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21 Days of Prayer and Fasting
Seeking God with all your heart.

Information Guide

Adding Fasting to Your Prayer Life

What is a Fast?

Fasting isn't a complicated business. When you fast, don't eat. You stay away from all food or refrain from specific types of food for a set amount of time. (Refraining from all food makes you the hungriest.) The duration of the fast may be a solo meal, one day, a week, or, in some cases, even longer.

Fasting from food can be done for a variety of purposes, either physical or spiritual. So abstaining from food alone doesn't constitute a Christian fast. Instead, a Christian fast is accompanied by a special focus on prayer during the fast, a time of dedicating yourself to God; often substituting the time you'd spend eating with prayer instead.

Different types of fasting.

The Bible describes four major types of fasting:

- **A Regular Fast** - Traditionally, a regular fast means refraining from eating all food. Most people still drink water or juice during a regular fast. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the Bible says, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty.
- **A Partial Fast** - This type of fast generally refers to omitting a specific meal from your diet or refraining from certain types of foods. Daniel 10:2-3 says, "At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over." In Daniel 1:12, they restricted their diet to vegetables and water: "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink." The Daniel Fast affords people a powerful time to focus special attention toward their God and His Word – the Holy Bible.
- **A Full Fast** - These fasts are complete - no food and no drink. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus: "For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything." Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16: "Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: '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 maids 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.'" **It is recommended that this type of fast be done with extreme caution and not for extended periods of time.**

- Although not mentioned in the Bible, some Christians today commit to 'fasting' from other activities as well. Some give up entertainment such as TV or movies to concentrate on prayer.

Fasting empowers. Fasting can also give you newfound strength in your spiritual life because of the intimacy you gain with God as a result. **However, the discipline of fasting can be problematic or even dangerous if you are pregnant, elderly or have experienced or are susceptible to eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia. Therefore, keep the following in mind:**

- Don't fast beyond the time limit you originally set. If you find that you can't stop your fast, see your doctor immediately.
- If you feel yourself preoccupied with the physical aspects of going without food (such as possible weight loss), then the act of fasting may be a hindrance to your prayer life rather than a help. If you focus on the fast and have difficulty praying, break the fast immediately and pray about what you just experienced.
- If you're recovering from an eating disorder, avoid fasting altogether as a spiritual discipline.

Fasting Benefits: Spiritual, Physical & Mental/Emotional

There are many variations of these fasts, and there are spiritual benefits of all of these, when we are able to devote the time spent eating to focus on God and serving others.

If you are looking for a **healing breakthrough** in **body, mind and/or spirit**, then you may consider doing a Daniel Fast.

There are numerous benefits to Daniel-type fasting, but it all starts with an inward, spiritual motivation.

“This is the fast that I have chosen...to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke. Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth.”

– Isaiah 58:6

When you **fast and pray**—two words that go hand-in-hand in scripture—*you pursue God in your life* and open yourself up to experiencing a renewed dependence on God, but it isn't easy. It is a spiritual discipline that requires denying your physical and mental self because your stomach and your brain will most likely work overtime to remind you when and what they want to eat!

As mentioned earlier, Daniel wasn't the only one in the Bible who fasted. There were others, but you don't have to be a "spiritual giant" like Daniel or put yourself through torturous fasts to draw closer to God.



However, fasts can help focus your spirit, heart and mind on God and not your own eating and drinking desires. In fact, before you begin your fast, you can make a list of prayer requests you are asking God to answer. Then, every time you experience hunger pangs or food or drink cravings, ask God to work in those prayer request areas.

Also, spend quiet time with God each day and read passages of scripture from the Bible. You don't have to be legalistic about this. There are many quality devotionals out there, so just choose one or ask a friend you trust to recommend one.

After all, it's about your relationship with God, not your performance for God.

It's a good idea to journal during your fast so that you can write down what you believe God is directing you in. For whatever reasons, many people say that they "hear" God more clearly during a fast than other times.

Isaiah 58:6, 8 says “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear.”

The truth is that “healing” can take place spiritually, physically and mentally when you fast.

