



ANNUAL CORPORATE FAST

Fasting & Prayer – an Overview

Part 1: Why?

The purpose of this booklet is to give you a quick study into the power and importance of fasting and prayer. As you are aware, here at Gateway, we have an Annual Church Fast, followed by our Advance Conference. We have seen significant spiritual breakthrough and the manifestation of the power of God during and following our corporate fast. It is a very exciting season, and we look forward to this every year. For additional teaching, please see Pastor Landen's messages on fasting that can be found on our YouTube page.

Jesus Said *When* Fasting:

This whole aspect of Fasting and Prayer is born out of Jesus' admonition to us in Matthew 6:16-18:

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (ESV)

The statement "when you fast", shows us that Jesus was not asking a question but stating an expectation. The disciple of Jesus is expected to fast. It is not a subjective suggestion; it is not based on if you feel like it is ok or not too radical. It is a clear expectation that the believer will embrace fasting as a normal part of their Christian walk.

It is important to share here that fasting is not fanatical. It is not going overboard with your faith or getting too radical. It is expected. There is a spirit in the world today that tries to trick disciples of Jesus that certain expectations that He has for us are too radical and therefore ok to avoid or disregard. This religious spirit literally convinces us to avoid the very things that give us power. In the guise of "orderliness" or "being proper", we have believed a lie that robs us of Kingdom Power.

From Glory to Glory:

In 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, we see the desire of the Lord for us to move forward and grow in our faith and in the expression of the glory of the Lord being released in our lives:

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (ESV)

While our fasts should be points of reference along our journey with the Lord, they also should serve as foundational moments that move us from one degree of faith to another. God doesn't want us to fast for fasting sake, His desire is that the fasts we

have would become foundational to new growth and life in Him. He truly does work all things together for good to those who love Him!

Three Benefits to Fasting:

Fasting has some very miraculous benefits. What we mean by this is that there are immediate miracles that take place as soon as one engages a fast of any sort. The very idea of denying ourselves of something that we need or desire, for the sake of connecting with God in intimacy, has an impact on Heaven's attention and immediately the Lord responds with benefits for us. These benefits may not be the answer to prayer that we are initially looking for, but they create a hunger for more of God that can last beyond our fast.

1. Greater Sensitivity

When you fast, you cause your flesh to be quieted and you are enabled as more sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual numbness is a result of God's people answering spiritual cravings with fleshly answers. Escapism is one of the enemy's best tricks to get the believer's focus off God and on to something else. When we fast, we require ourselves to seek the Lord during times that would be filled with other things. The miracle that happens is we become more sensitive to His Spirit and therefore more aware of His presence and voice. This is an amazing benefit because it also reveals to us the potential that we have in our relationship with God. Intimacy is real and possible. This should stir our faith to pursue Him in the same fashion when we are not fasting.

2. Greater Capacity

Another amazing miracle that happens during a fast is that our spiritual capacity is increased. What does this mean? It means that we are suddenly able to contain more of Him than we were before. We have an increase in our ability to hear and receive from Him. Our spiritual capacity for His voice, revelation, intimacy supernaturally increases, allowing us to truly feel His presence at a greater level and pray with greater levels of faith and assuredness.

3. Greater Release

Ultimately, one of the greatest benefits of fasting is a greater release from God. Whether it is the release of a greater measure of anointing in your life or the release of answered prayers, we see the Lord accelerate His answers to us because of our fasts.

Twelve Reasons to Fast:

Biblically, there are several reasons to fast. The following, while not a comprehensive list, gives us a biblical perspective on different reasons to fast and results from fasting, from the examples found in scripture. This list is not about forms of fasting, rather it is about circumstances that we may face in our lives that were also faced by people in scripture, and how the breakthrough of God came because they fasted. Do not look

for a form or way to fast from this list, formats for fasting will be addressed in Part Two of the booklet.

1. Release of the Power of God (Jesus Fast)

Luke 4:1-14 (Please read this passage). Two Important Statements: **“Jesus FULL of the Spirit” & “Jesus IN THE POWER of the Spirit.”**

What is fascinating about this passage is found in two very important statements. Jesus went into the fast filled with the Spirit but came out of the fast in the power of the Spirit. If you need a release of the power of God in your life, fasting is a way to see that happen. Jesus fasted for forty days and nights and returned from His fast full of the power of God. One reason to fast is to see a release of His power.

2. Deliverance of Demonic Habitual Sin (Disciples Fast)

Mark 9:29

Another reason to fast and pray is to see the breaking of bondage from habitual sin or demonic oppression. Jesus told the disciples that the kind of demonic activity that they faced required prayer and fasting to see it broken. If you need breakthrough from demonic bondage, there is power for you found in fasting and prayer.

