



## FASTING GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

But the days will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.” Matthew 9:15

There has been a resurgence of fasting in recent decades, as God calls His people to regular fasting as part of a normal lifestyle of the saints. We must prepare ourselves adequately so that the fast can honor God and fulfill its purpose. The following is a general overview of biblical precedent and guidelines for wise fasting to help and encourage you.

The level at which a person engages in fasting (particularly food) should be determined according to age and with regard to any physical limitations. Those with a known or suspected physical disability or illness, or those with any history of an eating disorder, should never fast, except in consultation with, and under the supervision of, a qualified doctor. Pregnant or nursing mothers should not fast food or drink as it could negatively affect the health and development of their baby and their own personal health.

Minors are discouraged from fasting from food and should never engage in fasting without express parental consent and oversight. Minors who desire to fast are encouraged to consider non-food abstentions, such as cell phone use, TV, movies, Internet surfing, video games, and other entertainment. If older teenagers do fast food under their parents’ supervision, we encourage them to use juice and protein drinks to sustain them, out of consideration for their health and metabolism.

### ***Physically Preparing for a Fast That Extends More Than Two Days***

- Prepare your body for the fast and prevent constipation during and after the fast by eating certain preventative foods at least two days beforehand (even longer before an

extended fast), such as: fresh fruit and raw vegetables, fruit or vegetable juices, oatmeal, etc.

- Eat smaller meals a few days prior to the fast.
- Avoid high-fat and sugary foods before the fast.
- Make your commitment and determine the length. You can fast in many different ways. Pray, and ask God what He will give you faith for in terms of the duration of the fast.
- A Daniel fast, with vegetables and water, is good for those carrying a heavy workload.
- A fruit or vegetable juice fast allows you to enter into fasting but still gives enough energy to function. Many people have done a 40-day juice fast. If you have sugar sensitivities or problems (e.g. diabetes), consult your doctor before attempting this (or any other) fast.
- A water-only fast has been undertaken by many people. We would not encourage this without strong medical supervision, particularly in the case of young people. Depending on your weight and metabolism, you can go forty days on water alone.
- A total fast is without food or water (all liquids). Never go beyond three days without water. Discuss your plans with your doctor, church leaders, and spouse or parents. We do not encourage the kind of fasting that abstains from all liquids without specific confirmation from the Lord through your church leadership or parents/spouse, etc.

### ***Helpful Hints for Your Fast (Physical)***

- Drink plenty of water. (Drinking at least half of your body weight in ounces of water per day is a good rule of thumb whether you are fasting or not.) Distilled water is most beneficial, but filtered and purified water also work well.
- It is wise to abstain from strong stimulants such as caffeinated and sugary drinks during a fast, including the artificial sweeteners found in diet drinks. Also, avoid soy protein drinks, which have been known to cause health problems during a fast.

- If you are on a juice fast, drink raw fruit juices such as apple, grape, and pineapple, which are excellent sources of necessary natural sugar to stabilize blood sugar and keep energy levels up. Orange and grapefruit juice are also good, but they are not recommended for arthritis or allergy sufferers. Monitor juice acidity carefully as it can cause canker sores (mouth ulcers). Raw vegetable juices such as carrot, celery, beet, or green vegetable combinations are excellent as well. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices can be made in a juice extractor or purchased ready-made (be sure to buy juices without any added sugars). Some of the benefits of drinking raw juice versus bottled are that it does not stimulate digestion (hunger) and it maintains all of its enzymes and nutritional value.
- Expect some physical discomforts because of the detoxification process, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains or dizziness. Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches, but it is a part of the detoxification process. Physical annoyances may also include weariness, tiredness, nausea, and sleepiness.
- During a fast, four major areas of the body are going through a detoxification process. Take care to attend to each of these:
  - 1) The bowels/colon/large intestines: During a fast of three days or more, taking an herbal laxative (inquire at your local health store) or an enema before bedtime will help eliminate solid waste products; these can cause headaches and sluggishness if left in the body during a fast. This should be done early during the fast and then intermittently throughout the rest of the fast. The body begins detoxifying during a fast, depositing the toxins into the intestines. If you do not take a laxative or an enema, the toxins can hurt your intestines or reabsorb into your bloodstream, making you feel nauseous.
  - 2) The kidneys: Drinking fruit juices, vegetable juices, broth, or just plenty of water will remove many toxins via the kidneys.
  - 3) The lungs: If strength permits, walk half an hour during the day to help cleanse the lungs. Also do some deep breathing throughout the day by inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.

4) The skin: Since one-third of the waste products eliminated during a fast are removed via the skin, adequate bathing is essential. Use a natural bristle body brush or loofah sponge on your skin prior to bathing, to help cleanse the skin.