We’ve discussed some of the spiritual aspects, but there are also specific physical and mental benefits to fasting, which happens to be one of the oldest therapies in medicine.

In fact, Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, believed that fasting enabled the body to heal itself. How?

During a fast, many systems of the body are given a break from the hard work of digesting foods that it normally has to manage. The extra energy the body gains gives the body a chance to restore itself, while the burning of stored calories gets rid of toxic substances stored in the body.

Here’s another example. The digestive tract is the body area most exposed to environmental threats, including bacteria, viruses, parasites and toxins. Plus, most of your immune system is in your digestive tract, so it needs to be in top shape. When food is broken down in the intestines, it travels through the blood to the liver, the largest organ of the body’s natural detoxification system. The liver breaks down and removes the toxic by-products produced by digestion, including natural ones and the chemicals which are typically present in our food supply and often on our daily menus.

During a fast, the liver and immune system are essentially freed up to detoxify and heal other parts of the body.

To make the 21 day fast easier consider doing the Daniel Fast, by including vegetables, fruits and water. The antioxidants and nutrients in vegetables and fruits help to add vibrancy to your health, including your immune system, fertility, skin and more.

A diet high in vegetables and fruits is known for halting bodily inflammation and oxidation—two primary processes that can lead to ill health. No wonder Daniel and his friends looked better than the others!

The Importance of WATER especially during a fast.

Drinking enough water keeps your lymphatic system in tip-top shape so that wastes and toxins are removed from your body.

Water also keeps your joints lubricated, delivers nutrients to your nervous system, helps the blood transport oxygen and other essential

nutrients to your cells, and even makes it so your heart doesn't have to work as hard pumping blood through your body. Water regulates your metabolism, too, and aids in digestion and body temperature control. An added bonus is that adequate water intake hydrates your skin cells and plumps them up.



The brain, which is around 75% water, must be kept hydrated, too, and will redirect water from other areas of the body if it doesn't get what it needs. Getting enough water also keeps your metabolism motoring, can help you feel fuller and can keep your weight in check.

After a fast, including the Daniel Fast – Daniel 1:12 people report a combination of spiritual, physical and mental benefits, including a closer relationship with God, answered prayers, a better state of health, freedom from food or beverage addictions, more energy, clearer thinking, a more positive attitude, feeling lighter and much more.



The tenth chapter of Daniel describes how he ate “no choice food; no meat or wine touched [his] lips” (Dan. 10:3) for three weeks.

At this point in time, Daniel is approximately 85 years old, well beyond the years when he was a young man in King Nebuchadnezzar's palace. However, Daniel was still attentive to what God had for him to do, which was also reflected in his diet.

For example, in Daniel 10, Daniel gets a vision from God about the future plight of the Jewish people for rejecting the Messiah and the

gospel, leading Daniel into a state of sorrowful mourning that leads to his 21-day fast.

In Hebrew, the words “choice food” suggest that Daniel refused desirable foods, most likely breads and sweets or at least foods which were considered tasty. Once again, Daniel trimmed his diet down to the basics—only for sustenance, not indulgence or personal satisfaction—so that he could focus on the spiritual, not his personal needs or wants.

And while there certainly are spiritual benefits to fasting, physical and mental benefits can occur as well.

Daniel Fast: Food List

According to our understanding of the Hebrew definition of “pulse” that was used in the verse for vegetables can actually mean a range of foods. Here is the Daniel Fast Food List of what you are allowed to eat:



BEVERAGES

- **Water only-must be purified/filtered and spring or distilled water is best.**
- **Homemade Almond milk, coconut water, coconut kefir and vegetable juice**

VEGETABLES (should form the basis of the diet)

- **Fresh or cooked**
- **May be frozen and cooked but not canned**

FRUITS (consume in moderation 1-3 servings daily)

- **Fresh and cooked**
- **May be dried like raisins or apricots (no sulfites or added oils or sweeteners)**
- **May be frozen but not canned**

WHOLE GRAINS (consume in moderation and ideally sprouted)

- **Brown Rice, Quinoa, Millet, Amaranth, Buckwheat, Barley cooked in water**
- **No Wheat, ezeziel bread, others bread, flours, or pasta**

