

# PRAYER AND FASTING

**FASTING:** Giving up food for a spiritual purpose

**PRAYER:** Asking a favor of God, talking with God

## REASONS FOR FASTING

God desires relationship with us. He is chiefly interested in our trust and obedience. He is the object of our motivation. Fasting seems to be an expression of our desire to seek and please Him. Fasting displays to God that He is more important than even food.

Fasting works! Prayer and fasting seem to work in synergy. Once when the disciples failed to exorcise demons, Jesus explained that in such instances prayer and fasting were required.

Fasting seems to move God to action. Of course, this does not mean that we can manipulate God by fasting, but for some reason there are times God desires us to underline our requests with fasting.

## PRAYER

Communication is a vital component in every kind of relationship. The current texting and social media phenomena are illustrations of the importance of communication. God wants to be on an open line with us every moment of every day. We can communicate need, thanks, praise, and emotion, as well as receive warning, affirmation, and wisdom at any moment.

For some mysterious reason, at times, God wants our requests before mobilizing His resources into action. Our prayers are effective.

## TYPES OF FASTS

There are several kinds of fasts, and there is no formula for determining which kind of fast, or duration is most appropriate for you. The following are three Biblical examples of fasting:

### **Absolute Fast**

Taking in nothing including water. This is extreme and should NOT be attempted without first talking to your doctor.

### **Normal Fast**

Withholding food, but not liquids like water and juices to maintain strength and electrolytes.

### **Partial Fast**

In the Bible, Daniel and his companions ate vegetables and water, but not the King's meat and sweets. This type of fast may be more appropriate if you have certain health issues. For some people, giving up chocolate or coffee may be a real reminder to pray.

You can also fast anything that means something to you: Media, Sports, Shopping, etc.

### **During a fast, always devote extra time to:**

- Reading God's word (The Bible)
- Praying
- Focusing on God
- Worshipping
- and ALWAYS serving/helping others (this is not a time of selfishness).

## HISTORY OF FASTING

The practices of praying and fasting can be found in both the Old and New Testaments. Before Jesus, our model, began his public ministry he fasted for 40 days in preparation. The scriptures listed in this brochure cite other instances of fasting found in the Bible.

## MOTIVES

A particular danger in fasting is that our God-centered motives can be tainted by our motives to draw attention to our self and impress others. Jesus cautions us to as much as possible let our fast be between us and God. We all really know God sees our heart and is never fooled. (See Isaiah 58)

## SCRIPTURES RELATED TO FASTING

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| • Matthew 4:14     | • Psalm 51              |
| • Matthew 6:17-18  | • Psalm 139             |
| • Matthew 17:14-20 | • 2 Chronicles 7:14     |
| • Joel 1:14        | • Jeremiah 29:10-14     |
| • Joel 2:12        | • Matthew 5-7           |
| • Exodus 34:28     | • Luke 10:38-42         |
| • Acts 13:2-3      | • Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 |
| • Acts 14:23       | • Galatians 5:16-26     |
| • Isaiah 58        |                         |

## FASTING & NORTH PARK

Northpark Church has made fasting an important part of our church life as we recognize that we need God's help in fulfilling our task as a church. Fasting for 21 days in January has become an important part of beginning our year with a focus on God and what He wants to accomplish in our individual lives, and the life of our church.

### TESTIMONIES

- *"I feel closer to God than ever... have trusted the Lord all my life, but never as much as I have in the past few months."*
- *"I felt that there was a greater sense of peace in my home."*
- *"God showed me how much I can really get done for Him and my family when I don't let media get in the way."*
- *"I quit smoking!!! Yeah... God is great!"*
- *"Every year's fast gets better. The extra time with God is so valuable, in terms of direction and introspection. I wonder 'why does it take a church wide fast? Why don't I live like this all year long?'"*
- *"I was tempted a lot but was blessed by the extra time and the calmness that came from this. I also felt like I became more organized and was able to time manage better when I didn't have the technology thing going on."*
- *"It was amazing how God helped me realize that with Him, I can give up something that seems hard to live without and let go of control [in other areas of life]. LET OTHERS IN! With God ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!"*



**NORTHPARK**  
*Community Church*

**Building Lives Through Relationships**

with God

with each other

with those who do not yet know Christ

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