

21 Days Fasting & Prayer

A Definition

Prayer and fasting is defined as voluntarily going without food in order to focus on prayer and fellowship with God. Prayer and fasting often go hand in hand, but this is not always the case. You can pray without fasting, and fast without prayer. It is when these two activities are combined and dedicated to God's glory that they reach their full effectiveness. Having a dedicated time of prayer and fasting is not a way of manipulating God into doing what you desire. Rather, it is simply forcing yourself to focus and rely on God for strength, provision, and wisdom you need.

What the Bible Says

The Old Testament law specifically required prayer and fasting for only one occasion, which was the Day of Atonement. This custom became known as "the day of fasting" (Jeremiah 36:6) or "the Fast" (Acts 27:9). Moses fasted during the 40 days and 40 nights he was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God (Exodus 34:28). King Jehoshaphat called for a fast in all Israel when they were about to be attacked by the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chronicles 20:3). In response to Jonah's preaching, the men of Nineveh fasted and put on sackcloth (Jonah 3:5). Prayer and fasting was often done in times of distress or trouble. David fasted when he learned that Saul and Jonathan had been killed (2 Samuel 1:12). Nehemiah had a time of prayer and fasting upon learning that Jerusalem was still in ruins (Nehemiah 1:4). Darius, the king of Persia, fasted all night after he was forced to put Daniel in the den of lions (Daniel 6:18). Prayer and fasting also occurs in the New Testament. Anna "worshiped night and day, fasting and praying" at the Temple (Luke 2:37). John the Baptist taught his disciples to fast (Mark 2:18). Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights before His temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:2). The church of Antioch fasted (Acts 13:2) and sent Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:3). Paul and Barnabas spent time in prayer and fasting for the appointment of elders in the churches (Acts 14:23).

Is fasting required/recommended?

The Word of God does not specifically command believers to spend time in prayer and fasting. At the same time, prayer and fasting is definitely something we should be doing. Far too often, though, the focus of prayer and fasting is on abstaining from food. Instead, the purpose of Christian fasting should be to take our eyes off the things of this world and focus our thoughts on God. Fasting should always be limited to a set time because not eating for extended periods can be damaging to the body. Fasting is not a method of punishing our bodies and it is not be used as a "dieting method" either. We are not to spend time in prayer and fasting in order to lose weight, but rather to gain a deeper fellowship with God. By taking our eyes off the things of this world through prayer and biblical fasting, we can focus better on Christ. Matthew 6:16-18 declares, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

What does fasting & prayer accomplish?

Spending time in fasting and prayer is not automatically effective in accomplishing the desires of those who fast. Fasting or no fasting, God only promises to answer our prayers when we ask according to His will. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him." In the prophet Isaiah's time, the people grumbled that they had fasted, yet God did not answer in the way they wanted (Isaiah 58:3-4). Isaiah responded by proclaiming that the external show of fasting and prayer, without the proper heart attitude, was futile (Isaiah 58:5-9). How can you know if you are praying and fasting according to God's will? Are you praying and fasting for things that honor and glorify God? Does the Bible clearly reveal that it is God's will for you? If we are asking for something that is not honoring to God or not God's will for our lives, God will not give what we ask for, whether we fast or not. How can we know God's will? God promises to give us wisdom when we ask. James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

What to do during your fast:

Scripturally, fasting is almost always partnered with prayer, read Ezra 8:21, 23 and Luke 2:36-37.

During times when you would normally eat you may want to:

- Worship - Nehemiah 9:1-3, Acts 13:1-3
- Repentance - Joel 2:12-17
- Petition - Daniel 9:3,17
- Read the Word of God - Nehemiah 9:1-3, Jeremiah 36:6
- Ask for direction and guidance - Judges 20:19-46, Ezra 8:21

Our prayer for you over the duration of the fast is that your passion for God and His Word will be ignited, and that you will develop a hunger for His presence that is greater than ever before!

Fasting Guide

When most people start fasting, there is typically some level of discomfort. However, it is possible to get used to the fasting routine pretty quickly. Quite simply, you must learn to fast in a way that works for you. While any true fast does involve abstinence from food or at least certain types of food, typically, different fasting combinations work differently for everybody and can change depending on the season you are in.

The goal is to get to a place where your mind is easily focused on God and spiritual things. You will have an increased spiritual energy, you can feel the fast working.

If you drink coffee regularly, one of the worst mistakes you can make is to fast for one to three days and cut caffeine out abruptly and completely. Please don't do that or you will spend this time grumpy and in withdrawal instead of enjoying God's presence. Mixing things up a bit during a twenty-one-day fast is what typically works best for people. For example, do a fruits and vegetables fast for a week. Then do all liquids for a while. Maybe even mix in a few days of only water if you think you are ready for that. Then go back to fruits and vegetables for a few days.

There isn't one approach that works the same for everyone. Follow the Holy Spirit, mix it up, find what works for you. With today's protein drinks and juicing machines, it is so easy to get a healthy dose of all your nutritional needs even while taking in only liquids.

Choosing your fast:

It is important to reiterate that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. While preparing for your fast, it is important to choose ahead of time what type of fast, or what combination, you will pursue. Not only will this help with making the necessary preparations to implement your plan, but as you commit to a specific fast ahead of time and know how you're going to do it, you will position yourself to finish strong.

Different types of fasting:

- Full Fast: Drink only liquids, primarily water, with optional clear broth and 100% fruit and vegetable juices.
- Specific Foods: Omit specific items like red meat, processed foods, or sweets from your diet.
- Juice Fast: Consume only vegetable and fruit juices and water. Adding protein shakes can enhance nutrition.
- Daniel Fast: A flexible fast involving vegetables and water, with variations based on Daniel 1 and 10. Avoid rich foods, meats, and wines.

