



PRAYER AND FASTING FOR HOLISTIC HEALTH (body, soul & spirit)

Fasting Is Biblical

The practice of regular fasting as normal Christian behavior was taught by Jesus (Mt. 6:16–17, 9:15), exercised by the early church (Acts 13:2), and has been the regular discipline of believers throughout church history. The practice of fasting in Scripture usually includes, but is not limited to, abstinence from food (Dan. 10:3) and may be engaged in for varying durations—typically for no more than a few days at a time.

Abstaining from all food for extended periods of time is biblical, but was rare and unusual in Scripture (Ex. 34:28; 1 Kgs. 19:5-8; Lk. 4:2), and thus should never be undertaken without counsel and appropriate supervision. The same standard applies to an absolute fast (Esther fast—no food or water for three days) of any duration (Est. 4:16). The maximum length of an adult fast that is biblically supported is forty days without food for a male adult in good health, and three days without water. The Bible does not speak of children engaging in fasting food.

Fasting Is Always Voluntary

Though spiritual leaders may invite others to join in corporate fasting with a specific goal in mind and for a specific time, fasting can never be forced or made compulsory. But Piercing Faith Church does promote and encourage fasting as a biblically and historically proven means of positioning our heart to receive more of God's grace in the context of commitment to prayer and to the Word (Joel 2:15).

The level at which a person engages in fasting (particularly food) should be determined according to age and regarding 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.

Fasting is an ancient practice of humanity and animal life. Often associated with mourning, repentance, and prayer. Fasting can be voluntary or involuntary and its impact depends upon the motivation. However, for our purpose of discussion we will be dealing with fasting from a New Testament perspective as a spiritual discipline for holy living, which was always connected with prayer.

What is Biblical Fasting?

- Fasting ALWAYS involves FOOD! Many individuals and groups of people have misunderstood what fasting is and is not. The Hebrew word for fast means “**to cover the mouth.**” The Greek word for fast means “**to abstain from food.**” While we do need to get away from everyday distractions of our lives and spend time alone with God, away from people, **fasting is always about restricting food!** Everything else is self-discipline and dying to our flesh. So, to truly benefit from the fast **one would have to restrict/change their normal food intake.**
- Fasting is a spiritual discipline. The motivation should be a desire and hunger for the will of YAHWEY (godly reason) as we get quiet and humble ourselves before Him, so we can hear what He is saying to our situation. When we satisfy our flesh with everything that it demands we tend to drown out God’s voice because we become very preoccupied with self-gratification. During fasting **we take charge of our flesh**, making it a servant to our born-again spirit, and thus we can get in tune with what the Holy Ghost is saying. A means of changing us through progressive transformation

What Biblical Fasting is not!

- Method to manipulate God
- Fasting from friends, television, the mall...
- Fasting is not a healthy weight loss plan
- Fasting should never be done to show off how spiritual you are

In Matthew 6:16-18 Yeshua was noticeably clear on the subject, telling us not to toot your own horn. Not to brag about what you are doing and how you are “sacrificing” something for God—let the Lord be your Rewarder, not men! **However, if you are taking part in a congregational fast, feel free to invite others to join, with humility.** You might find that having outside support will help you be more diligent in your efforts as well.

What Happens During the Fast?



image source: <http://intheimageofhisgloryministries.blogspot.com>

Fasting is undertaken by people of all ages for many assorted reasons. However, whatever your need/reason is you can be certain that your entire being will benefit from it: Spirit, Soul, and Body. We are tri-part beings. When we fast, we strengthen our faith as we engage His word, and we learn to allow Gods-intended order into our life: as human we are a **spirit that possesses a soul and lives in a body.**

Body

Our bodies are most definitely going to be impacted as we change our diet by abstaining from all food or certain foods. For some the change is going to be dramatic. **You might experience detoxing from food addictions**, such as: caffeine, processed or unnatural foods, chemicals, and sugar.

The symptoms that accompany the detox process might be light or more pronounced: headaches, leg cramps, fatigue, nausea, and even **light depression**. As the body detoxes, the symptoms will alleviate, and you will experience more energy, better sleep, clearer and sharper mind, and many other benefits. So, take the time to ride it out. If you need support, ask others for prayer.

Most people will lose weight during the fast. Some may experience healing from various maladies, such as: diabetes, allergies, arthritis, high cholesterol and even cancer.

Soul

The soul is the principal place of our emotions, intellect and will. It is the place where we make decisions, experience anger, fear, love, frustration, and cravings. The soul is frequently referred to as “the flesh” in the Bible. Which is our natural or the old nature. During the fast your soul may rebel against the change in your diet. You will get an opportunity to **experience and win** this battle over the flesh, which might prove to be one of the most powerful lessons of the fast.

Spirit

Our spirit is the part of us that can be or has been born again when we gave our lives over to Christ. It should be the part that surrenders to God. **When we are fully surrendered, we can truly abide in Yeshua. Our spirit is filled with the Holy Ghost (regenerated) if we yield to Him.** The purpose of the fast is to place our born-again spirit in control of the other two parts of us: soul and body. When our flesh is acting out with a craving, we take control of it with our born-again spirit.

Praying with all Prayer

When I was growing up in church, we use to sing a song that said; “Stop now it’s praying time, the sun is almost down”. That was many years ago and times have gotten worse. In Luke chapter 18 verse one, Dr. Luke’s exhortation is for men (humanity) to always pray. Fasting is a great spiritual discipline, but it must be accompanied by **prayer**. Paul expands upon this theme in **Eph. 6:18**, informing the saints that they should be “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints...”)

So, what does it mean to pray with all prayer? It simply means that there are multiple kinds of prayer that we as saints, should be utilizing.

For starters, I think we should keep it simple saints. Our God delights in hearing the prayers of those made righteous in Yeshua (Proverbs 15:8, I Peter 3:12). You need not wait until you have taken a prayer course to have a conversation with our Heavenly Father. Talk with Him as our Creator with great reverence. Confide in Him with expectation of answered prayers.

Relationship Building Prayers

This is where our intimate relationship with God is nurtured. During this time, we express our **thanksgiving, praise, worship, and adoration for God**. We fellowship with Him, talk to Him as a friend, sing praises to Him and sometimes quietly wait in His presence.

This relationship building phase of prayer keeps the soil of our hearts fertile and ready to receive His Word, His will, and His guidance. It is here that we express repentance for our sins. We pour out our heart to God and express our love for and trust in Him, even amid demanding situations or challenges. This is the place where we reaffirm our commitment to serving Him and renew our determination to remain steadfast and unwavering, for He is faithful to fulfill His promises.

Ask, Seek and Knock

A petition is a specific legal request. Which means there is a process for filing the petition. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6 that the saints should make their request known unto God with thanksgiving. Through the pen of Matthew (7:7-11) we are told that Yeshua encouraged his disciples/followers to ask, seek and knock for what they needed based upon His word. John weighs in on the subject (I John 5:14,15) assuring us that God will grant our petitions when we ask according to His will.

So, what is His will? His Word, the Holy Bible in its original manuscript. When we have needs, we can search the scriptures to see what God has promised us or has already provided for us as our inheritance in Christ Jesus. Then we can pray in accordance with Mark 11:22-24 as one of the “whosoever” that believes, says, and receives it by faith. I am learning that we should know God’s will from his word before we pray. This is a position of confidence, and we need not pray "if it be Thy will" because we know God's will from His Word. But we should pray thy will be done in earth (me) as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10).

*Materials taken from various sources