

## Fasting

Fasting is abstaining from something in order to spend extra, concentrated time in prayer. People often choose to fast from food, but it could be anything that is consuming our time and thoughts, such as social media, tv, shopping or sports.

As an example, if we decide to abstain from eating or shopping during our fast, the urge to eat or shop serves as a reminder to pray. As we pray, we are strengthened spiritually. We learn that God is enough and will meet our needs. Fasting allows for a heightened awareness of God and helps us connect with Him through prayer.

Fasting isn't a magic wand to get what we want. It's a time of special concentrated prayer and communion with God. When we allow Him to work in our hearts and we give Him the time for what we normally "rightfully" enjoy, it connects us to Him in a powerful way.

Fasting isn't something we do to look spiritual. Matthew 6:16 (NIV) says, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full."

Through fasting, we learn that we don't really "need" what we thought we needed, and we come to a new dependence on God to not only meet our needs, but to hear and answer our prayers as well.

Consider the following ideas as you prepare to fast.

- Decide what you'd like to fast from and when you will fast.
- For a first-time food fast, skip only one meal. Or, begin the fast after supper one night, to before supper time the next night. This will only necessitate missing two meals.
- Make a list of things to pray for before the fast. It could be for yourself or others.
- Begin your prayer time by reading and praying over a Bible passage like John 15 or Psalm 103.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty water and fluids.
- After the fast, process what you learned about depending on God.
- Avoid fasting from food if you are sick, pregnant or nursing, suffer from certain medical conditions like diabetes, gout, ulcers, liver or kidney disease, heart disease, blood disease, cancer, etc. Consult with a medical professional if you have questions about a medical condition as it relates to fasting. When in doubt, it might be best to consider fasting from something other than food.