

21 DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER

Why do we fast?

A Biblical definition of fasting is going without food or sustenance for a specific period of time. There are many people who are unable to abstain from food for medical reasons, therefore, they choose to deny themselves of something else of value to them such as fasting television or fasting social media. When choosing to deny yourselves of something instead of food, you want to choose something that often takes the place of spending time in the presence of God. Since fasting involves humility and the attitude of our hearts, the abstinence we choose should bring us closer to God as we trust Him during this fasting period.

God delights to do more than we can ask or imagine, especially when we choose to humble ourselves and pray. You can rest assured that not only is God going to answer as you continue to seek him, but he's going to answer in even bigger and better ways than you could have ever thought possible!

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Although the heart of fasting should always be to humbly draw closer to God and to experience His presence in a deeper and fuller way, when we fast with the right heart and for the right reason, fasting has many benefits.

Below are 10 benefits of fasting:

1. Deeper intimacy with God

David was determined to seek God and know him intimately.

In Psalm 27 David declares "One thing I ask from the lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord & to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock." When we fast and pray, we set aside time to satisfy the deepest hunger of our lives, knowing and experiencing God.

2. Answers to Fervent Prayer

There will always be situations that demand focused and earnest times of prayer. James 5:16 tells us:

“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again, he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.”

When we confront situations in our lives that seem impossible, earnest prayer and fasting can help us to gain a new perspective on God’s promises, power and potential in our lives, therefore giving us renewed confidence to pray with faith and authority.

3. Develop Humility before God

Fasting is a discipline that helps us to recognize our need for God. As we fast, we realize our total dependence on God and we realize He is our ultimate supplier of every good thing in our lives.

1 Peter 5:6 encourages us to humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand so that he can lift you up. Our Lord and savior Jesus once said “blessed are those who are poor in spirit for the kingdom of God belongs to them. To be poor in spirit means to be aware of your absolute need of God.

4. Gain Wisdom and Understanding

We often talk about Daniel’s fast but we are inclined to miss his reason for fasting for 21 days. Daniel 10 tells us that Daniel needed to understand what God was doing and why Israel was in the predicament they were in, so he set his heart to fasting and seeking God until the answer came. Do you need to gain wisdom for a certain situation in your life? Do you need Godly insight on a certain decision you need to make? Then, fasting is a good place to begin. Read Daniel 10:12;14.

5. Spiritual authority over demonic activity

In Mark chapter 9 we find an interesting situation that develops with Jesus’ disciples. While Jesus is on the mount of transfiguration, a man with a demon possessed child approached Jesus’ disciples and asked them to cast the demon out of the boy. Although Jesus’ disciples had been with Jesus, they still did not realize the fullest potential of being Jesus’ disciples. As a result, they failed at dealing successfully with the evil spirit that tormented this young man. In response to their failure Jesus instructed his disciples that prayer with fasting brings a deeper level of awareness and subsequent authority to deal with demonic forces. “This kind does not come without prayer and fasting.” Read Mark 9:29

6. Repentance and Salvation

In Jonah 3:4-10 We find the city officials and leaders of the wicked city of Nineveh being sternly warned of impending judgement from God if they didn’t repent and cease from their evil ways. Through a citywide fast the people of Nineveh respond to God’s love and mercy and the entire city is spared from destruction.

As you fast and pray ask God to touch hearts and turn lives around for his glory and for their good.

7. Personal Victories in your life

James 4:6-10 says But He gives us more grace. This is why it says: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and weep. Turn your laughter to mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. As we draw near to God in prayer and fasting and as we humble ourselves, God draws near to us and supplies his power and his grace so we can rise above our limitations and experience personal victories in our lives.

8. National deliverance and protection from the enemy.

In 2 Chronicles 20:1-37, We discover that God's people were under attack from five armies. When king Jehoshaphat heard about the impending invasion he immediately called for a national fast and a time of intense prayer. As a result of seeking God fervently Israel's enemies were completely defeated. The interesting thing is that the people of God never had to use their weapons because God divinely intervened on their behalf and reminded them that the battle was not theirs because God was fighting on their behalf. When God's people seek God fervently God fights for them and brings, healing, revival, restoration and salvation to the land. God promises us in 2 Chron. 7:14

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now my eyes shall be open, and my ears attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place.

9. Clearer call to Ministry

Maybe you are wondering if God has a specific call for your life. Ministry comes in all kinds of ways and everyone is called to do something in God's wonderful kingdom. When we fast and spend time seeking God and his perfect will for our lives, He helps us receive his heart for ministry and he gives us a clearer vision of the call of God. The Bible is filled with men and women who received a divine call from God. In Acts 13 the apostles were determined to hear from God, so they fasted and prayed. The result was a powerful call and a divine commission by God to do the work of ministry.

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