



21-Day Fast

January 6th – January 26th

According to Jesus in Matthew 6, there are three disciplines every Disciple is called to practice: **Fasting, Prayer and Giving**. Biblical fasting takes a lot of discipline and strength – strength that you can only receive from God. It is a time to choose the will of God over your own will, seeking his purposes anew. When you give God your first and your best through **Fasting, Prayer and Giving** at the beginning of the year, you set the course for the entire year! Fasting, Prayer and Giving are inseparably linked to one another as well. Simply put, fasting without prayer and giving is called a diet. The promises of God over your life are valid because of what Christ did for us (2 Cor. 1:20), and as we discover how to be true disciples, we want to follow the example Jesus set for us in how we fast, pray and give.

Why Should I Fast?

First and foremost, we fast because it is a command for disciples of Jesus. We like to say we are discipleship-driven, meaning our priority, as a tribe of people, is to find opportunities to follow Jesus in every way. Fasting is about:

- Re-aligning with God's Will
- Re-submitting to God's Authority
- Re-dedicating Ourselves to God's Purposes

We also fast, following the example and tradition of countless biblical heroes – Moses the Lawgiver, Esther the Queen, David the King, Paul the Apostle and Jesus the Son of God turned to fasting to align themselves with God's Will and become empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The Biblical Benefits of Fasting:

1. Increases Spiritual Appetite
2. Increases Spiritual Power
3. Increases Spiritual Brokenness
4. Increases Spiritual Usefulness
5. Increases Spiritual Receptivity

No matter what situation you face or breakthrough you need, fasting and prayer cleanses your heart, mind, and body, drawing you closer to God and leaning on Him to turn the battle in your favor or provide the guidance you need. They give God the room in our lives to bring healing, blessing and strength that we need to be his Disciples.

God's Chosen Fast:

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, "Here I am." If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to dwell in."

Isaiah 58:6-12 NKJV

Notice the focus of the Lord's instruction through Isaiah. He challenges any fasting that does not involve re-alignment with His will and obedience. Above all, fasting is about putting God first: His Will and His Ways. When we choose this, God promises to unleash His blessings in our lives and satisfy us in a way that nothing on Earth can.

Types of Fast:

Over the years, people have chosen to fast many things, but in the Word of God fasting is always tied to food, and always has a purpose. As our stomachs begin to growl it presents a tangible opportunity to trade our will for God's. We encourage you, if you are able, to fast some meals during the 21 days as a minimum, regardless of what you feel God is leading you to do. Whether you are able to fast one meal a day or even more at times, make sure that the purpose of your fast remains to create time to connect with God intentionally. *Remember that Fasting without Prayer and Giving is simply a diet, and let's be intentional about the real purpose of fasting as Isaiah 58 reminds us to be.*

Because the focus of fasting is on creating this time, sometimes people choose to counteract their other appetites with fasting. In this day and age, technology fasts are also useful as we spend hours a day in front of the TV, computer and phone. Maybe Social Media is the primary occupier of your time and going without it for 21 days could transform each day for God.

Final Guidelines for Fasting:

- Do not fast if you have severe medical problems
- Consult a doctor before attempting to fast
- Prepare by eating lightly for several days
- Begin with one, two, and three meal fasts.
- Drink water and juices
- Do not go beyond 2-3 days without water
- Headaches and hunger pains are normal
- Exercise lightly but not strenuously
- Spend time in prayer and Bible reading
- Break your fast with a light meal of fruits and vegetables