



ASKing with Fasting



When you pray... when you fast... Matthew 6:5,16

Jesus teaches prayer and fasting as related subjects. Sometimes scripture even describes them as combined activities. (E.g. Matthew 17:21, Acts 14:23) In ASK Network we **ASK with fasting**, as the Lord directs. **Receive from Him anything we ASK, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him. 1 John 3:22**

Fasting food and drink quickly reminds us of our humanity. Hence, it helps us focus on God. It is known medically that the body should not go more than three days without water or forty days without food. These are the natural limits of most biblical fasts. There are only three exceptions: the supernatural fasts of Jesus, Elijah and Moses who all did forty-day fasts without food or water; Moses twice. Interestingly Elijah and Moses appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, representing the Law and the Prophets.

Here we are looking primarily at the devotional practice of abstaining from food, or maybe drink, but God may ask any kind of a fast of us as He does in Isaiah 58 where abstaining from various sinful behaviors can break the effect of injustice.

Reasons for fasting when ASKing on behalf of Church, communities and all nations:

- ➔ **To be humbled** I humbled my soul by fasting. Psalm 69:10 I proclaimed a fast... that we might humble ourselves before our God. Ezra 8:21
- ➔ **To be holy** They stood and confessed their sins. Nehemiah 9:1-3 Then your righteousness will go before you. Isaiah 58:8
- ➔ **To be heard** So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. Ezra 8:23 They declared a fast, and all of them... When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. Jonah 3:5,10
- ➔ **To hear** I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes... "I have now come to give you insight and understanding." Daniel 9:3,22

More on the reverse side...

Types of fasting:

- ➔ **Total fast:** Esther observed a three-day fast with no food or water. (The maximum a body can sustain naturally.) *Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do.* Esther 4:16 The result for Esther was the deliverance of an entire people. Paul also did a total fast for three days. *For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.* Acts 9:9 This was preparation for ministry.
- ➔ **Abstaining from food only:** This is what is understood by most biblical references to fasting. E.g. Ezra — 9:5, 10:6, People of Nineveh — Jonah 3:5-9, Anna — Luke 2:37, Church in Antioch – Acts 13:2-3, etc.
- ➔ **Partial fast:** This can be a very useful form of fasting as it need not affect every day life. Daniel did a partial fast for three weeks: *I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.* Daniel 10:3

Before you fast:

- ➔ Be clear as to the spiritual objective of the fast.
- ➔ Seek the Lord as to how long (sunset to sunset, one, three, ten, twenty-one and forty days are all mentioned in scripture.) If it is to be an extended fast prepare carefully and prayerfully, and break fast wisely.
- ➔ Pray about what kind of fast (total, food, partial or some other).
- ➔ Ask the Lord to purify your motive and humble your heart.
- ➔ Determine if this is a public fast with others (e.g. Zechariah 7:5) or private (Acts 13:2).
- ➔ Make yourself accountable to someone.
- ➔ If you might have any medical complications check with a doctor.



**To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins
by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and
priests to serve His God and Father—
to Him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.**

Revelation 1:5-6