



SUMMITCHURCH

Fasting Guide

WHAT IS FASTING?

By definition, fasting is abstaining from all or some kinds of food or drink. The goal of fasting is to deny ourselves food or drink to draw nearer to God. Biblical fasting is denying your body food while feeding your spirit with the Word of God and prayer. Fasting puts the flesh under and quiets our flesh so that we may commune with God and receive God's direction for our lives.

Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and, most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

WHAT FASTING IS NOT

Biblical fasting is not a hunger strike in an attempt to get God's attention or to gain God's favor! As a child of God, you already have God's attention and favor! Fasting does not move God or change God... fasting changes us!

CAUTION!

Some people may have health issues that may prevent them from fasting. It's always best to consult your doctor before beginning a fast.

TYPES OF FASTS

Complete Fast

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

Selective Fast

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

Partial Fast

This fast is sometimes called the "Jewish Fast" and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown.

Soul Fast

What some call a "soul fast" is not actually a fast because it doesn't involve abstaining from food or drink. However, it can be helpful if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the "soul fast" and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the "soul fast."

Timing of a Fast

At Summit, we encourage fasting for 21 days each year in the month of January. This is part of 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, a season of focused prayer as a church family. You may also choose to fast at other times during the year for your own spiritual development. It's very typical to fast a single meal, a whole day, or three days or more. The timing of your fast is not as important as the strength of your focus on God as you fast.

Scripture References

Romans 8:32 (NIV)

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV)

27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

James 4:8 (NIV)

8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Acts 13:2 (NIV)

2 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."

Matthew 6:16-18 (NIV)

16 When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others 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 9:14-15 (NIV)

14 Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"

15 Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

Nehemiah 9:1-3 (NIV)

1 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. 2 Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. 3 They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the Lord their God.

Isaiah 58:6 (NIV)

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"