3. Safe Passage through Circumstances (Ezra Fast)

Ezra 8:21-23

Ezra was about to journey through some unsettling passages. He was carrying great wealth in the caravan that he was leading and could not afford to have his mission thwarted by the theft his provisions. Considering this, Ezra had the company that was with him fast and pray for safe passage. God provided the protection and Ezra arrived in Jerusalem safe and sound. If you are in or having to face dangerous passages while on mission for the Lord, whether actual physical danger or perilous circumstances, you can fast and pray for safe passage.

4. Revival (Samuel Fast)

1 Samuel 7:1-6

Israel was returning to the Lord and putting away former things. When you are desiring revival in your own life or in the life of your family or church, fasting is a key in unlocking the staying power of that revival. This fast helps us clearly see sin in our lives or areas of dysfunctional thinking so that we can repent and move forward revived in the Spirit of the Lord.

5. Overcoming Mental Anguish & Meeting with God (Elijah Fast)

1 Kings 19

After an amazing outpouring of the Lord, Elijah was threatened by Jezebel and hid from her. In his hiding he began to get depressed. The Lord miraculously provided two meals for him and then he fasted for forty days and hid in a cave at Horeb. In that cave he had an encounter with God that points to God's desire for

intimacy with us. One can fast and pray to both break the power of mental anguish and as well towards birthing a new intimacy with the Lord and hearing His voice.

6. Generosity and Provision (Widow's Fast)

Isaiah 58 & 1 Kings 17

Elijah received instruction from the Lord to receive provision from a widow in Zarephath. She however did not have, in her mind, the provision necessary for both Elijah and her family. She was asked to give away the last of what she had before they ate their last meal and died. It was a challenge to her faith but she did and found a release of supernatural provision for herself and her son. The power of God for provision is released through fasting and prayer.

7. Direction and Clarity (Paul's Fast)

Acts 9 & 22

After Paul had the Damascus experience, in his blindness, he fasted and prayed for three days and received direction from the Lord through Ananias. If you are needing clarity and direction, it can be released to you when you fast and pray.

8. Health and Healing & Prophetic Release (Daniel Fast)

Daniel 1:8-18 & 10

There is a supernatural physical provision that is available through fasting as shown in Daniel 1. Even though it made no natural sense for Daniel and his friends to continue to strengthen physically eating differently than the other young men, God miraculously sustained them. There is a place of physical restoration that can be found in fasting and prayer. Secondly, in Daniel 10, we see that Daniel fasts for 21 days and then experiences angelic visitation and prophetic insight into the end times that continue to be important to the church today! Great prophetic release is a result of prayer and fasting.

9. Strength to be a Witness/Set Apart (John the Baptist/Nazirite Fast)

John 1:6 & Luke 1:15

John the Baptist lived a life of fasting. He was set apart as a Nazirite. Others in scripture that were Nazirites were Samson and Samuel. John the Baptist's fast set him apart to be a witness. If you need strength to grow as a witness, it can be accomplished through prayer and fasting.

10. Miracles (Esther Fast)

Esther 4:14-5:1 Esther needed a miracle. To go to the King uninvited was to invite death. She needed miraculous favor so that her people could be saved. As we know, her fast proved effective and her people were saved through her faith filled risk taking. Prayer for miracles require that same faith filled willingness to risk. When we fast and pray, we unlock our potential for miracles.

11. Revelation and Repentance (Moses Fast)

Deuteronomy 9:7-13

Moses fasted for forty days without eating or drinking. This was a fast that took

place in the very presence of God. Moses fasted and prayed for the children of Israel in repentance but also received the revelation of the Ten Commandments. If you are in a place where you need revelation or are wanting to intercede for people who need to return to the Lord, you can find answers in a time of fasting and prayer.

12. Release of Authority and Commissioning (Apostles Fast)

Acts 13:2-3, 14:23

Prior to commissioning and appointing people, the Apostles fasted and prayed. It provided supernatural authority for the role that was being bestowed upon the individuals. If you are in need of a shift in your spiritual authority, fast and pray and you will find that you attain a greater realm of authority in the spirit due to your time of fasting and prayer.

Part 2: How?

Know what you are fasting for:

Be clear on your focus.

As you are preparing to fast, be sure that you have determined what you are fasting for. Clarity of focus will help you stay on target with your fast. If you are not clear on what you are praying for, you will find that you lose your determination as you continue your fast.

The best way to do this is to write things down. Write down what you are desiring to see happen in your life and what specific things you are praying for.

As always with God, the journey is as important to Him as the destination. As you are spending the time in fasting and praying, be sure to incorporate the following things.

