

**HOW TO DO A
BIBLICAL
FAST**



HDC

*** THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF FASTS COMMONLY PRACTICED BY CHRISTIANS TODAY:**

1. A PARTIAL FAST.

This is described in the book of Daniel. For three weeks, Daniel, who was a prophet during a time when Israel lived in exile, abstained only from “delicacies” like meat and wine (Daniel 10:3).

2. A COMPLETE FAST.

A complete fast means drinking only water or sometimes juice when fasting for an extended period. Juice fasts will provide you with more energy than water-only fasts and still lead you into the humbling experience of denying your desire for solid, chewable food.

If you are new to fasting, start slow. Progressive steps help your body become accustomed to the drop in food intake. You can start by fasting for one meal a day, one day a week or one week a month.



*** PREPARING FOR THE FAST:
DRINK PLENTY OF WATER AND
CUT BACK ON CAFFEINATED DRINKS.**

The normal fast involves abstaining from all forms of food, but not from water, and commonly lasts 24 hours, from sunrise to sunrise. If you are fasting for the first time, you might begin by missing a meal or two. Over time, you can build up to a full day or more. Begin by refraining from solid food, but drink liquids.

Water is the best, since soft drinks are not good for the digestive system, and coffee and tea stimulate the nervous system. Before beginning a fast, it is best to eat lightly and cut back on caffeinated drinks. During the first few days of a multi-day fast, it is common to experience headaches as the body withdraws from caffeine. If you are planning for an extended fast (more than 14 days), you should prepare mentally and physically by cutting down on food intake one week before the actual fast, taking on a vegetarian diet to control cravings for food. Reduce your intake of beverages like coffee, tea and soft drinks as well. Drink plenty of water. (This is always a good idea — whether you're fasting or not!)



*** DURING THE FAST:
TAKE BREAKS TO STUDY SCRIPTURE
PASSAGES YOU HAVE CHOSEN.**

During your fast, set aside specific and significant time to worship and seek God in prayer. Plan ahead so your time can be unhurried and conducive to enjoying the Lord.

Many people begin this time by repenting of any sins the Holy Spirit brings to mind and asking for God's forgiveness. This is essential to ensure that sin is not hindering your communication with God. Then plan time to make your requests known to God and to seek His will. Take breaks to study Scripture passages you have chosen. Don't rush your time with God. Take time to listen. Keep a notebook and pen nearby to record the ideas, insights, directions and instructions He impresses on your mind.

When you turn down the "noise of Western civilization" by fasting, you can more easily hear God. Continue to drink plenty of water. Apple or watermelon juice is a great morale booster. Sleep early — the first few days of the fast are usually the most challenging. Persevere through this period. Consult your doctor if you are unsure of any headaches or bodily reactions.



*** ENDING THE FAST:**

IF YOU PLAN TO FAST ONLY A DAY OR TWO AT A TIME, IT IS BEST TO END THE FAST WITH A SMALL GLASS OF FRUIT JUICE AS YOUR FIRST MEAL.

Breaking the fast may require as much discipline as beginning it. During the fast, your stomach contracts and your body's digestive and elimination systems rest.

The longer you fast, the more time the digestive organs need to reactivate before functioning at full speed. If you plan to fast only a day or two at a time, it is best to end the fast with a small glass of fruit juice as your first meal. Gradually introduce small amounts of easily digestible foods such as yogurt, soup, fresh fruit, and cooked vegetables. If your fast lasts longer than a few days, you should continue with juices for a day or more before gradually introducing more substantial foods like yogurt, soup and fruit. Be sure you introduce new foods in small quantities and that you chew it well. You should stop eating at the slightest sensation of fullness.

If fasting only a few days at a time, ending the fast should be easier. If you have built up to and desire to fast longer, you should consult your physician and review a health book on fasting.



* **FASTING AND MEDICAL SAFETY**

According to "***The Foods and Nutrition Encyclopedia,***" "For healthy individuals, no harm results from short-term fasting." The average healthy person can go without food between 21 and 40 or more days before the body begins to eliminate vital tissue (starvation).

Consult your physician before beginning any fast lasting longer than three days.

If you have underlying health conditions such as pregnancy, anemia, behavioral disorders or other chronic health problems, you should never fast without consulting a physician first.



*** WHAT IF YOU FAIL AT FASTING?**

Bill Bright put it this way:

It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve.

Keep trying until you do succeed.

God will honor you for your faithfulness.



*** CONCLUSION**

Fasting is a way God's people have humbled themselves before Him for more than three thousand years! Jesus, David, and many other followers of our God have gone without food for a little while to worship and pray to the one who supplies all our needs.

Praise God: the one who hears and answers our prayers!

