

Some thoughts from Pastor Mark and from Times Square Church's website on prayer and fasting (website: tsc.nyc)

The power of a church is in its prayer life.

We truly believe that hard times are coming to the people of God, but that there is HOPE where God is taking His church. With hardship, there is opportunity for God to move in incredible ways and for us to see a revival in our city. As His people; dedicating time to pray and fast shifts our focus on Jesus and prepares our hearts for what's to come.

More About Fasting

During Days of Prayer and Fasting, we encourage fasting as a spiritual next step that can bring clarity and revelation into your life.

The goal of fasting is to draw near to God.

Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose; it hits the reset button of our soul and renews us from the inside out. It also enables us to celebrate the goodness and mercy of God and prepares our hearts for all the good things God desires to bring into our lives.

Here are 3 common fasts that may help you decide how you want to fast. Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and, most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

The Selective Fast:

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food. **Daniel 1:11-16**

Soul Fast or Media Fast:

This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance.

For example, you might choose to stop using social media, gaming, or watching television, (including the NEWS) for the duration of the fast and

then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

Mark's Note: When I taught youth and they did a totally Media Fast for one week - All forms of media, entertainment, movies, gaming, etc. It actually caused deliverance and opened their eyes to wasted time. They didn't realize how dependent they were on such things. They became closer to God and had a lot more time to accomplish other things in their lives.

Ask: Could some of you be over dependent, even addicted to social media, entertainment, TV, music or gaming? Can you turn it off for 4 days to seek the Lord and spend time with Him in Prayer and the Word?

The Complete Fast:

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option. You should only do this if you have experience in fasting and have consulted with your doctor.

Some have health issues and a Complete Fast could be very harming to you. This is to be a timing of drawing near to the Lord, not ending up in the hospital or people planning a memorial service.

Here's a few Biblical references to fasting:

- Matthew 6:16-18 - Jesus instructions
- Luke 18:9-14 - This is a time to humble & open ourselves before God
- Matthew 9:14-15 - Jesus will return soon. Prayer and fasting readies us for our Lord's return & being active about our Father's business. Getting us focused on His priorities.
- Acts 27:33-37 - Fasting will have an end result - ... v35-36
- Nehemiah 9:1-3 Allow this to be a time of separating from all that is not of God, confession of sin, reading the Word, exalting and worshipping the Lord your God.

Biblical Fasting with God's results

- Isa. 58:1-5 - Avoid wrong motives in fasting (Matt.6:16)
- Isa. 58:6-12 - Fast the right way with God's motives and results (Matt.6:17-18)

More points for your spiritual consideration - Pastor Mark

- 1. We, as the church of Jesus Christ are at a point in which the Lord is awakening and preparing His body for things to come. Rev. 19:5-10**
- 2. Jesus doesn't want anyone to miss out on His last Harvest of souls and discipling them to spiritual maturity. Regardless of the hostile climate our world will enter into. Mat. 24:3-14 is our Lord's warning and preparation to us all about the final days of the world and the church prior to His Coming. Endurance, level headedness, compassion, trusting in the Lord, being led of the Holy Spirit and telling people about Jesus is to be the norm of our lives. Matt.24:13-14**
- 3. If we heed the Lord's call to be prepared and be about our Father's business. Then we will not be caught off guard as things escalate during the times prior to Jesus coming for His church. Mat. 24:36-51; Luke 19:11-27**
- 4. The Lord has impressed upon me and many others of the last day Jesus forerunners and spiritual watchmen Jesus is raising up. Isa.40:3-9 Our part.**
- 5. Jesus will return at the appointed time. Isa.40:10-11 This is our "Blessed Hope"(Titus 2:11-14). Looking forward to Jesus coming for His church as stated in 1Cor.15:50-58; 1Thes 4:13-18; 2Thes. 2:1-3**
- 6. We are not to be overly concerned (fearful) what's happening in the world around us. Jesus already told us it will not be a pretty sight, yet knowing He is in total control. Isa.40:12-15, 17,21-26; Luke 21:25-28 & Rev.1:5 ...Jesus is ruler over the kings of the earth...**
- 7. May regular times of prayer and fasting cause your eyes to behold who your God truly is. Knowing just how all powerful He is in the land of the living here on earth. Isa.40:28-31& 40:10; Rev.1:8**
- 8. Keep your eyes and the faith of your heart firmly placed on Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all, who still saves the lost, sets captives free and heals all who are oppressed of the devil. Heb.12:1-2; Acts10:36-38; Luke 10:1-2, 9, 16, 17-21; There is a revelation Jesus, that He is making known of Himself to all who seek Him with their whole heart.**

What can days of prayer and fasting bring into your lives:

- **The Power of the Holy Spirit.** Acts 1:8 & Acts 4:17-20, 23-31
- **The Power of Healing** in the areas of your life that need it. Spiritual, emotional, bodily, relationally, marriages, and deliverances. Luke 4:18-19 & Matt. 9:35-38; Acts 10:38
- **The Power of Holiness** in becoming more like our Lord and separated unto Him. John 17:17-18, 20-23; 1Peter 1:13-21; 1Thes.4:1-8
- **The Spiritual Awakening of the church** for our nation and a persons need of salvation in Jesus Christ.(Acts 2:36-47; Acts 16:28-34) It begins right here with you and me. Eph. 5:13-18 It starts when each person takes God at His Word, obeys Him and is filled with the Holy Spirit. Awake, arise and walk. Keep being filled with the Holy Spirit. Asking for God's wisdom, making proper use of our time, knowing God's will in our lives and doing it. Jesus is coming for a glorious church - You! Psa.85:1-6; Hab.3:1-2; Acts 3:19-16-21
- **Participate in times of personal prayer and fasting at a level of commitment you can do. Expect the Lord to come to you and then through you.**
- **Let's yield and submit ourselves to the Lord - Josh 3:5** As we set time aside to seek the Lord. Expect the Lord Jesus to do wonders in and among us. Daniel 11:32 & 12:1-3

Commitment now to the Lord, allowing Him to have His way in your individual life and in the church, the body of Christ.

