Family Life International Ministries

2024 Prayer and Fasting Guide

Theme: “All In” (Matthew 22:37-38)

**What Is A Fast? (**the spiritual meaning)

* Fasting is seeking the heart and will of God – choosing to abstain from eating food for a period of time, in order to bring our hearts and minds into agreement with God.
* Fasting is an outward expression of an inward commitment to pursue God. When you fast, you slow down to hear from God. Fasting can take various forms and last different lengths of time. When followers of Christ fast, it is always combined with prayer.
* Fasting is abstaining from food (or other things) in order to give ourselves to prayer and fellowship with the Lord. The Bible mentions three kinds of fasts: **Absolute Fast**: No food or water. **Normal Fast:** Abstaining from food. **Partial Fast:** To exclude activities that give us pleasure (such music, entertainment, social media) and include more time in the Word of God, prayer, listening to worship music, reading a books that help your spiritual growth.

**Main biblical references to fasting:**

* + Exodus 34:28 (Moses fasted 40 days & nights)
	+ Joel 2:12-13 (God calls the entire nation to return back to God)
	+ Isaiah 58:6-9 (to bring about Salvation, healing, freedom, restoration)
	+ Isaiah 58:10-12 (become the light that shines in darkness; guidance/direction, restoration)
	+ Matthew 6:16-18 (fasting - between you & God)
	+ Matthew 17:21 (powerful change only occurs when you fast & pray!)
	+ Acts 14:23 (choosing the next generation of leaders)

**The Impact/Effect Of Fasting: (Isaiah 58 – NIV)**

* Vs 6: Freedom for those that are bound; lighten the burden of those we influence;
* Vs 7: Share what we have with those in need; help/support family members in need;
* God’s presence in your life gives light and hope; old wounds begin healing quickly!
* God hears and answers our prayers;
* Feed the hungry; help those in trouble. Re-build families and communities; restore what was lost.

**Fasting/Prayer Details:**

1. The length of the fast is from December 11th– 31st, 2024.

2. The time of fasting is from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 pm daily (or as you may need to modify).

3. You will receive fasting information in your email with recommendations for:

a. Daily devotional reading from which you can write down key thoughts;

b. Fasting to break habits, behaviors, & strongholds. Daily/weekly prayer emphasis – so that you can pray in agreement with us.

c. To join us for Wednesday night teachings, and prayer on FB Live & YouTube.

4. **Connect with a Prayer Partner:** A prayer partner is someone who will pray with you and for you during the fast. They are also able to answer any questions you may have if you are not familiar with fasting. We can assign a partner to you (for anyone who would like someone to pray and check in with during the fast). Please text the word “prayer partner” to (210) 239-7296. Someone will get back with you shortly.

5. DRINK LOTS OF WATER WHEN FASTING, especially if you are fasting food.

6. Text (210) 239-7296 if you have a question about fasting and someone will call you back.

**THE PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF FASTING**

**Types of fasts:**

**Regular fast:** – abstaining from food/drink. What you should do:

1. Drink lots of water (pure water, not carbonated or mineral), herbal teas, or black coffee.

2. Eat high-fiber foods, such as nuts, beans, fruits and vegetables and high protein foods, fish, poultry, tofu during your eating window. Minimize the intake of red meats.

3. Minimize your intake of foods that are high in carbohydrates (fried foods, potatoes, rice, flour, sugar, candy, cakes, etc.). These foods increase hunger.

4. It is common to have slight headaches for the first 2 days, which is due to the toxins being released from your body. The headaches should dissipate by day 3.

6. Before you begin eating at 6:00 pm each day, take a moments and give God thanks for keeping you during that day. Gently break your fast, either with a piece of fruit or a small amount of juice.

7. Fasting promotes detoxification and allows your system to burn unused fats and releases toxins from the body.

8. Fasting promotes healing of inflammatory diseases in the body.

9. Fasting reduces blood sugar.

10. Fasting corrects high blood pressure.

**SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF FASTING**

Today, when we talking about fasting, we voluntarily go without food, drinking water only.

[Isaiah 58:1-14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isa%2058.1-14) tells of the kind of fast that God has chosen. The Hebrews understood the term “afflict thy soul” ([Isaiah 58:5](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isa%2058.5)) to mean *going without food*. They choose to deny themselves something else of value to them such as fasting television or fasting social media.

Since fasting involves humility and the attitude of our hearts, the abstinence we choose should bring us closer to God as we trust Him during this fasting period. When we are fasting for spiritual breakthroughs in our lives, we will reap benefits that we may not expect.

