

FASTING

5-DAY GUIDE

the **bridge**
community church

PRACTICAL GUIDE SHEET FOR FASTING

Throughout Scripture fasting refers to **abstaining from food by an individual or a group/community in a designated period for a spiritual purpose**. Jesus assumes and teaches about the practice of regular fasting (Matthew 6:16-17, 9:15). It is exercised by the early church (Acts 13:2) and has been a regular spiritual discipline of believers throughout church history.

PREPARING TO FAST

- Humble yourself before God with a contrite heart; pray for the enabling, guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit (Psalms 35:13; 1 Samuel 7:6; John 15:15-21, 16:5-15).
- Determine the type of fast you will carry out: Liquid-only Fast, Partial Fast, or Absolute Fast.
- Decide and commit to a duration of the fast: one day, one night, three days, five days, or seven days.
- Keep it to yourself and do not show off (Matthew 6:16-18). Ask someone else to join your fast for accountability.
- Prepare your body and start slowly, especially if you are a beginner. Do not overeat before or after your fast.
- The scope of a fast can include fasting from TV, entertainment, news media, e-mail, gaming, shopping, and other habits in order to draw closer to God.

Absolute fasting is not for beginners and should be undertaken with careful health consideration and medical guidance. Food-related fasting is generally not advised for minors, diabetics, those with chronic health challenges, those prone to eating disorders, and pregnant or nursing women.

DURING THE FAST

Fasting is not just about what we give up. It is about how we spend the time we would normally use for meals to pray and seek the Lord. Expect intense urges to quit fasting, powerful temptations, and spiritual warfare (Matthew 4:1-11).

- Keep praying for God's strength and protection; put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20).
- Set aside specific and significant time and location to worship and seek God during your fast.
- Use normal mealtimes to take a prayer walk.
- **Follow the 5-Day Devotional provided in this guide.**
- Look for opportunities to practically serve God and people.
- Keep a journal of what the Lord is teaching you.
- Continue to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Get plenty of sleep.

BREAK THE FAST

Breaking a fast requires just as much careful consideration as beginning it. Do not plan a large celebration feast when breaking a fast.

- Do not break extended fasts abruptly. Start with small portions of fruits, vegetables, and liquids before slowly returning to a normal diet.
- If the fast lasted a day or two, begin with a small amount of fruit juice and gradually add easy-to-digest foods.
- If the fast lasted longer than a few days, continue liquids such as fruit juice for a day or more before gradually increasing more substantial foods. Stop eating when you begin feeling full.

REMEMBER

God is more interested in your attitude and walk with Him than how long you fast. Deliberately abstaining from food is one concrete way to show your commitment and sincerity in seeking God. Zechariah 7:5 reminds God's people to examine whether their fasting is truly for Him.

Five Days of Prayer and Fasting

Day 1: Why We Pray and Fast

Scripture

Matthew 6:16-18

Devotional

Fasting is not a way to twist God's arm or earn His favor. We are already fully accepted in Christ. Instead, fasting is one way we humble ourselves before the Lord and express our hunger for Him.

Food reminds us of our dependence on God. Every hunger pang becomes a prompt to pray. Every craving reminds us that our deepest need is not physical but spiritual. When we fast, we intentionally step away from something good to pursue someone better.

Throughout Scripture, God's people fasted when they desired greater focus in prayer, repentance from sin, guidance from God, or renewed dependence upon Him. Fasting helps quiet the noise of life so we can listen more carefully to the voice of God.

As you begin this week, remember that fasting is not about proving your devotion. It is about positioning yourself before God with an open heart and saying, "Lord, I need You more than anything else."

Reflection

- What am I hoping God will do in me through this week?
- What distractions am I asking the Lord to remove?
- What does my dependence upon food teach me about my dependence upon God?

Prayer Prompts

- Thank God for the gift of salvation through Christ.
- Confess areas of self-reliance and pride.
- Ask God to increase your hunger for Him.
- Pray for greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit throughout the week.

Day 2: Pray For Your Family

Scripture

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

Devotional

The family is one of God's primary gifts and one of His primary means of shaping us. Yet family relationships often bring both great joy and deep challenges.

