

BIBLICAL FASTING



Faith Apostolic Church Of Christ

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- ◉ **Exodus 34:28** - “And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”
- ◉ **1 Samuel 7:6** - “And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.”
- ◉ **Ezra 8:23** - “So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.”
- ◉ **Luke 4:1-2** - “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ²Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.”
- ◉ **Acts 13:2-3** - “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. ³And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their hands on them, they sent them away.*”

PURPOSE OF BIBLICAL FASTING

1. To seek “a right way” (direction from God) (Ezra 8:21-23)
2. To seek God’s guidance (Judges 20:26)
3. To express grief (after Saul’s death) (1 Samuel 31:13)
4. To seek deliverance or protection (2 Chronicles 20:3-4)
5. To express repentance and a return to God (1 Samuel 7:6)
6. To humble oneself before God (1 Kings 21:27-29)
7. To express concern for the work of God (Nehemiah 1:34)
8. To minister to the needs of others (Isaiah 58:3-7)
9. To overcome temptation and dedicate yourself to God (Matthew 4:1-11)
10. To express love and worship for God (Luke 2:37)

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- ◉ Fasting was a common practice in the Old Testament (Exodus 34:28, 1 Samuel 7:6, Ezra 10:6).
- ◉ In the New Testament, Jesus Christ began his ministry on earth with a lengthy fast of forty days (Luke 4:1-2).
- ◉ In the early Church, the Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to embark on Paul's first missionary journey through prayer and fasting of the church leaders at Antioch (Acts 13:2-3)
- ◉ Our Lord's words "**Moreover when ye fast**" (Matthew 6:16-18), presume that believers today "*will*" fast ("*when,*" not "*if*"), and passages like Acts 13:1-3 and 14:23 indicate that fasting was a practice of the early church (see also 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27).

WHAT IS BIBLICAL FASTING?

- ◉ Biblical fasting is refraining from eating or drastically reducing your food intake for a certain period of time, in order to focus your time, thoughts and attention more on God, for the purpose of sharpening your spiritual responses to certain situations.
- ◉ We tend to be controlled by our fleshly desires, which can become selfish and even destructive when left unchecked.
- ◉ As we fast, we deliberately weaken the powerful bond with our flesh and strengthen our spiritual relationship with God, Spirit to Spirit. But it is an exchange. There must be less of us and more of Him. In other words, our dependency on the flesh must decrease, so that God might increase in us!

WHAT FASTING IS NOT

- ⦿ Fasting is not a means of earning blessings, for they come by God's grace, nor is it practiced to punish the body. Rather, fasting helps us discipline or control the flesh (temperance), establish spiritual priorities, focus on spiritual matters, and exercise faith for spiritual needs. (Goal - A Spiritual experience)
- ⦿ Today we often hear of people "*fasting*" from Facebook, social media, from chocolate or sugar, or from television. Is there merit in these forms of *self-sacrifice*?
- ⦿ To simply to deprive ourselves of a natural desire (such as a specific food, social media, or TV) is not *of itself* "*Biblical*" fasting. Moreover, if we fail to include sincerely devote ourselves to God in worship and prayer, there will be no spiritual benefit.

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- ◉ In contrast to our own specific desires, Food is an obvious choice to deprive the body because we *need* food, and abstaining from it hurts (or afflicts) the body! It brings us to that necessary point of dependence, affliction and submission to God.
 - ◉ A true biblical fast will ALWAYS result is a new **Spiritual experience!!!**



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- The Bible describes three main forms of fasting:
- 1) Refraining from eating food - Involves the total abstinence of food. Luke 4:2 reveals that Jesus “did eat nothing.” Afterwards “He was hungered.” The scriptures indicate that Jesus abstained from food, but it did not mention water.
- 2) In Acts 9:9 we read of an *absolute fast* where for three days Saul “neither did eat nor drink.” The abstinence from both food and water seems to have lasted no more than three days (Ezra 10:6; Esther 4:16). Moses went forty days without bread or water (Exodus 34:28)
- 3) The partial fast—in Daniel 10:2-3, the emphasis is upon the restriction of diet rather than complete abstinence of food. The context implies that there were physical benefits resulting from this partial fast. However, the events that followed (10:5-21) indicates that there was a revelation from God given to Daniel as a result of this time of fasting.

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- ◉ Biblical fasting, unlike fasting for medical or health reasons, must be done with an attitude of seriousness and sincerity. When we fast, we willingly deprive the body of nourishment and the pleasurable taste of food. The body requires food for sustenance; therefore our hearts and minds must be totally focused and directed towards God so that He may be the full source of our strength during our period of fasting.
- ◉ Fasting and prayer are frequently found together in Scripture, for fasting is a preparation for concentrated and humble prayer. (See Ezra 8:21-23; Ps. 35:13; Dan. 9:3; Acts 13:3.)
- ◉ Fasting must be accompanied by sincere humility and brokenness before the Lord (Isa. 58:1-10; Joel 2:12-13; Matthew 6:16-18). If fasting is only a formal religious ritual, it accomplishes no spiritual purpose.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN FASTING

- ◉ Your personal reasons for pursuing a fast.
- ◉ The method of fasting you want to pursue.
- ◉ Your own personal health.
- ◉ The duration of the fast.
- ◉ Your prayer schedule. Less “me” time, more God time to focus.
- ◉ Your prayer (secret) place.
- ◉ Reach your Goal - A Spiritual experience

