

The Ins and Outs of Fasting and Prayer

Fasting must forever center on God. It must be God-initiated and God-ordained. Like the prophetess Anna, we need to be "worshipping with fasting" (Luke 2:37). Every other purpose must be subservient to God."

Set Your Objective

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.

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.

Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers.

Prepare Yourself Physically

- 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 Medication should be withdrawn only with your physician's supervision.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.

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.

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.

The benefits of fasting are innumerable. Here is just a partial list of the many benefits of this most powerful of spiritual disciplines.

- The Word of God comes alive
- Addictions and strongholds are broken
- We become more sensitive to God's presence
- The physical body is purged of toxins
- It becomes easier to trust and obey God
- The sanctifying process is accelerated
- Faith increases
- Doubts and fear vanish
- God reveals to us our sinful attitudes
- Decrease of self-indulgence
- Decrease of self-righteousness
- Emotional scars are healed