**Deeper Intimacy with God**

Fasting and prayer will deepen our relationship with God and when we willingly give up food to spend time with Him, we will develop a deeper intimacy with Him.

David longed for the presence of God as He cried night and day, [Psalm 42:1-3](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%2042.1-3), and again in [Psalm 63:1-11](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%2063.1-11), we see how he longed for God.  In our time of fasting and prayer, we will have that deeper intimacy with God.

**Answers to Fervent Prayer**

Sometimes we do not see the results we are seeking in our regular prayers. While we cannot control or manipulate God to answering our prayers the way we want, God will see your heart and respond according to His plan.

**Develop Humility before God**

Fasting food for any length of time is humbling. We need food to survive. So when believers voluntarily [“afflict their soul”](https://215ministry.com/humility-and-fasting/) with the fasting of food, they are humbling themselves. When the attitude of your heart is one of truly seeking God, He will see your motive and respond to your heart’s cry.

**Gain Wisdom and Understanding**

When Daniel sought the LORD for help, he fasted for 21 days to gain understanding and wisdom for his situation. [Daniel 10:12](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Dan%2010.12); [14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Daniel%2010.14) tells us that God heard Daniel’s heart and saw his [humility in fasting](https://215ministry.com/humility-and-fasting/) and sent the angel to help him understand.

As you spend time in fasting and prayer, believe that God will give you wisdom and understanding. Not only in the thing you are praying for but also for every area of your life. He will give you a clear mind and better understanding.

**Authority over Demonic Strongholds**

You may be fasting to break the devil’s strongholds in areas of your life or others. While strongholds can be broken through commanding the evil spirits along with using the name of Jesus, fasting can add more spiritual power to the breaking of strongholds.

Some strongholds are stronger than others, meaning that they may have been nagging the believer much longer than others, or, they are stronger simply because the evil spirits are stronger.

Either way, fasting and prayer will equip you in breaking the bonds of wickedness.

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**Repentance and Salvation**

[Jonah 3:4-10](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jonah%203.4-10) tells when Jonah reluctantly obeyed God and gave the people of Nineveh the message from God…to repent of their wicked ways. That message resulted in the entire city repenting before God. Their change of heart caused God to spare them for 100 years.

You may be earnestly seeking salvation for loved ones through times of fasting and prayer. The result may be immediate, soon after or even weeks or months later but God will answer.

**Personal Victories in Your Life**

Another of the many benefits of fasting and prayer is receiving personal victories in your own life. You may be praying for self-control or self-discipline in a certain area of your life and soon after your time of fasting, you may begin to notice the victory in that area.

**Seeing Things the Way God Sees It**

Look again at [Isaiah 58:1-14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isa%2058.1-14). From God’s perspective, He saw the outward appearance of the people fasting but their hearts were in the wrong place. They were not taking their fast seriously as they were enjoying their daily pleasures.

[When we fast,](https://215ministry.com/fasting-necessary-today-for-christians/) God expects us to [humble ourselves](https://215ministry.com/humility-and-fasting/), [2 Chronicles 7:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Chron%207.14), so that we can see the situation as God sees it. He sees the big picture and has a specific time for everything to be accomplished.

As we spend time seeking God in fasting and prayer, we will begin to see two things: ourselves the way He sees us and the situation we’re praying for as He sees it.

**God’s Protection and Help**

When we fast and pray, another benefit is receiving God’s intervention in our circumstances. We are targeted by the enemy and need God’s divine help in winning the victory.

King Jehoshaphat and his people fasted before they went into battle. God said to them, [2 Chronicles 20:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Chron%2020.15), that the battle was not theirs but His. He would be with them and He would deliver them, [2 Chronicles 20:17](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Chron%2020.17). Their fasting and seeking God resulted in a dramatic deliverance.

**Direction in Ministry**

The teachers and prophets along with several other men, in [Acts 13:1-3](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2013.1-3), spent time in fasting as they sought the Lord for direction. The Holy Spirit responded with the direction to send out Barnabas and Saul for ministry to where He was calling them.

Then, if you notice in [Acts 13:3](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2013.3), they fasted a second time before sending them out. This time they also laid hands on them before sending them out into the mission field.

God may be calling you into a new area of ministry. If so, it would be wise to spend time in fasting and prayer to seek His will. You may even ask others to join you as you seek God’s will for your life.