## Prayer & Fasting



# Payer & Fasting

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## About this Journal

This journal is designed to help bring accountability and intentionality to fasting and prayer. This journal will help guide you through each day of the fast to ensure that you are committed to both the discipline of prayer and your commitment to fasting.

## What is Fasting?

Biblical fasting involves abstaining from eating (and/or drinking) for spiritual purposes.

#### **OLD TESTAMENT**

Israel celebrated certain annual fasts in the Old Testament, the most prominent being the Day of Atonement. There were also occasional fasts tied to specific historical events, sometimes individual and sometimes corporate. Here are a few of the occasions for fasting: at a time of grief (1 Sam. 31:13: Nehemiah 1:4), at a time of repentance (1 Sam 7:6; 1 Kings 21:27), as an expression of humility (Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10), and as an expression of a need for God's guidance and help. What all of these fasts share in common is that they were an expression of dependence on God and a turning back to Him.

#### **NEW TESTAMENT**

Fasting teaches us that it's God's Word that truly nourishes us. Matthew 4:1 - 4 records the only example of Jesus fasting, just before He was tempted in the wilderness. He faced temptation with these words. "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 - 5 which talks about the 40 years Israel spent in the wilderness, depending daily on manna to sustain them. He says that God humbled them and let them be hungry in order to teach them to depend on God's Word to sustain

them. By His example of fasting, Jesus reminds us that food alone can't sustain us. We need to be nourished by God's Word.

Fasting teaches us that doing God's will sustains us. John 4:31-35 records Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. When the disciples return. they encourage Jesus to eat. He responds by saying, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then He adds, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." Again, Jesus reminds us that food alone is not enough. We are sustained by doing God's will. Fasting teaches us that Jesus Himself sustains us. In John 6:48-50 Jesus savs. "I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, vet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die." We see this pictured symbolically in the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper. Jesus is the source of eternal life. Fasting is literally feasting on Jesus. Jesus assumed that fasting would be a part of His disciple's spiritual life. In Matthew 6:16-18, He says, "When you fast." not "if you fast." He warns us not to fast to impress people but to be near to the heart of God.

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#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FASTING?

Fasting is designed to intensify our dependence on God by weakening our dependence on food and other things.

#### **HOW DOES IT DO THAT?**

Fasting reveals and heals our dependence on food (and other things) to fill the discomfort caused by low self-esteem, unsatisfying work, unloving relationships, uncontrollable circumstances, etc. It removes the false peace that comes from the pleasure of eating or filling our schedules with busy work or useless entertainment. Richard Foster savs. "More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting, these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. David writes, "I humbled my soul with fasting" (Psalm 69:10). Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear-if they are within us, they will surface during fasting."

Lastly, fasting teaches us that we can go without getting what we want and still survive. Fasting can free us from having to "get" what we want. Therefore, fasting can teach moderation or self-control, not only in relation to food but in other areas as well. It teaches contentment. (1 Timothy 6:6)

#### **BENEFITS OF FASTING:**

- Divine Intervention, Strategy, and Clarity - Esther 4
- Healing and Renewal Acts 13:2; 14:23
- Deliverance Mark 9.28-29
- Divine Insight Exodus 34:28
- Repentance Joel 2:12-13;
   Daniel 9:3-5
- Consecration Luke 4:2-4
- Closer Connection to God and Deeper Sensitivity to God's voice - John 10:27
- Self-Denial and Discipline -Matthew 16:24—26
- Preparation Acts 13:3-4
- Spiritual Growth 2 Peter 3:18
- Protection Ezra 8:21-23

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## Types of Fasts

#### **DANIEL FAST**

Based on the fasting experience of the Old Testament prophet Daniel (Daniel 1 And 10), the Daniel fast is a partial fast that allows whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. While eliminating meats, seafood, dairy, eggs, sugar, and sweeteners, leavened bread, coffee, and soda. Moderate portion sizes are encouraged.

#### **PARTIAL FAST**

This fast is sometimes called The "Jewish Fast" and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 AM To 6:00 PM, or from Sunup To Sundown.

