

21

DAYS

of Prayer & Fasting

**Why Should We Fast?
How Should We Fast?**

As we embark on [21 Days of Prayer and Fasting](#) together as a church family, our hope is that each of our members will grow in their enjoyment of fasting. We know many may associate fasting with giving something up. But fasting is so much more than that.

Fasting is also about gaining something, gaining a deeper intimacy with God. This guide is designed to help you take the next step toward enjoying fasting (and therefore, God) more deeply by answering why and how we should fast.

Why Should We Fast?

Fasting is more about satisfaction than it is about sacrifice. It is about prioritizing our souls' desires over other desires to get more of what satisfies most deeply. When you fast, you feel hunger or desire and are reminded that you are in need and not self-sufficient. Fasting intensifies your awareness of your needs and thus intensifies your prayers as you seek His sufficiency. Jesus is called the "bread of life" meaning that nearness to Him satisfies our souls' deepest longing ([John 6:35](#)).

Consider these spiritual purposes for fasting:

1. To intensify your prayers ([Daniel 9:3](#))
2. To seek clarity from God ([Acts 14:23](#))
3. To express repentance for sin ([Jonah 3:5-8](#))
4. To lament or grieve ([2 Samuel 1:12](#))
5. To ask God to move ([Nehemiah 1:3-4](#))
6. To overcome fear or persecution ([2 Chronicles 20:2-4](#))
7. To resist temptation ([Matthew 4:1-11](#))
8. To worship and love God ([Luke 2:37](#))

Moreover, Jesus fasted ([Matthew 4:1-2](#)) and taught with the assumption that his followers would fast ([Matthew 6:16-18](#)) as an essential practice of the Christian experience. We cannot be like Jesus or be close to Jesus without fasting.

How Should We Fast?

The most common practice of fasting involves voluntary abstinence from eating food for a predetermined amount of time and for a spiritual purpose. However, abstaining from eating food is not the only way to fast. Consider these three types of fasting:

1. A normal fast is abstinence from eating all food (everything except water) for a predetermined amount of time and for a spiritual purpose ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)).
2. A partial fast is abstinence from eating some foods for a predetermined amount of time and for a spiritual purpose. This could include things like soda, coffee, meat, sugar, etc. ([Daniel 1:8-16](#)).
3. An alternative fast is abstinence from something other than food for a predetermined amount of time and a spiritual purpose. This could include abstaining from things like social media or other types of entertainment or activities ([1 Corinthians 7:5](#)).

The scriptures do not specify the length of time for fasting. The Bible provides examples of people fasting for part of a day, a single day, a single night, three days, seven days, 10 days, 14 days, 21 days, 40 days, and also for unspecified periods of time.

To start fasting, begin by prayerfully choosing a type of fast, an amount of time, and a spiritual purpose. If you are concerned about health issues, you would be wise to consult a physician before abstaining from food. If you've struggled with disordered eating or control, you should first seek advice from trusted Christian friends or leaders, and possibly consider starting with an alternative fast.

The greatest reward that God could give us is deeper intimacy with Himself. Our hope during Springfield's [21 Days of Prayer and Fasting](#) is that you take one simple step toward enjoying fasting as a means of getting greater satisfaction with God.



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Begins April 8th