May this help you as you seek the Lord to love and honor Him more in your life. Jesus is coming for a glorious church, you. So, be apart of what Jesus is doing in this final days before His Coming for you.

Much love in Jesus,

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PS - I've attached below another document - Practical Tips on Prayer and Fasting

PRACTICAL TIPS ON PRAYER AND FASTING

Edited & Modified by Mark C. Smith, Pastor

PRAYER

(Adapted from, The Foundation of Christian Living)

1. **Focus on God:** through praise and worship, reading/meditating on God's Word, submitting your mind and your will to Him. (Psa.46:10; Psa.1:2-3)

2. **Confession:** Of any sin that the Holy Spirit shows you during this time, also forgive any person that may have sinned against you. (1John 1:9)

3. **Submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit:** Ask the Holy Spirit to empower and direct you in your praying, ask Him to pray through you.

4. **Listen:** When you are alone praying. 3 voices have access to your mind: your own thoughts, Satan's (erroneous, wrong and sinful thinking formed from this fallen world or Satan's influence) and God's voice by His Word or indwelling Holy Spirit.

Learn to block Satan out!

- If you've laid down your mind and submitted it to God, then your mind cannot speak. (Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 12:1-2)

- If you are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, proclaiming Jesus as Lord, resisting Satan and protected by God's armor; Satan cannot speak. (Eph.6:10-17)

- If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, God **will** speak. (Eph.5:18; John 10:27)

5. **Persevere:** Keep on praying until you know that you have got somewhere and the peace of God settles in your heart. Even if you feel dry in prayer, persist and you will breakthrough. (1Thes.5:16-22)

6. **Be Real:** Speak normally and naturally to God. Don't pretend or be religious. God knows you better than anyone. (Matt.6:5-8)

7. **Don't worry:** Being anxious is a sin and a lack of trust in God. (Matthew 6:25-34) Always approach prayer with faith in God. (Mark 11:22-24)

8. **Praise and Thanksgiving:** During prayer, have times of praise and thanksgiving, especially for answered prayer. Praise and thanks to God often releases the power of God. (Psa.100:1-5; Phil.4:4-9)

FASTING

(Adapted from, Derek Prince: Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting)

1. **Know God's Call To Fast:** You should believe that the Lord wants you to fast, knowing that it is a biblical truth. Knowing it is the Holy Spirit who has led you to fast. (Matthew 6:16-18).
2. **Fast in Faith:** *"But without faith it is impossible to please God"* (Hebrews 11:6). You should fast believing that God will reward your sacrifice, diligence and obedience.
3. **Fast according to your level of faith and experience:** If you are not used to fasting, it is advisable to set shorter periods. Like, missing one meal a day. It is better to set a short period as your objective and meeting it rather than failing to meet it, becoming discouraged and give up.
4. **Fast with prayer:** The whole point of fasting is that it is accompanied by diligent prayer. There is no reward in just not eating for days. Times of fasting should be given to prayer. You probably won't be able to pray all day, you should give a good portion of it to prayer.
5. **Read the word:** You should also spend time reading the Word, because the Word of God builds your faith. If you are struggling with your fast, read scriptures on fasting and prayer. (Isaiah 58:6-12; Matthew 6:5-15; Mark 11:22-24; John 16:24; Ephesians 1:15-23 & 6:17-20)
6. **Fast with humility:** You should not make it obvious to people that you are fasting, some people may have to know, but if people don't need to know, keep it to yourself. You don't need to tell others. Beware of pride or boasting.
7. **Check your motives:** Read Psalm 58:1-12; Isaiah 58:3-5; Matthew 6:16. Note attitudes that are pleasing to God and those which are displeasing.
8. **Fast as the Holy Spirit leads you to:** Some people fast for shorter periods of time without any fluids (no more than 72hrs), others drink water, others still, drink fruit juices or skimmed milk. It is wise to abstain from strong stimulants such as tea/coffee/sugary drinks etc. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit with a surrendered heart, knowing He will show you what to do.
9. **Resist the moans of your flesh:** You may feel unpleasant physically at times during the fast. Like, a bit weaker, a headache or dizziness. These are usually indications of the purifying process that is taking place in your body. Fasting, in fact, can be beneficial physically when practiced with care. Do not allow physical discomfort to deter you, go through with the fast you planned.
10. **Special Consideration:** Always make sure you are able to fast (go without eating) if you are under a doctor's care or on specific medicine that requires you to eat. You may want to do a media fast. Abstaining from all forms of tv, social media, entertainment, email, etc. Dedicating this time to be with God in prayer.

Enjoy your time of prayer & fasting. May God richly guide and bless you.

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