

A DAY OF FASTING :

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. JOHN 6:35

This guide is designed to help you prepare and walk through a day of fasting. Feel free to pray more than suggested or add reading and journaling time as needed. The point of this guide and the fast as a whole is to grow in hunger for God and seek Him in the place of the time we would spend eating, watching, or playing.

Far from a mere responsibility, fasting gives us opportunities to pursue greater communion with Christ. By emptying our lives of commotion, clutter and noise, we hope to find greater room for Him to speak through His Word. Rather than simply subtracting something from our lives, this is an opportunity to add something greater.

Some fasts are traditional (food, caffeine, sweets), while others can be less traditional (media, sleep, shopping). Choose what you will fast for a day this week (or all of them): Food, Television / Movies , Social Networking / Internet, Caffeine or Sweets, Radio/Music, Sleep

This is not intended to be a burden, but rather an opportunity, and should be stewarded as circumstances allow. If we are to follow Christ, it will take some degree of discomfort and inconvenience. May we begin to prepare our hearts accordingly.

1. Step one (preparation)

Pick a day this week to start fasting in the evening. Plan to eat your last meal and then set aside some time to prepare.

Spiritual Preparation

In preparation for this special time with God, I strongly urge you to examine your heart, and detect any unconfessed sin. Scripture records that God always requires His people to repent of their sins before He will hear their prayers. King David said:

Come and hear, all of you who reverence the Lord, and I will tell you what he did for me: For I cried to him for help, with praises ready on my tongue. He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins. But he listened! He heard my prayer! He paid attention to it! Blessed be God who didn't turn away when I was praying, and didn't refuse me his kindness and love. (Psalm 66:16-20)

In your prayers, confess not only obvious sins, but less obvious ones as well. The sins of omission as well as the sins of commission. These may be experiences leaving your first love for our Lord: worldly-mindedness, self-centeredness, spiritual indifference, and unwillingness to share your faith in Christ with others, not spending sufficient time in God's Word and in prayer, a poor relationship with your spouse, your children, your pastor, or other members of your church.

Physical Preparation

Although fasting is primarily a spiritual discipline, it begins in the physical realm. You should not fast without specific physical preparation. You will find it helpful to begin by eating smaller meals before you abstain altogether. Resist the urge to have that "last big feast" before the fast. Cutting down on your meals a few days before you begin the fast will signal your mind, stomach, and appetite that less food is acceptable.

READ: Psalm 42:2

Pray:

Journal your thoughts: How desperate am I for God?

2. Step two: 7AM (usual breakfast time)

READ: LUKE 4:1–13

PRAY:

NOW: Make a list of all the things you are thankful for. As they come to mind thank Him for them.

True spiritual fasting focuses on God. Center your total being on Him, your attitudes, your actions, your motives, desires, and words. This can only take place if God and His Holy Spirit are at the center of our attention. Confess your sins as the Holy Spirit brings them to your attention and continue to focus on God and God alone so that your prayers may be powerful and effective.

3. Step three 12PM (usual lunch time)

This may be the hardest time yet. Being out at work or in the cafeteria and fasting is hard. Decide now where you will go during your lunch time to get away with God. Maybe take a walk instead of sitting and smelling co-workers food. Maybe sit in a meeting room and read scripture. You can do this...

READ: Psalm 25

PRAY:

Our appetites dictate the direction of our lives — whether it be the cravings of our stomachs, the passionate desire for possessions or power, or the longings of our spirits for God. But for the Christian, the hunger for anything besides God can be an arch-enemy. While our hunger for God — and him alone — is the only thing that will bring victory.

4. Step four 5PM (Usual dinner)

Gather the family, sit with your spouse, sit with the kids as the day comes to a close. Instead of eating dinner we are going to run to God.

READ: Jeremiah 29:12-14

PRAY:

Share with each other what God did, spoke. Share if it was hard to fast or what distractions came. Journal if solo.

A renewed closeness with God and a greater sensitivity to spiritual things are usually the results of a fast. Do not be disappointed if you do not have a "mountaintop experience," as some do. Many people who have successfully completed extended fasts tell of feeling a nearness to God that they have never before known, but others who have honestly sought His face report no particular outward results at all. For others, their fast was physically, emotionally, and spiritually grueling, but they knew they had been called by God to fast, and they completed the fast unto Him as an act of worship; God honored that commitment.

5. Step Five... Break your fast.

Several hours after your usual dinner time eat a smaller meal while thanking the Lord

Your motive in fasting must be to glorify God, not to have an emotional experience, and not to attain personal happiness. When your motives are right, God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him in a very special way.