

MAKE YOUR PLAN

As you plan to fast this week, answer the following questions to make your plan!

What is the purpose of your fast?

For your fast, what will you be giving up?

How long will you be giving this thing up for? Is there a specific day or length of time?

Is there anyone you need to make aware of your fast for practical reasons?



Fasting Guide Forsaking for Faith

KNOLLWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

FASTING

The Purpose and the How

Fasting is a wonderful spiritual discipline that God has gifted to his people to use in their daily walks with him. Ultimately, God uses fasting in our lives to draw us away from the things of this temporal world and into knowing and loving God more. As we will see, fasting is not formulaic, but it is good for God's people and serves multiple purposes in the Christian life.

FAITH ORIENTED

We give up things all the time in our daily lives. We get busy at our jobs and accidentally skip lunch. We get a headache from looking at a screen for too long, so we put away our phones for an hour. But these are not Christian fasting. In order for fasting to be Christian fasting, it must be pursued as an act of faith. **Christian fasting must be a purposeful act driven by faith and oriented around the things of faith.**

APPETITE CHANGING

One of the main purposes of fasting is to change our appetites. Our sinful nature is inclined to the things of this world. Perhaps, more specifically, it is inclined to over-indulgence in the things of this world. Fasting, then, serves to change our appetites from the things of this world to God and his purposes. **When we fast, we are changing our appetites to hunger and thirst after God and his righteousness.**

SOUL SATISFYING

Even though we may know intellectually and experientially that nothing in this world will satisfy us, we need help remembering this to be true. Thus, one of the great purposes of fasting is to set our souls on the reality that God is the one who satisfies our souls. **By giving up what our soul is tempted to find satisfaction in for a time, we actively labor to find our true satisfaction in God.**

TACTIC DRIVEN

Fasting requires two things: a clear purpose and a clear plan. It is easy to think "oh I should fast," but a plan begins turning thoughts into actions. So before you fast it is helpful to think it through with questions such as: What is the purpose of this fast? What are you going to give up? How long you will give it up? Is there anyone you need to let know ahead of time about your fast such as your spouse? **A successful time of fasting begins with a successful time of planning.**

*If you are giving up food, you may experience headaches and drowsiness.

INTERCESSORY FOCUSED

Fasting is intimately connected to prayer. There are many times in Scripture when the God's people fast because they are asking for a specific prayer request to be answered. This is still a valid reason to fast today. Other times we fast because we simply want to know and experience God, but how will we do that without prayer? Prayer and fasting are intimately connected. One helpful tip is: whatever time you normally spend doing the activity you're giving up, spend in prayer with God. Fasting doesn't force God to answer our prayers, but it does force us to pray and that is a good thing. **Christian fasting must be focused on praying.**

NORM REJECTING

Jesus clearly taught that his followers should fast, but the New Testament actually gives very few instructions on how to fast. There is no "normal" fasting. There are no set rules regarding how long you need to fast or what it should look like. So when we talk about how to fast, we need to know that there is a lot of freedom when it is done in faith! It can be missing one meal or it can be missing a week's worth of meals. It can be missing breakfast or lunch or dinner. While fasting in the Bible generally refers to food, most Christians agree that it doesn't need to be just food, especially if there are health concerns. You can fast from social media, television, food, etc. **Fasting is more about the pursuit of God than following a specific norm.**

*"The typical form of fasting is personal, private, and partial, but we find a variety of forms in the Bible: personal and communal, private and public, congregational and national, regular and occasional, absolute and partial" - Habits of Grace by David Mathis (page 118)

GOD GLORIFYING

Just like everything else in all of creation, the ultimate purpose of fasting is the glory of God. We fast so that God will get the glory. Fasting is an act of faith, a small step towards knowing and loving God more, and every step of faith is God-glorifying. **It is great news that when we participate in fasting, we are participating in an act that brings God delight and in an act where He is getting the ultimate glory.**