BEANS & LEGUMES (consume in moderation)

- **Dried and cooked in water**
- **May be consumed from can as long as no salt or other additives are contained and the only ingredients are beans and water**

NUTS & SEEDS (sprouted are best)

- **Raw, sprouted or dry roasted (no salt added)**

COMMON FOODS for Daniel Fast

Here is a list of some common foods you can consume in the Daniel Fast:

<p>FRUITS (preferably organic and fresh or frozen):</p> <p>Apples Apricots Avocados Bananas Blackberries Blueberries Cantaloupe Cherries Coconuts Cranberries Dates Figs Grapefruit Grapes Guava Honeydew melons Kiwi Lemons Limes Mangoes Melons Nectarines Oranges Papayas Peaches Pears Pineapples Plums Prunes Raisins</p>	<p>VEGETABLES (preferably organic and fresh or frozen):</p> <p>Artichokes Asparagus Beets Broccoli Brussel sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Collard greens Corn Cucumbers Eggplant Green beans Kale Leeks Lettuce Mushrooms Mustard greens Okra Onions Parsley Peppers Potatoes Radishes Rutabagas Scallions Spinach Sprouts Squash Sweet potatoes Tomatoes Turnips Yams Zucchini</p> <hr/> <p>LEGUMES (preferably organic):</p> <p>Black beans Black-eyed peas</p>	<p>Kidney beans Lentils Mung beans Pinto beans Split peas</p> <p>NUTS & SEEDS (preferably organic, raw, unsalted and soaked/sprouted):</p> <p>All nuts (raw, unsalted) Almonds Cashews Chia seed Flaxseed Pumpkin seeds Sesame seeds Sunflower seeds Walnuts</p> <hr/> <p>WHOLE GRAINS (preferable organic):</p> <p>Amaranth Barley Brown rice Millet Quinoa Oats (groats soaked)</p> <hr/> <p>LIQUIDS</p> <p>Water (spring, distilled, filtered) Vegetable juice (fresh pressed) Coconut milk Coconut Kefir Almond Milk</p>
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FOODS TO AVOID

On the Daniel Fast, you should not consume any of the other foods or beverages listed below. And, I want to mention that on the Daniel Fast some allow sea salt or Himalayan salt and others do not. My recommendation is to only use a bit of sea salt when necessary in flavouring dishes.

Here are foods you definitely want to refrain from eating:

- **Iodized Salt**
- **Sweeteners**
- **Meat**
- **Dairy products**
- **Breads, pasta, flour, crackers, cookies**
- **Oils**
- **Juices**
- **Coffee**
- **Energy drinks**
- **Gum**
- **Mints**
- **Confectionary**

However you decide to fast, remember **fasting changes us not God** – and the benefits massively outweigh the temporary discomforts. May God bless you as you choose to draw closer to Him!

Fasting Scriptures

Scriptures that speak on fasting

God's intervention

1. 2 Samuel 12:16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground.

Repentance

2. 1 Samuel 7:7 When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." Now Samuel was serving as leader of Israel at Mizpah.

3. Daniel 9:3-5 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and **keep his commandments**, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws."

4. Joel 2:12-13 "Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

5. Jonah 3:5-9 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet

relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

Guidance

6. Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

7. Acts 13:2-4 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

Worshiping

8. Luke 2:37 Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.

Strengthen prayers

9. Matthew 17:20-21 And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. “But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

10. Ezra 8:23 So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer.

Mourning

11. 2 Samuel 1:12 They mourned and wept and fasted all day for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the LORD’s army and the nation of Israel, because they had died by the sword that day.

12. Nehemiah 1:4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

13. Psalm 69:10 When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.

Humility

15. Psalm 35:13-14 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother.

16. 1 Kings 21:25-27 (There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel.) When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly.

Don't fast to be seen and brag

17. Matthew 6:17-18 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

18. Luke 18:9-12 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

Reminders

19. Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that **they should always pray and not give up.**

20. Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

21. Ecclesiastes 3:1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

22. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

References:

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/adding-fasting-to-your-prayer-life.html>

<https://draxe.com/daniel-fast/>

Scriptures: NKJV/NIV/NLT