
WHAT IS FASTING?

An Aspect of Prayer

Fasting is stopping eating for a set time in order to devote more time, and give more focus, to prayer.

An Expression of Ultimate Desire

It's a whole-body way of expressing our deepest desires to God.

An Act Involving All That I Am

Fasting involves every part of us in the act of praying. "Fasting is the body talking what the spirit yearns, what the soul longs for, and what the mind knows to be true. Fasting is body talk... the whole person expressing herself or himself completely in prayer" (Scott McKnight - Fasting)

An Act of Resistance

Fasting is a defiant 'NO' to every appetite apart from the appetite to see God move in the things we pray for.

A Means of Grace

Fasting is something that *we* can choose to do, which position us to receive what only *God* can give. Jesus promised that if we fast, "your Father, who sees everything, will reward you". (Matthew 6:18)

A Hearing Aid

As we fast our minds are drawn to God's presence, and it is more likely that we may hear his voice. "One day as these men were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

JESUS ON FASTING

"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.
Matthew 6:16-18



A short guide and introduction

THORNBURY BAPTIST CHURCH

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lifeSTREAMS: Prayer & Fasting



HOW TO FAST

There are many ways to fast, for example:

Ordinary Fast

Stopping all food and drink except water for a set time. This could be as little as cutting out one meal, to refraining from eating for one or more days. The best advice for those starting out is to start small and work up as the Spirit leads.

The ‘Daniel Fast’

This is named after the prophet Daniel who, with his friends refused all ‘fine food’ and chose instead “a diet of vegetables and water,” (Daniel 1:12).

Following that pattern, some fast by abstaining from certain kinds of food and drink for a period of time (for example, eating only fruit and drinking only water for a set time).

The ‘Wesley Fast’

Named after the 18th Century evangelist John Wesley, this is a weekly fast that takes place across the time span of Jesus’ final journey from the Last Supper to the Cross, i.e. sundown on Thursday to sundown on Friday. Once again, there are no set rules and many find it better to adapt the fast (say) from 3pm on Thursday to 3pm on Friday, or between 6pm on those two days.

In all forms of fasting be sensible in terms of your stage of life, health and reasonable needs. Fasting is a means of of grace not a spiritual endurance test!

PRAYERS FOR FAST DAYS

Prayer to Begin a Fast

Heavenly Father,

As I enter this time of fasting, I come before You with a hungry heart. I set aside earthly satisfaction to seek my satisfaction in You.

Lord, purify my mind, my body, and my spirit. Help me to let go of distractions, worries, and selfish desires. Replace them with Your presence, Your peace, and Your purpose.

Let this fast be more than a physical act — let it be a spiritual encounter. May my hunger speak to you of my deep longing to see you act in the lives and situations of those I love.

Be attentive to my cries on their behalf. Do not turn a deaf ear. Do not be indifferent.

Open my ears to hear Your voice more clearly. Let Your Word be my food, and Your grace my strength. Where I am weak, make me strong through Your Spirit.

Search my heart, O God, and reveal anything in me that does not honour You. Refine me, redirect me, and renew me. And may this fast bring healing, clarity, and deeper intimacy with You.

In Your holy name I pray,
Amen.

Short Night Prayer During a Fast

Heavenly Father,

You never sleep or slumber. As this day closes, watch over those for whom I am praying and fasting. Throughout this night be their guard and be attentive to their needs.

I pray the blessing of your your peace upon them as I rest.

Amen.

Arrow Prayer when Feeling Hungry

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for this hunger pang. It reminds me of my deeper needs and concerns as I pray today.

Lord have mercy on those on my heart, and hear my prayers on their behalf.

Amen.

Prayer to Close a Fast

Heavenly Father,

As this time of fasting draws to a close I commit to you all the needs, concerns and requests that I have brought to you.

I trust that you have heard my prayers and I look to you for your continuing help.

I thank you now for the blessing of food. May it strengthen me as I respond to your words spoken to me during this time.

In Your holy name I pray,
Amen.

Please check the LifeWORKS Prayer page on the website for more resources for Prayer:

https://www.thornburybaptistchurch.org.uk/?page_id=15522