

Winter Bible Study Series

PRAYER & FASTING



Prayer and Fast With



Critical for a healthy Christian life

Ezra 8:21-23

I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. 22 I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, “The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.” 23 So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer

Luke 18:1

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

What Is Prayer?

communication between a person and God. It is a way to connect with God, ask for forgiveness, guidance, and blessings for oneself and others. Prayer is talking to God, a direct address to Him, and the communication of the human soul with the Lord who created the soul. It is a two-way relationship in which man should not only talk to God but also listen to Him.

What Is Fasting?

To “fast” means to abstain from some or all kinds of food or drink for a period of time.

Fasting can also include the abstaining from other types of behavior and is not just limited to food and drink. We understand the term abstinence to refer to a fast of sexual intercourse until marriage.

Remember

Matthew 17:20-21

So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Biblical Precedent

Old Testament

Day of Atonement

“This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves[a] and not do any work—whether native-born or a foreigner residing among you— Leviticus 16:29

New Testament

Prayer and Fasting as a disciple

- **Jesus Christ fasted. (Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:2)**
- **Jesus said “when you fast,” not “if you fast.” (Matthew 6:16)**
- **Jesus said when the bridegroom was taken, then His disciples would fast. Jesus is the bridegroom and He has been taken up into the heavens for now. The Church Age is a season of needful fasting. (Matthew 9:14-15; Mark 2:18-20; Luke 5:33-35)**
- **Jesus said some devils are only cast out by prayer and fasting. (Mark 9:28,29)**
- **The New Testament saints fasted. (Acts 9:8,9; 13:23; 14:23)**
- **Paul taught us to pray and fast. (1 Corinthians 7:5)**
- **Fasting is one of the ways a minister can commend himself. (2 Corinthians 6:5)**
- **Paul fasted often. (2 Corinthians 11:27)**

How To Fast?

**Fast is about disciple (bringing into submission)
habits, thoughts and activities that afflict our
Christian Health**

- Daniel fasted pleasant bread, flesh (meat), and wine (tasty drink) for three weeks. (Daniel 10:3) Pleasant bread is any food you like a whole lot. Daniel ate during this time. He refrained from the things his flesh craved, but not what was needed for nourishment. He drank liquids, just not wine.

- Daniel fasted the king's meat and wine indefinitely. This can represent fasting anything possibly causing you to pervert judgment. (Daniel 1:8-16)

- First Corinthians teaches married people to fast sex from time to time. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

- Philippians teaches us to be known for our moderation. (Philippians 4:5)

- We should fast sin. Abstain from it or anything even looking like it. (1 Thessalonians 4:3, Acts 15:20,29)

**“fast your attractions so that they don’t
become distractions.”**

Dr. Mark Barclay

Fast With Proper Motives

- **Should not be a dead work**
- **Should be done with a proper heart**

Matthew 6:16-18 “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure 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 sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

- **Should not be done to gain recognition**
- **Should be done to prove anything**

Luke 18:11-12

The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

- Should not be done to justify self**

Isaiah 58:3-4

**‘Why have we fasted,’ they say,
‘and you have not seen it?
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?’**

**“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.**

**Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.**

**You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.**

- **Should be a time of consecration
(sacred)**
- **Should bring about a change for the
better**

Next Lesson

Lesson 2

When and Why You Should Fast