

Guidelines For Fasting

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Many of the Bible characters practiced the spiritual discipline of fasting. These guidelines are for you **before** you begin a fast.

What is fasting?

Fasting is abstaining from food or certain foods for a particular period of time in order to feast upon God's word for a particular prayer request.

It is important that you plan your fast.

- I recommend that you start out by fasting from one meal, the evening meal. For the noon meal that day, eat a little less than usual in preparation for fasting that evening. Drink extra water during the afternoon in preparation for the evening fast.
- Identify the passage of Scripture that you will be feasting on during the evening fast. I would recommend Colossians 1:9 – 20, Paul's prayer for the Colossian church and the word picture of Jesus Christ. Or Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12, the great Suffering Servant song of Isaiah.
- Identify the particular prayer request that you will be focusing upon during the evening fast.
- The morning after your evening fast, break the fast with a glass of water and something light. When you fast you are giving your digestive system a short break. You don't want to wake it up with something too rich or heavy.

After you have practiced a few evening meal fasts, then try the two-meal fast, fasting from the noon and evening meal. The same guidelines apply for this fast, especially drinking plenty of good water during the morning and afternoon of the fast, and breaking the fast with a large glass of water and a light breakfast.

After you have practiced the two-meal fast, try the three-meal fast. Begin the three-meal fast with the evening meal, breakfast, and noon meal. It is very important to drink plenty of good water (not from the tap) before and during the three-meal fast. Follow the same guidelines with Scripture and prayer.

Have some fruit juice and/or almonds ready in case you start to feel a little dizzy or faint during your fast. Listen to your body during a fast. Don't be legalistic. Use common sense.

Consider other types of fasting such as from all media, or certain types of foods like salt or sugar, or the silent fast (from speaking).

A good book on fasting is John Piper's book entitled *A Hunger For God*.