Whether your family is thriving or struggling, God invites you to bring them before Him in prayer. No heart is beyond His reach, and no situation is beyond His power.

As you fast today, pray for the spiritual health of your family. Ask God to strengthen marriages, encourage parents, protect children, and restore broken relationships. Pray that your home would be a place where Christ is known, loved, and honored.

Remember that lasting change in your family begins with God's transforming work in your own heart.

Reflection

- How can I better reflect Christ in my home?
- What family relationships need healing or restoration?
- How can I intentionally encourage the faith of others in my family?

Prayer Prompts

- Pray for your spouse or future spouse.
- Pray for your children, grandchildren, or younger generations.
- Pray for parents and grandparents.
- Pray for healing in strained relationships.
- Pray that your family would treasure Christ above all else.

Day 3: Pray for the Church

Scripture

Acts 2:42-47

Devotional

Jesus loves His church. He purchased it with His own blood and promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

The local church is more than a building or a weekly gathering. It is God's family, God's temple, and God's mission outpost in the world. Yet every church needs God's continued grace and power. Programs cannot produce spiritual life. Only the Holy Spirit can.

As you fast today, pray that God would deepen the church's love for Christ, commitment to Scripture, and passion for making disciples. Pray that believers would be marked by humility, unity, holiness, and joy.

Ask God not merely to grow the church numerically but to grow it spiritually. We need transformed hearts far more than crowded rooms.

Reflection

- How can I contribute to the health of my local church?
- Where do I need a greater love for God's people?
- What would it look like for our church to be fully surrendered to Christ?

Prayer Prompts

- Pray for your pastors, elders, and ministry leaders.
- Pray for unity within the church family.
- Pray for spiritual maturity among believers.
- Pray that many people would come to faith in Christ.
- Pray for wisdom in making disciples and reaching the next generation.

Day 4: Pray for Our Community

Scripture

Jeremiah 29:7

Devotional

God has placed us in specific neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and communities for a reason. We are called to be salt and light where He has planted us.

Many around us are carrying burdens we cannot see. Some are lonely. Some are struggling financially. Some are battling addiction, grief, fear, or hopelessness. Many have never truly heard and understood the gospel.

As you fast today, ask God to help you see your community through His eyes. Pray not only for people's physical needs but also for their spiritual needs. Pray that God would open doors for gospel conversations and show believers how to demonstrate the love of Christ in practical ways.

Reflection

- Who in my community needs prayer today?
- How has God called me to serve and influence others?
- Who am I praying will come to know Jesus?

Prayer Prompts

- Pray for local schools, teachers, and students.
- Pray for civic leaders, first responders, and healthcare workers.
- Pray for people experiencing hardship and poverty.
- Pray for spiritual awakening throughout your community.
- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with neighbors and friends.

Day 5: Pray for Missionaries

Scripture

Matthew 9:37-38

Devotional

From the beginning, God's plan has been to bless the nations through His people. Jesus commissioned His followers to make disciples of all nations, and that mission continues today.

Missionaries often serve in difficult places, facing spiritual opposition, cultural barriers, loneliness, and sacrifice. Yet they continue faithfully because Christ is worthy to be known among every tribe, tongue, and nation.

As you conclude this week of fasting, lift up those who have gone out for the sake of the gospel. Pray for boldness, protection, endurance, and fruitfulness in their ministry. Pray also that God would raise up more workers for the harvest.

Fasting reminds us that there are things far more valuable than comfort. There are people around the world who have never heard the good news that Jesus saves. May God give us His heart for the nations.

Reflection

- How can I participate more fully in God's mission?
- Am I praying regularly for gospel advance around the world?
- What sacrifices might God be calling me to make for His kingdom?

Prayer Prompts

- Pray for missionaries you know personally.
- Pray for unreached people groups.
- Pray for protection and endurance for those serving overseas.
- Pray for open doors for the gospel.
- Pray that God would send more workers into His harvest fields.

Closing Prayer for the Week

Father, thank You for meeting us during this time of prayer and fasting. Deepen our love for Jesus, strengthen Your church, bless our community, transform our families, and advance the gospel among the nations. May this week not simply change our schedules but change our hearts. Teach us to hunger for You more than anything else, and help us walk in obedience to all You have shown us. In Jesus' name, Amen.