



CHURCH ON THE ROCK  
*Alaska*

# FASTING



# BIBLICAL FASTING

## What is fasting?

Fasting is the spiritual discipline of denying yourself of something you “need” in order to focus on hearing from the Lord and experiencing His presence. Self-denial helps us focus outside of ourselves; the resulting cravings are reminders to pray, and the Holy Spirit teaches and empowers us in unique ways during a time of fasting and prayer. Prayer is an essential element of fasting. If we do not spend time with the Lord in prayer, we are not fasting in the Biblical sense, we are dieting!

## Fast Food!

In Scripture, fasting is exclusively described as food related. While times of self-denial in other areas can be helpful, there is something significant about fasting food.

## Why fast?

Fasting was an expected and anticipated activity in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Jesus fasted. Some of the purposes of fasting are:


- to worship God
- to grow spiritually
- to confess and repent
- to engage in spiritual warfare
- to appeal to God
- to seek God's guidance.



## How Long should I Fast?

The Bible has examples of 1, 3, 7, 21, and even 40-day fasts. The general guideline is that the length of the fast should be influenced by the purpose of the fast and the experience of the person fasting.

Do you simply want to turn your heart and mind toward the Lord? A shorter fast could be enough. Do you want to see results in prayer in a particular area consider a longer fast.



Choose a  
fast

- **New to fasting:** try skipping one meal, or going one full day.
- **Fasted before:** consider a longer fast.
- **Veteran faster:** you probably already know what length is right for your needs.

Let fasting decisions be lead by the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to your own specific medical needs.

## How Do I Fast?

- **Lead into your fast**, especially longer fasts, by reducing the size of your meals, and cut out heavy foods like breads and meats.
- **Wean yourself off caffeine.** Start at least three days before your fast. (You don't want to be going through food and caffeine withdrawals at the same time.)
- **Drink plenty of water** throughout your fast.
- **Schedule time alone to pray** and seek God through Scripture. Spend time in quiet reflection and attention on the Lord. Prayer is a defining feature of fasting, make time for it.
- **Don't call unnecessary attention to yourself.** Jesus warns that when we call attention to our fasting out of pride, that attention is the only reward we will get. Don't be awkwardly evasive with people but don't publicize it. If you are fasting with a group, feel free to encourage and be encouraged by the group.
- **End a fast slowly.** Your digestion will stop after about three days. Let it restart slowly. Begin with a piece of fruit or a salad, and increase your intake to normal levels slowly over a few days.

# Examples of Biblical fasting

## 1. Act of Worship.

Cornelius on his rooftop Acts 10:30  
Anna in the temple Luke 2:37  
Paul's instruction to married couples 1 Corinthians 7:5-7, 35

## 2. Spiritual Growth.

Moses fasted for 40 days and nights Exodus 34:28  
Paul in Damascus Acts 9:9

## 3. Confession and Repentance.

David's repentant psalm after his sin of adultery Psalm 35:13  
The fast of Ninevah Jonah 3:5-7

## 4. Spiritual Warfare

Israel under attack from the Philistines 1 Samuel 7:6  
King Jehoshaphat's fast to save Judah 2 Chronicles 20:3  
Jesus' 40 day and nights fast in the wilderness Matthew 4  
Casting out demons with prayer and fasting Mark 9:29

## 5. Appealing to God.

Ezra fasted to appeal to God Ezra 8:21  
Daniel pleads for mercy Daniel 9:3

## 6. Seeking Guidance.

Esther calls a fast to save her people. Esther 4:16  
Fasting before appointing Barnabas and Saul. Acts 13:2

WHY: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_



Make a  
Fasting  
Plan