances make it impossible or inconvenient to undertake a normal fast. Certainly it requires no less

discipline. It can be used however as a stepping stone to the NORMAL fast by those who have never fasted before. One great advantage is that even after being sustained for a long period, normal eating can be resumed almost at once, which is NOT the case with the other 2 kinds of fasting.

The Absolute Fast, is as defined in *Acts 9:9*, “for 3 days (never more)... neither ate nor drank.” Moses and Elijah were the only ones who did more, but both were supernatural in nature (i.e. an exceptional measure for an exceptional situation).

Esther 4:16 - Intervention for the Jews (3 days).

PURPOSES OF FASTINGS

- *Personal Sanctity*—(humbling yourself with fasting.) *Ps. 69:10; Matt. 5:4*
- *Facilitates Intercession* – (to be heard on high) *Isa. 58:4; Ezra 8:23*
- *Change God’s Mind* – *Jonah 3:5-10*
- *To free the Captives* – *Isa. 58:6*
- *For Revelation* – *Dan. 9:2,3; 21,22*
- *To Buffet the Body* – *Duet. 32:15-16*
But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked: you waxed fat, you grew thick, you became sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.

Paul said “every athlete exercises self control in all things.” *I Cor. 9:25-27* – In the mind of Paul, there was not merely the danger of temptation if the body was not

buffeted, but of loss of power in the great contest of life, just as an athlete who failed to train seriously would be hindered on the day of the race and lose the prize. Therefore, take the steps necessary to subdue the appetites and desires of the body, that the spiritual man might be kept in the ascendancy (control).

Fasting may also be voluntary or involuntary (no desire for food because of anxiety, sorrow, mental distress, or simply no food available – *Dan. 6:18, Matt. 15:32*).

FOOD AND THE BODY

We know that food is of course necessary for the sustaining of life, but AIR, WATER AND SLEEP are much more urgently needed. The body cannot live more than a few minutes without air, or a few days without water and sleep; but in normal circumstances a normally healthy and well-nourished body can exist quite satisfactorily for several weeks without food.

During a prolonged fast the body is living on surplus fat, and at the same time acting like an internal incinerator, burning up the waste and decaying tissues of the body. Only when this refining process is complete (complete fast) does it commence to consume its sound living cells, and that is when starvation begins.

How Do We Know When This Happens?

The Body Passes Through 3 Phases.

The FIRST PHASE is marked by a craving for food and may last a couple days or more. Once through it there may continue to be a pleasurable sensation at the thought of food, however with no craving or strong temptation.

The SECOND PHASE is marked by a feeling

of weakness and faintness which may last for 2 or 3 days. Here is where it seems to require an effort of the will for every movement.. This is the most difficult part of the fast and you may find it necessary to rest a good deal. The gradual disappearance of this sense of weakness is a signal the body has eliminated its grosser wastes and poisons.

The THIRD PHASE and easiest, is one of growing strength with little or no concern about food and only occasional and decreasing spasms of weakness. Here you often feel you could continue your fast indefinitely with very little effort. The termination of this phase is marked by hunger pangs (*Matt. 4:2*), showing that the process of elimination has been completed and now the body is beginning to draw on the sound living tissue. This is the warning bell that the fast is complete and the body is beginning to starve. At this point the fast would of course be broken off.

This reveals the true difference between an “appetite for food” verses “hunger for food.” *Isa. 58:8* also says at this point “your healing shall spring up speedily”. Receive it!

Physical Benefits; brightness of eye, pure breath, clear skin, new digestive system and a sense of physical well being.

Sense Faculties; sharpened sense of taste and smell, mental powers become remarkably clear and active.

Breaking Fast; self discipline is required to curb & control appetites until the body is ready for full feeding. Quantity of intake must be small and well masticated.

God’s Chosen Fast

Isaiah 58 is the classic of scripture on the subject of fasting. God reminds His people that the acceptable fast is the one which HE has chosen. Fasting, like prayer, must be God-initiated and God-ordained if it is to be effective. Prevailing prayer begins with God; He places upon us a burden by the Spirit and we respond to that burden. Prayer that originates with God always returns to God. So it is with fasting.

Fasting is a practice which may actually seem strange to most twentieth century Christians, maybe even a little extreme or fanatical. Some fear it will have harmful results and oppose fasting almost instinctively. Having proven the great value and blessing of fasting over the years, this document is to provide to the earnest believers a scriptural basis for fasting as well as provide some guidelines to aid on the practical issues as well.

Fasting provides us benefits therapeutically as well as spiritually. Many however have turned from this divinely appointed means of grace.

There are two basic categories of fasting:
-Public (Proclaimed)
-Personal

The Public or Proclaimed fast is primarily called for in times of national or spiritual