

Fasting guidelines

Introduction

We are encouraging as many as possible to fast each Wednesday during the 40 Days; we will break our fast at the Evening Celebration meetings by breaking bread together (although you can, of course, still come to the meetings if you haven't been able to fast). Please read the following and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as to how, when and for how long He wants you to fast and pray.

Types of fast

There are many different ways of fasting – there is no one 'right' way. It is also important to note that fasting from food is not appropriate for everyone (see the 'practical guidelines' on p53).

Here are some of the different ways of fasting:

The Normal Fast

No food is eaten and drinking only water.

The Absolute fast

To fast completely without food or water up to an absolute maximum of three days: see Esther 4:16, Ezra 10:6 and Acts 9:9. We recommend that anyone considering this should first speak to a doctor.

The Partial or Daniel Fast

A cutting back of food to vegetables and fruit only, or one meal a day. This is a practical fast for those involved in heavy work or who have medical reasons for requiring regular food intake: see Daniel 10:2–3.

The Juice Fast

Some prefer to have a liquid only fast which allows for more physical work. Many use this type of fast for a longer fast.

Fasting from other things

e.g. television, electronic gadgets, social media, etc. and use the time to pray and reflect instead!



This is not a comprehensive list of guidelines but some helpful hints:

Spiritual Guidelines

1. Fasting must first and foremost be an act of worship to God. Receiving from God or seeing situations changed, while part of fasting, are secondary matters. Be sure your motives are appropriate as you enter into your fast. Desire to meet with God, to be more Christ-like and for the holiness of God to be more evident in your life.
2. Schedule in time to pray and read the Word of God. If you don't, you will miss wonderful opportunities to hear from God.
3. Be prepared for opposition. This will come from the enemy as he doesn't want you to fast. It will also come from your own body, which is used to having three meals a day!
4. Fasting may bring out the worst in you! One writer said he never knew the strength of the 'desires of the flesh and lust of the eyes' to be so strong as when he fasted. Use it as an opportunity to acknowledge and address those things.
5. Expect to hear God in dreams, visions, revelations and through the Word of God in new and exciting ways.
6. Do not listen to the lie that nothing is happening. Fasting is a discipline that God has instigated, and He blesses your obedience.



➤ Practical Guidelines

1. Food fasts should only be undertaken by people who are fit and healthy. We do not recommend that the following people participate in food-related fasting: under 18s, people who are ill, underweight or living with chronic health challenges, those prone to eating disorders, those who require food with their medication, women who are pregnant, nursing or on their period. If in any doubt at all, please consult your doctor first.
2. Fast with someone else. There is strength in numbers!
3. Make a commitment and set a duration. However, be willing to review the duration if health or circumstances change.
4. If drinking juice, drink low or non-acidic diluted juices.
5. Don't boast about your fast. At the same time, don't be legalistic about this. Tell those who need to know.
6. Schedule in regular rest breaks as you grow weary and exercise only lightly.
7. While most will choose to fast for the day, some may choose to fast for a longer period of 2 or 3 days. If you are planning on fasting for any longer than that, make sure there are people who know, and, again, only do this if it is medically advisable.
8. Break the fast gradually, especially after prolonged fasts.
9. Remember we are under grace, not law. If at any point you feel you need to break the fast, be released to do so.

If you want to talk to someone about fasting, please feel free to speak to any of our Pastoral Leaders.