

Spiritual Discipline Fasting

Fasting is an extremely powerful spiritual discipline. It involves sacrificing our often excessive desire to eat. Fasting brings back balance and challenges the desires of the flesh, which are in combat with our spiritual desires. Fasting teaches us to discipline our body and mind bringing them into alignment with the spiritual life we have in Christ. Fasting effectively gives ascendancy to the Spiritual life.

Fasting is often neglected simply because it takes discipline to fast. Unfortunately this causes many Christians to miss out on the amazing intimacy with God that comes through fasting.

Motives

Starting a fast to simply get what you want from God is not a spiritual discipline. It is manipulation!

When practicing any spiritual discipline our motivation should never be self-serving. Our motivation should be to connect intimately with the Lord in a new and deeper manner.

I believe fasting should be a time of consecration, submitting humbly before God and renewing intimacy through repentance and confession. This will pave the way for deeper intimacy in your spiritual life and enable you to hear the voice of God clearly.

If your hearts desire is intimacy with God then your motive is right and your fast will be very powerful spiritually.

Scriptures

By Jesus; Mt 4:1-2, Mk 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-2

By John's disciples; Mt 9:14

By Anna Luke; 2:36-37

By Cornelius; Acts 10:30

By Paul; 2Cor 6:5, 11:27

By Daniel, Daniel; 9:3,10v3.

By Paul at the time of his conversion; Acts 9:9

By the disciples at the consecration of Barnabas and Saul; Acts 13:2-3

By Paul and Barnabas at the consecration of the elders; Acts 14:23

Ways to Fast

- One meal per day
- One day per week
- Daniel Fast Dan 10 v3 (no choice food or drink for 3 weeks)
- Fasting an activity eg TV, facebook, McDonald's (it is about your heart attitude and desire to give your spiritual life priority)
- Fasting more than one day requires specific planning. You need to be healthy and a doctor's check up would be advised.

You do not have to choose one of the above let God lead you to fast in a unique way before him.

Tips

If you are not in the habit of fasting a three day fast is possibly the longest you should undertake. Like any discipline it is necessary to build up the capacity to fast over a period of time.

In a fast your body will go through a detox phase which could include headaches (especially if you drink a lot of coffee). I recommend juice fasting simply to keep your system from running down. Drink plenty of fluids; **your health is important!**

Time to Pray

Prayer and fasting go together. Fasting will make you aware of how much time you spend thinking about and preparing food. I have found that fasting actually releases regular chunks of time into my schedule. The best way to use this extra time is to enter into prayer, take time to sit and wait expectantly with a heart to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Remember there are many spiritual disciplines and practicing more than one is extremely refreshing in your spiritual walk.

Important.

In regards to fasting there are many ways to fast please be wise and if you are going to have an extended fast consult your Doctor making sure there are no unforeseen health issues. Fasting is not a way to loose weight it is a spiritual exercise not a diet. If you are fasting longer than 3 days talk to Pastor Nick he will coach you and encourage you through your fast.

Following are some web sites on fasting.

<http://www.billbright.com/howtofast/index.html>

<http://www.allaboutprayer.org/prayer-and-fasting.htm>

<http://www.billbright.com/7steps/begin.html>