

PLAN

- **Plan what you will fast and how you will fast.** If you don't start with a plan, as soon as you begin to fast you'll be tempted to compromise.
- **Plan when you will pray.** Prayer, like most worthy commitments in our lives, requires "space" and "time." Often times we make a purpose to be disciplined in fasting, but we don't make time for prayer. We simply fill our meal times up with other things around the house or office.
- **Plan to participate in our prayer times together.** We'll gather in the Sanctuary Monday–Sunday for prayer from 6AM–7AM, and in the evenings Monday–Saturday from 7PM–8PM.

Prayerfully and carefully consider your commitment. Ask God for His grace and power to participate fully in all He is calling you to this week.

INCLUDE YOUR KIDS

Although your kids probably won't be fasting from food with you, it's a great time for them to begin learning about fasting. Consider having them fast from electronics for the week, or take it a step further and have them fast an element of their diet - perhaps only having water as a beverage, or fast from desserts. Part of fasting is to learn the discipline of telling the flesh 'no', and allowing a hunger to develop. Make sure to include them in some prayer time so that fasting is more than simply 'taking a break'.

ENDING YOUR FAST

The longer the fast, the greater the celebration should be at the end. With that said, gorging yourself at the end of a fast will leave you feeling ... terrible! Don't end with a big, greasy breakfast! Slowly reintroduce food to your system. Start with some crackers, cereal, or something light, and then add a bit more a couple hours later.



POWERFUL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Fasting is a powerful spiritual discipline. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life. Fasting and prayer can bring about revival - a change in the direction of our nation, the nations of earth and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This awesome power can be released through you as you fast through the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

TYPES OF FASTS

The Bible records several methods of fasting. Some fasts consist of abstaining from all food and just drinking water. Jesus abstained from all food for His forty-day fast in the desert. Daniel's fast required him to withdraw from all nourishment except vegetables and water. He refused the delicacies of the king's table for a period of time. Esther's fast appears to have been a total abstinence of food and water for a period of time. Whether you choose to fast one meal a day or the whole week, make your commitment meaningful and sacrificial.

FAST SAFELY

If you're considering a significant fast and have any kind of a medical condition, consult your doctor before you begin. If your job is physical in nature fasting may be unwise or dangerous. Also, if you are under any type of medication, make sure you talk to your doctor before changing your regime. Prudence and caution are in order.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR WEEK OF PRAYER & FASTING

Receiving God's best blessing from a fast requires solid commitment. Arranging special time each day with God is absolutely crucial in attaining intimate communion with the Father. You must devote yourself to seeking God's face, even (and especially) during those times in which you feel weak,

vulnerable, or irritable. Read His Word and pray during the times you would normally eat meals. Meditate on Him when you awake in the night. Sing praises to Him whenever you please. Focus on your Heavenly Father and make every act one of praise and worship. God will enable you to experience His command to "pray without ceasing" as you seek His presence.

As you enter this time of heightened spiritual devotion, be aware that Satan will do everything he can to pull you away from your prayer and Bible reading time. When you feel the enemy trying to discourage you, immediately go to God in prayer and ask Him to strengthen your resolve in the face of difficulties and temptations.

The enemy makes you a target because he knows that fasting is the most powerful of all Christian disciplines and that God may have something very special to show you as you wait upon Him and seek His face. Satan does not want you to grow in your faith, and he will do anything, from making you hungry and grumpy, to bringing up trouble in your family, friends or workplace to stop you. Make prayer your shield against such attacks.

A renewed closeness with God and a greater sensitivity to spiritual things are usually the results of a fast. Do not be disappointed if you do not have a "mountaintop experience," as some do. Many people who have successfully completed extended fasts tell of feeling a nearness to God that they have never before known, but others who have honestly sought His face report no particular outward results at all. For others, their fast was physically, emotionally, and spiritually grueling, but they knew they had been called by God to fast, and they completed the fast unto Him as an act of worship; God honored that commitment.

Your motive in fasting must be to glorify God, not to have an emotional experience, and not to attain personal happiness. When your motives are right, God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him in a very special way.