

FASTING



We're encouraging as many as possible to fast each Wednesday during the 40 days. We'll end our fast at each evening meeting as we break bread together, apart from on the last week when our evening meeting is on Friday 11 July instead. (You can, of course, still come to the meetings if you've not been able to fast.) Please read the following and ask the Spirit to guide you as to how he wants you to fast and pray.

Why fast?

Think about your motives as you prepare to fast. Above all else, fasting is an act of worship to God – so prioritise pursuing God's presence. As you fast, schedule in time to pray and read the Bible. Expect to hear from God in new and exciting ways, in dreams, visions and revelation.

Types of fast

There's no one 'right' way of fasting – people fast in different ways. (Fasting from food isn't appropriate for everyone, please see the notes on the next page.)

The Normal Fast | no food is eaten, and drinking only water.

The Absolute Fast | fasting 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 Fast | cutting back to only eating vegetables and fruit, or drinking juice or smoothies, or to 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.)

Fasting from other things | while we want to prioritise fasting from food, you might want to see this as a chance to withdraw from other things (like TV or social media), and use the time to pray and reflect instead.

What to expect

Expect opposition! This will come from the enemy as he doesn't want you to fast – and it will also come from your own body. Be aware that 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.

FASTING CONTINUED



Some 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 longer periods 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 your 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.