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How to begin your fast

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these seven basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

STEP 1. Set your objective

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to **2 Chronicles 7:14**. Make this a priority in your fasting.

STEP 2. Make your commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (**Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15**) For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast—one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, forty days (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often)
- What physical or social activities you will restrict
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3. Prepare yourself spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in **Ephesians 5:18** and His promise in **1 John 5:14,15**.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2).
- Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (**Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13**).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (**Galatians 5:16,17**).

STEP 4. Prepare yourself physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

While you fast

Your time of fasting and prayer has come. You are abstaining from all solid foods and have begun to seek the Lord. Here are some helpful suggestions to consider:

- Avoid drugs, even natural herbal drugs and homeopathic remedies. Medication should be withdrawn only with your physician's supervision.
- Limit your activity.
- Exercise only moderately. Walk one to three miles each day if convenient and comfortable.
- Rest as much as your schedule will permit.
- Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety.
- Expect some physical discomforts, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness, or the "blahs." Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches. Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness.

The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

STEP 5. Put yourself on a schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be. Begin your day in praise and worship.

MORNING

- Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees.
- Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will.
- Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, your church, your community, your country, and beyond.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to **Philippians 2:13**.

NOON

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for your community's and nation's leaders, for the world's unreached millions, for your family or special needs.

EVENING

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

When possible, begin and end each day on your knees with your spouse for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

Dietary Routine

Here are foods that are approved while on the Daniel Fast.

- Beans and lentils. All types are permitted.
- Nuts and seeds. All types are permitted, except those with added salt.
- Fruits and vegetables. All types are permitted.
- Oils and fats. Only vegetable oils are allowed, and only in small amounts, such as to saute vegetables. Olive, avocado, peanut, coconut, grapeseed, canola, walnut, and sesame oil are all approved oils.
- Whole grains. Amaranth, barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, freekeh, millet, oats, plain popcorn, quinoa, rye, sorghum, spelt, teff, whole grain pasta, whole wheat, and wild rice are approved.
- Unleavened bread. Whole grain breads and flatbreads made without yeast, sugars, or preservatives are permitted.
- Herbs and spices. All fresh and dried herbs and spices are permitted and encouraged as flavor enhancers, though salt should be used sparingly.
- Beverages. Water should be your main beverage. Unsweetened plant beverages such as 100% fruit juice are permitted in small amounts.
- Vitamins and supplements. All are permitted as needed. If you use protein powders, they should be minimally processed and meet the diet's guidelines.

Here are foods that should be avoided:

- Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs. Animal products are not permitted.
- Dairy products. All dairy should be avoided, including milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream.
- Added sugar and artificial sweeteners. Table sugar, agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, brown sugar, cane juice, corn syrup, honey, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, and similar products should be avoided.
- Yeast. Yeast and leavened bread products are not permitted.
- Refined grains. White flour and white rice are not permitted.
- Processed foods. Any food that is heavily processed or contains added colors, flavors, or
 preservatives should be avoided. Processed foods include chips, candy, chocolate, premade
 meals, takeout, granola bars, and more.
- Solid fats. Butter, ghee, lard, margarine, and shortening should be avoided.
- Certain beverages. Alcohol, coffee, tea, kombucha, soda, and sugar-sweetened beverages should be avoided.



Drinking fruit juice will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy.

The taste and lift will motivate and strengthen you to continue.

The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth.

Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach's sake.

Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints, even if your breath is bad. They stimulate digestive action in your stomach.

Breaking Your Fast

When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being.

STEP 6. End your fast gradually

Begin eating your normal diet gradually. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

A Final Word

STEP 7. Expect Results

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you
consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His
presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence
and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically
refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians.

It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or your may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor you for your faithfulness.

I encourage you to join me in fasting and prayer again and again until we truly experience revival in our homes, our churches, our beloved nation, and throughout the world.

DANIEL 9:3-4	And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, C Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.

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DANIEL 9:5	We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.
	juagments.

	DANIEL 9:17-19	Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.
		O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.
		O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.
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DANIEL 1:11-14	Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,
	Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.
	Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.
	So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

DANIEL 10:1-3

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing [was] true, but the time appointed [was] long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

DANIEL 10:4-7	And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which [is] Hiddekel;
	Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins [were] girded with fine gold of Uphaz:
	His body also [was] like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.
	And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

WARK 16:15-16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.		And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to
	MARK 16:15-16	every creature.

MATT 4:4	Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."			
		JOHN 6:35	Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
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GALATIANS 5:16	So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the
	flesh.

	MAT 6:16-18	When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigur their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who see what is done in secret, will reward you.
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ZEC 7:4-5	Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, "Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and
	seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?"

MATT 0:14 15	Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them,
MATT 9:14-15	"Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

PSALMS 35:13-14	Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief at though weeping for my mother.

JOEL 2:12	"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

EX 34:27-28		And the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he wa there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.		

JUD 20:26	Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

EZRA 8:21	Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble	
LZRA 0,ZI	ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.	

	And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of	
LUKE 2:36-37	Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was	
	eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.	
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		Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by		
	MATT 4:1-2	the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.		
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ACTS 14:23	Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put
	their trust.



Sample menu for a day in the life of fasting

Breakfast

1-2 servings whole grains with fresh fruit

Mid-Morning Snack

Fresh fruit or fresh chopped vegetables

Lunch

1-2 servings whole grains, fresh salad with legumes and light, organic dressing

Mid-Afternoon Snack

Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with whey protein

Dinner

1-2 whole grains, steamed vegetables, fresh salad with legumes and light, organic dressing

MONDAY	
TUESDAY	

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