#### **ABSOLUTE FAST**

This fast is where you consume absolutely no food or water (Caution: Should not be undertaken over 3 days and only then if you have a clear directive from the Lord and are in good health).

#### **ESTHER FAST**

Esther called for a three-day fast when she was going to approach the king without being summoned.

The details about Esther's fast are straightforward: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When

this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish. I perish." - Esther 4:16

In this case, they might fast from food for three days (drinking water only) leading up to the situation while praying for favor and strategy.

#### **40-DAY FAST**

The concept of fasting for 40 days comes from the example we see in the Bible. Three important men in the Bible were led to do an extended fast — Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. In Matthew 4:1-11, it is shown that Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights and cited Scripture to resist the temptations of Satan. The forty days serve as a time of fasting and prayer to draw closer to God and strengthen your prayer life.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA FAST OR SOUL FAST

Refraining from logging into or viewing any social media, through a mobile device or computer for any period of time.

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### How to Begin A Fast

#### **HOW TO BEGIN**

- 1. Start with a clear goal and be specific.
- 2. Determine why you are fasting.
- 3. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.
- 4. Pray daily and read the Bible.

#### PREPARATION - USE TEMPLATE ON NEW PAGES TO HELP PREPARE

- 1. Confess your sins to God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness.
- Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4).
- 4. Surrender your life fully to Jesus (Romans 12:1-2).



SCAN FOR TLC
FASTING VIDEOS

## Understanding Prayer

Remember, fasting should be combined with prayer. God called us to fast and pray. If you are fasting a certain meal of the day, use the time you would normally be eating to pray. The combination of prayer and fasting is a powerful way to focus on seeking God for breakthroughs and answers to prayer.

Begin to set a schedule of when and where you will pray throughout your fast. For instance, will you pray in the morning? If so, where? Begin to pray and lean into prayer even before the start of your fast.



SCAN FOR TLC
PRAYER RESOURCES

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# Preparing for Fasting

TYPE OF FAST:
DURATION OF FAST:
QUESTIONS TO PONDER:  What are three things that you are praying for during this fast?  1
2
3. Where does repentance need to show up in your life?
What will you be abstaining from during this fast?

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## Daily Prayer Template

DAY:	DATE: / /
SCRIPTURE FOCUS:	
PRAYER FOCUS:	
ADDITIONAL PRAYER FOCUS:	
Reflection: What is God saying to you personally:	
Prayer: Write your prayer below:	
ANSWERED PRAYERS:	

DATE: / /

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# Resources

## HOW WE LIVE OUT THE VISION OF CORPORATE PRAYER AND FASTING AT TLC:

# WE KEEP THE MAIN THING, THE MAIN THING; OUR AIM: CHRIST-CENTERED

Prayer keeps our vision clear and our hearts postured on what really matters, which is Christ.

### WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER; OUR AIM: COMMUNITY

Corporate prayer is one of the many ways we stay connected as a church.

Throughout scripture, we see the importance of corporate prayer and fasting.

#### STAY CONNECTED TO TLC

#### **GIVING**

- Website: www. thelifechurchrva.org/give
- Givelify App: Search for "The Life Church RVA"
- Text to Give: Text the dollar amount you would like to give to 84321

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Connect with us on all Social Media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube: @ thelifechurchrya
- Visit our website: www. thelifechurchrva.org/nextsteps

### JOIN A TEAM — LET'S SERVE TOGETHER

 https://thelifechurchrva.org/ joinateam

#### DISCIPLESHIP

- Resources to support you in exploring your faith journey: https://thelifechurchrva.org/ discipleship
- Corporate Prayer every first Saturday of the month

#### **HEARTBEAT KIDS**

 Resources and Worship experience for kids: https:// thelifechurchrva.org/ heartbeat and via Instagram @ tlcheartbeatkids

#### **TLCXYTH (TEEN MINISTRY)**

 https://thelifechurchrva. org/tlcyth or @TLCYTH on Instagram

#### **TLC MERCHANDISE**

 Be sure to get your TLC Merch and share your faith - https:// thelifechurchrva.org/merch

