

What Is Fasting?

In the Bible, fasting is abstinence from food or drink for a specific period of time for the purpose of seeking God and his will. While fasting is typically choosing to abstain from some or all food, we can also choose to fast other things. It can be especially beneficial to fast things that occupy a lot of our time or attention or distract us from investing in our relationship with God. When we fast, it's essential to also focus on drawing near to God through prayer, worship, and Scripture reading.

The Purpose of Fasting:

Prayer and fasting don't change God. They change us! The goal of fasting isn't to get God to do what we want. It's to know God more deeply and discover his will. Through fasting and prayer, we draw near to God so that he can do the work in our hearts and lives he wants to. Fasting helps remind us of our need for God and allows us to seek him with greater focus.

Our 10-day fast is to help prepare us individually and corporately for what God wants to do through us as a community of believers as we launch baseChurch. Although our fast will benefit us personally, it's intended to be a time when we can press into God as a church family and prepare our hearts together so that God can do what He desires among us corporately this year. Because this is a corporate fast, we encourage you to take time to gather together with other believers this week for times of prayer and worship.

Examples of Things You Could Fast:

Food:

- Liquid fast (abstaining from all food, except for liquids such as smoothies, juice, pureed soups, water)
- Juice fast (abstaining from all food and beverages except juice and water)
- Partial fast (choosing not to eat certain foods or fasting specific meals each day)
- Complete fast (abstaining from all food and drinking only water)

Please note: If you have any health challenges that could be impacted by fasting, it is wise to consult your doctor before beginning your fast. If you complete a food fast, be sure to drink lots of water.

Examples of things other than food that you could consider fasting:

- Social media
- Movies, Netflix, YouTube
- Reading books other than the Bible
- Hobbies
- Anything that you know occupies too much of your time or attention

Practical Guidelines for Fasting:

Ask God what he wants you to fast

- Fasting is not about impressing God or others with how spiritual we are but following his leading
- Don't let guilt, peer pressure, or a desire to impress God or others be your motivation for fasting

Be wise, especially when fasting food

- Consider your current health
- Consider the demands of your job
- What can you fast while remaining safe on your job and being a faithful employee?
- If you're fasting food, drink lots of water

Plan ahead

- Plan to pray, read the word, or worship during the time you would have spent on the activity you are fasting—if you don't plan ahead, your schedule will quickly fill up with other things.
- As you pray, use Scripture to guide your prayers so that you are praying according to God's will (1 John 5:14,15). Study the prayers of the Bible and use these as inspiration. The Psalms can also provide great inspiration for prayer.
- Make time to be still and listen for God's voice
- Make time to gather for prayer and worship with other believers
- Every time you crave the thing you have chosen to lay aside, let it remind you to turn your heart toward God in that moment
- Don't be surprised if there is resistance to your fast or if you are tempted to think, "What's the point? Is this making a difference?"
- Whenever we choose to honour God, there will be fruit, even if we don't see it right away.

Recommended Books:

- "Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth" by Richard J. Foster
- "Fasting for Fire: Igniting Fresh Hunger to Feast Upon God" by Jennifer A. Miskov, Lou Engle, Randy Clark
- "Fasting: Opening the Door to a Deeper, More Intimate, More Powerful Relationship With God" by Jentezen Franklin
- "Jesus Fast: The Call to Awaken the Nations" by Lou Engle
- "The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives" by Dallas Willard

Note: All books are available on amazon.ca.