

Old Testament Passages on Fasting

Exodus 34:28

Leviticus 23:27

Deuteronomy 9:9

Judges 20:26

1 Samuel 1:7; 14:24; 20:34; 28:20; 31:13

2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35; 12:16; 21-23

1 Kings 13:8-22; 19:8; 21:9-12, 27

1 Chronicles 10:12

2 Chronicles 20:3

Ezra 8:21-23; 9:5; 10:6

Nehemiah 1:4; 9:1

Esther 4:3; 16; 9:31

Psalms 35:13; 69:10; 102:4; 109:24

Isaiah: 58:1-14

Jeremiah 14:12; 36:6, 9

Daniel 6:18; 9:3; 10:2-3

Joel 1:14; 2:12-15

Jonah 3:5

Zechariah 7:5; 8:19

New Testament Passages on Fasting

Matthew 4:2; 6:16-18; 9:14-15; 15:32; 17:21

Mark 2:18-20; 8:3; 9:29

Luke 2:37; 5:33-35; 18:12

Acts 9:9; 10:30; 13:2; 14:23; 27:9, 33

1 Corinthians 7:5

2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27

Notes on Fasting

- going without food for spiritual reasons, concentrated, focused prayer
- a statement to God that you believe the spiritual is greater than the material
- an opportunity to get closer to God, not distracted by daily concern for food
- is your level of commitment to Christ beyond the level of convenience

-Matthew 6:16-18 the Father “will reward you”

- not to persuade God to do something He doesn't want to do
- not to get God to forgive
- not to punish the body

- I. It is to be done in **sincerity** Matthew 6:16-18; Luke 18:12
 - done with the right motive
 - part of our intimate, private fellowship with the Father
- II. It is to be done in **secret** Matthew 6:16-18
 - not to be seen of others
 - it may be necessary to tell others - spouse, children, etc.
- III. It heightens our **sensitivity to sin** 1 Samuel 7:6; Nehemiah 9:1-2
 - we give God an opportunity to show us our sin that needs to be confessed
 - give concentrated time to prayer causes to become aware of unconfessed sin
 - focus on prayer and our relationship to God
 - a fresh sense of cleansing, purity
 - want to find out how submissive you are? how committed?

(continued on Page 2)

- IV. It must be done in **selflessness** Isaiah 58:1-14
-not to be done for selfish reasons
-must be emptied of selfishness before we can expect to see God at work
- V. It can be done to **seek** God's guidance 2 Chronicles 20:3; Ezra 8:21-23;
 Daniel 9:3; Acts 13:2; 14:23
-to bring our desires, prejudices, persuasions under God's perspective
-to know cleansing that we might hear Him
- VI. It can be used by God to bring **spiritual awakening**
 Joel 1:14; 2:12-17, 28-32; Matthew 17:21

Practical Suggestions:

- those with certain health concerns should not fast, diabetics, pregnant, etc.
 - God's word does not require everyone to fast
 - other ways to set aside time for prayer
- begin with a one day fast
 - Jewish day, from sunset to sunset
- drink plenty of water
- spend extra time in prayer, especially confession and repentance
- spend time studying God's word
- spend time in worship
- check with a doctor before longer fasts (more than 3 days)
- longer fasts may experience headaches, bad breath, dizziness
- if you fail, ask God's forgiveness, then begin again
- don't eat large amounts before fasting

Dangers of Fasting

- 1) Spiritual Hypocrisy
- 2) Legalism, work of the flesh
- 3) Equating spirituality with fasting

For further reading:

- Anderson, E.S. (Andy) Fasting Changed My Life (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977)
Bright, Bill The Coming Revival (Orlando, FL: New Life Publications, 1995)
Townes, Elmer Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996)
Foster, Richard Celebration of Discipline (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988)
Piper, John A Hunger for God (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997)
Wallis, Arthur God's Chosen Fast (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1970)
Whitney, Donald Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life (Colodorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991)
Willard, Dallas The Spirit of the Disciplines (San Franciscico: Harper & Row, 1988)