Health Warning: Avoid fasting from water, and consult a healthcare professional if you have medical conditions, are pregnant, or on medication. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

What we're praying for:

Week 1

Day 1 - Monday 9th September Our Pastors and Their Family

We're praying for Andrew, Alana, and their whānau. May they be filled with wisdom, insight, and joy as they lead us into 2025 and beyond. Let's also lift up Jacob, Elle, and Reuben, that they grow strong in their faith and experience God's protection and love.
Hebrews 13:17

Day 2 - Tuesday 10th September Our Leadership and Teams

Pray for wisdom and strength for our leaders, elders, and trustees. Ask for peace in their homes and insight as they guide us forward.
Matthew 20:26; 1 Peter 5:1-3

Day 3 - Wed 11th September C3 Global Movement

We're lifting up the C3 Global Movement, including Ps Phil and Chris Pringle and our Pacific Directors, Ps Tamati and Tessa Cameron. Pray for salvation, discipleship, and the Holy Spirit's power across all C3 Churches.
John 14:6

Day 4 - Thursday 12th September Our Church Community & Unity in Christ.

Let's pray for our community; singles, couples, families, children, and youth. May God's love shine through our relationships, and may we grow in grace together. Also, pray for unity at The Found and among Whakatipu churches, inspiring love and good deeds as we build God's kingdom.
Ephesians 4:3, Hebrews 10:24-25, John 13:35

Day 5 - Friday 13th September Passion for Worship

We're praying for a renewed passion for worship at The Found. Lift up our worship team, asking for more musicians with integrity and a deep love for God. For a new sound to rise, for songs to come forth from The Found that bring heaven to earth. Psalm 100

Day 6 - Saturday 14th September Peace for Jerusalem

Today, we pray for peace in Jerusalem and that the people of Israel may come to know Yeshua as their Messiah.
Psalm 122:6; Psalm 40:7

Day 7 - Sunday 15th September Our Tamariki

Pray for our tamariki (children) and the team who will disciple them. Ask for creative ideas, joy, and lasting friendships as they grow in their relationship with Jesus.
Mark 9:37; 3 John 1:4

Week 2

Day 8 - Monday 16th September Friends and Neighbours

Let's pray for our friends and neighbors, asking God to open their hearts and give us opportunities to share His love with them.
Romans 10:13-14; John 15:4-8

Day 9 - Tuesday 17th September Our Region

Pray for Whakatipu and Central Otago, for unity among local churches, and for a fresh move of the Holy Spirit. Lift up community outreaches like our youth group and food initiatives.
Ephesians 4:1-16

Day 10 - Wed 18th September The Global Church

Pray for the global Body of Christ, especially those facing persecution. Ask for revival and the spread of God's kingdom worldwide.
Matthew 28:19-20; Revelation 7:9

Day 11 - Thursday 19th September Church Planting and Growth

Pray for new church plants and the growth and health of churches who join us. Ask for relationship, resources, favour and open hearts to the message of Jesus, and building His Church. Acts 2:47; Colossians 4:3; Ephesians 6:19

Day 12 - Friday 20th September Praying for Our Local and NZ Government

Let's pray for our local and NZ government, asking for wisdom, integrity, and justice in their decisions. May they serve with humility and a heart for the people. Also, pray for unity among leaders and for policies that reflect God's heart and Word. Lift up our police, fire, and service workers as they protect and serve our communities.
1 Timothy 2:1-2, Proverbs 11:14, Micah 6:8

Day 13 - Saturday 21st September Helping Others Know Jesus

We're asking God to make our gatherings welcoming and full of His presence. Pray that more people would encounter Jesus' love and follow Him.
Matthew 28:19

Day 14 - Sunday 22nd September Encouraging five-fold and spiritual gifts within The Found and in peoples spheres of influence

Let's pray for God to raise up apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers among us, equipping our church for works of service and building up the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12

Week 3

Day 15 - Monday 23rd September Praying for Health and Healing

Let's pray for those in our community who are facing health challenges - physical, mental, or emotional. Ask for God's healing touch and for strength and wisdom for healthcare workers. May His peace and comfort bring hope and renewal to those in need.
Psalm 103:2-3, James 5:14-15, Isaiah 53:4-5

Day 16 - Tuesday 24th September Guidance for Leadership

We're lifting up our leadership, asking for God's wisdom in appointing new trustees, elders, and deacons. Pray for spiritual gifts to complement the needs of our church. 1 Timothy 3:1

Day 17 - Wed 25th September Praying for Generosity and Stewardship

Let's pray for a spirit of generosity in our community. May we give faithfully through tithes and offerings, trusting God to use our contributions for His kingdom's work. Pray that our giving supports ministry efforts locally and beyond, aligning our hearts with God's purpose.
2 Corinthians 9:7

Day 18 - Thursday 26th September Revival Among Youth

Pray for a revival among our high-school youth. Ask God to ignite a passion for Jesus in their hearts and lead them to boldly share their faith.
1 Timothy 4:12; Acts 2:17

Day 19 - Friday 27th September Outreach and Evangelism

Today we're praying for boldness in outreach and evangelism. Ask for divine opportunities to share the gospel and for hearts to be ready to receive it.
Romans 1:16; Matthew 9:37-38

Day 20 - Saturday 28th September Spiritual Gifts in Action

Pray for the activation of spiritual gifts within our church. Ask God to reveal and empower each person's gifts for the edification of the body.
1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Day 21 - Sunday 29th September A Future of Hope and Faith

Let's close this fast by praying for the future of The Found. Ask God to lead us with clarity and unity as we move forward in faith and hope.
Jeremiah 29:11; Proverbs 3:5-6