

THE FAST THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?" Isaiah 58:6

Prayer and fasting is an essential part of your spiritual growth. Let us come boldly to God's throne of grace with prayer and supplication that He would bring freedom to those who have been bound. As you read what the Scriptures have to say about fasting, let us have a common understanding of this powerful key to spiritual triumph in Christ.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a time set apart unto the Lord when you deny your body of food (not water) and pray. It is a time to humble yourself before God. Fasting is not a means of earning God's approval or favor through self-denial. But the Bible tells us that Spirit-led fasting paves the way for the breaking of bonds of oppression and bondage. (Read Isaiah 58:6-12.)

FASTING IS SCRIPTURAL

1. Jesus taught fasting. (Matthew 4:2; Matthew 6:16; Mark 2:20; 9:29)
2. The early Church practiced fasting. (Acts 13:21 Acts 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5, 2 Corinthians 6:5, 2 Corinthians 11:27)
3. Great people of the Bible fasted and prayed and saw mighty breakthroughs in their situations: David (2 Samuel 1:12); Esther (Esther 4:16); Ezra (Ezra 8:21); Daniel (Daniel 9:3).

FASTING GUIDELINES

1. Ask the Lord how much you should fast. Listen for His voice; experience the joy of being obedient to Him as you realize that He said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me" (John 4:34).
2. Always drink plenty of water while fasting.
3. Do not fast if you have medical or dietary conditions which would make fasting unwise. Check with your doctor if you have any question.
4. If you are unable to do a full-food consider these options:
 - * Drink fruit juices.
 - * Do a "partial" fast where you restrain from delicacies or "pleasant foods."
 - * Fast activities, such as television or recreational pursuits.
 - * Add extra times of prayer beyond your normal pattern.
 - * Enter into worship and intercession for other's needs.
 - * Take five-minute "prayer breaks" throughout the day.
 - * Meet with others for prayer, either in person or by phone.
 - * Meditate in the Word as nourishment for your soul. Jesus said that you "shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).
5. Don't be discouraged. Not everyone feels the effects of the fast immediately. Some people get headaches or feel weak.
6. It is wise to conclude your fast with a light meal. (Soup or a breakfast-type meal without meat is recommended). This will help your body adjust to an increased intake of food.