### ***Helpful Hints for Your Fast (Spiritual)***

- Pray, seek advice, and do research before going on a fast. If you are going on an extended fast seek medical advice before the fast, especially if you have any existing medical concerns or conditions. If you are under 18 years of age, discuss your desire to fast with your parents. Spiritual covering, submission, and unity are important factors when fasting. Discuss your plans with your church leaders. Remember, fasting is an attitude of the heart! Ask them if they would consider fasting with you.
- Fast and pray in order to humble yourself and purify your worship. In fasting we are not trying to get something from God, but seeking to realign our hearts' affections with His. In fasting we can more readily say, "We love you, Lord, more than anything in the world." Lust of any kind is perverted worship, but fasting enables us to cleanse the sanctuary of our hearts from every other rival.
- Have a clear target as your prayer focus (what do you need from God?) Without a vision (a clear, prophetic prayer goal), the people perish. Write down your vision, so you can run with it (**Hab. 2:2**).
- Take time to pray and read the Word. This may seem obvious, but busyness and distractions can keep you from devotions. Reading books with testimonies of victories gained through fasting will encourage you, too.
- Expect to hear God's voice in the Word, dreams, visions, and revelations. Daniel prepared himself to receive revelation through fasting (**Dan. 10:1-2**). There is a fasting reward (**Mt. 6:18**).
- Prepare for opposition. On the day of your fast you can bet that donuts will be at the office or in class. Your spouse (or your mom) will suddenly be inspired to cook your favorite meals. Press through. Many times you may feel more tension build at home. Satan tempted Jesus on the fast, and we must expect the same. Discouragement may

come in like a flood, but recognize the source and take your stand on the victory of Christ.

- If you fail, don't give in to condemnation. The "to fast or not to fast" dilemma can be a major tool of the enemy. Even though you may fail several times, God always extends grace. Just hit the "delete" button and continue on your fast.
- Feel free to rest a lot and continue to exercise with supervision.
- **Breakthroughs often come after a fast, not during it.** Do not listen to the lie that nothing is happening. It is our conviction that every fast done in faith will be rewarded.

### ***How to Successfully Break Your Fast***

- Break your fast gradually. At this point you will need to exercise watchful self-control. Break your fast on a meal that is light and easy to digest (i.e., a pound of grapes, a shredded apple, watermelon, or steamed vegetables).
- **When breaking a fast of ten days or more, the break-in period should be extended one day for every four days of fasting.**
- A fast of three days or more should never be broken by eating a normal meal (including animal proteins, bread, sugar, dairy, and processed foods) because these heavy foods put a severe strain and shock on the digestive organs which have been resting throughout the fast. Eating too heavily after a fast can produce serious discomfort (stomach cramps, nausea, and weakness) and can nullify the physical benefits of fasting; it can also cause serious irreversible complications or even death.
- **After breaking an extended fast, continue drinking fruit or vegetable juices because the stomach is continuing to detoxify.**
- During any fast exceeding two days, your stomach will shrink. Do not over-expand it again by overeating. If you have been prone to eating too heavily, guard against going back to this habit. If you train yourself to eat more lightly, your stomach will adjust itself accordingly.

- While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:
- 1st–3rd day after the fast (increase amount of days for extended fast): Eat fruit and raw/steamed vegetables only. Example meals for the first few days are a pound of fruit, a baked or boiled potato without butter, steamed vegetables, or a vegetable-only salad without oil-based dressing. Avoid bananas for the first few days; they have no juice in them and can easily cause constipation.
- Thereafter, you may return to heavier foods such as animal proteins, but maintaining a healthy diet after the fast will promote lifelong health and allow you to fast correctly in the future.
- Take extra care in breaking a water fast. Begin with drinking fruit or vegetable juices and gradually ease into eating fruit and steamed vegetables.
- It is important after a fast to begin to discern between real hunger and cravings so you do not feed your cravings.

### ***Important Medical Considerations***

- Pregnant or nursing mothers should never fast all food and/or drink, as fasting could be very dangerous to their baby’s development and health, and their own personal health. Pregnant or nursing mothers could engage in types of fasting such as giving up certain kinds of food. However, women who are nursing or pregnant must always maintain a balanced diet. Any kind of fasting which leads to detoxification could be dangerous to the baby as the toxins can affect the baby via the mother’s milk or her bloodstream.
- People who have struggled with eating disorders in the past should undertake any fasting with wisdom and caution. Fasting should not be used as a motive for weight-loss; it is important to enter back into “normal” healthy eating after a long fast (as described in the previous section).
- If you have a diagnosed illness and/or are taking prescription medicine, fasting should only be done under the direct supervision of a doctor or healthcare professional.

- \*Some people have trouble fasting and become extremely hungry, dizzy, and nauseous because they may have undiagnosed low blood sugar, so they should drink fruit and vegetable juices to help keep the blood sugar stable during short fasts. If the juice contains too much sugar for your system, dilute it by 50 percent with water or drink a “green drink” (made by juicing carrots, celery, spinach, and parsley). If these or any symptoms persist, you should stop fasting and seek immediate professional help from a doctor or healthcare professional.
- If you are having digestive trouble after breaking a fast (e.g., diarrhea), mixing a cup of unsweetened applesauce with a cup of cooked brown rice may help. This should stop the diarrhea. Also, take digestive enzymes (inquire at your local health store) to aid your stomach’s digestive transition.

***This Handout Is for Informational Purposes Only***

The information in this handout reflects only the limited opinions, experience, and suggestions of PFC and is not meant to substitute the advice provided by your doctor or other healthcare professional.

You should not use this information for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease, or prescribing any medication. Additionally, this information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. These tips have been found “to be helpful and successful, but they are no guarantee that you will fast without experiencing any difficulties. You will need to do your own research, talk with health experts and those experienced in fasting, and continually ask the Lord for increased discernment and wisdom concerning fasting and healthy living.

***\*The information contained in this document has been pulled from multiple sources and personal experience of our pastor.***