1. **Get Quiet** – The purpose of the fast is to quiet ourselves so that our capacity to hear the voice of God can increase. Do not make yourself busier to avoid the hunger pangs that you feel. It is important that we find quiet time to rest in Him and reflect on Him
2. **Worship** – Make sure that your quiet includes worship. Spend time just worshipping the Lord, not even worrying about praying for the specifics in that moment but using the time wisely to connect with God in Worship.
3. **Prayer** – This whole process is about prayer, so therefore do not neglect it. Look for opportunities to pray. Pray during your day as you get the chance but also set aside times for prayer.
4. **Read** – Read the Word and books that you have found to be helpful in developing your spirit man. Determine a Bible reading program that you will cover throughout the course of the fast. Increase it from what your normal reading would be; make sure that you have time to spend in reflection and meditation. Meditation, as the world looks at it, is to just empty your mind; in the spirit, it is the emptying of the fleshly mind so that it can be filled with the things of the Spirit of God. Look for opportunities to fill your mind or meditate on Him.

5. **Journal** – Record what the Lord is saying to you. Be vigilant. Write down dreams you may have or visions, as well as insights and revelations from the word and from times of reflection. These will be important for you not only now but in the future. Be sure to steward well what God releases to you during your fast.
6. **Avoid FILLERS** – There is a miracle with time with fasting. It slows down exponentially. You will find that during your fast, days linger on and seem to go by very slowly. That is a gift from God. However, there is a tendency to desire to fill time when you are hungry. Things like TV, internet, novels, video games or games, that take your attention away from your hunger are filling, but wasteful. When we fast, we are saying that we want to be filled with more of the Spirit of God, yet our actions can say that we just want to be filled with something; we don't care what. Don't fall for the lie that you need other things to satiate your hunger. Don't waste the time of the fast.

Prepare Your Spirit

Confess, Clean, Consecrate

Take some time in the beginning of your fast to do some housecleaning. Ask the Spirit to show you where you need to be cleaned up. We follow the Biblical model of confession and repentance which leads to forgiveness and cleansing. Allow the Lord to point out sinful issues in you not only at the beginning but throughout your fast. God will show you the things that are prohibiting you from walking in greater intimacy with Him, but then you can deal with it and move into that intimacy. (1 John 1:9)

Determine Your Method

Ask the Lord how He wants you to fast

There are several ways to fast and pray. Determine how you are going to do that by asking the Lord for what He would like you to do. There may be things that He will ask you to give up for a time that you would not have thought of or would not have naturally fasted.

Corporate Requests

Every year, Gateway Family Church has different corporate requests that we pray for as a body of believers. They are shared with the congregation at the beginning of the fast and are prayed through during corporate gatherings of worship during the fast. It is important to note here as well that when the church family has gathered for times of worship and prayer that you do your very best to be there to participate with the family. These times have proven to be powerful opportunities to connect with God.

Four Kinds of Fasts:

It is important to be aware of your physical limitations with fasting. If there are medical reasons that would prohibit you from fasting food, there are other things that you can

do both with fasting food and without fasting food, however, it is vital that you make wise decisions in your method of fasting.

1. Absolute Fast – No food or liquid for a set period

Moses did this for forty days and nights on Mount Sinai. This is a supernatural fast and not recommended unless you have heard directly from the Lord. It is a fast without food or drink. Water is very important to the body and to go without it for a prolonged time is dangerous. Moses was in the very presence of the Lord speaking with Him face to face. So, we understand that there was a level of sustenance from being in His presence that required no food or drink. This fast can be done for short periods under God's permission.

2. Normal Fast – Liquids only (no food) for a set period

This is the most common form of fasting. Liquids like water, juices, broths, and the like are drunk during the duration of the fast and foods are not eaten.

3. Partial Fast – Certain foods and liquids for a set period (e.g., Daniel Fast)

This is also a very common form of fasting. In this fast, the person will eat only certain foods, i.e., just vegetables, or a certain kind of soup. People will often cut out all sugar, meats, or breads during this fast. It is up to the individual and the Lord to determine what will be eaten and what will be fasted.

4. Sacrificial Fast – Certain sacrifices for a set period

While this fast can pertain to foods such as sweets or fast foods, most often it is used by those who cannot fast food. This is a great form of fasting for children. Here is where, media, tv, internet, novels, puzzles, etc., can be sacrificed for the duration of the fast. I recommend for all fasting that fillers, as noted before, be avoided so that we can focus on the Lord. However, for those who cannot fast food, a sacrificial fast can be very effective.

Ways to Fast:

There are several ways to fast, once you have determined the form of fasting that you are going to do.

- **Full Fast** – Choosing one form of the fast and doing only that form for the entire duration. For example, a 12 day Partial Fast where for 12 days only certain foods are eaten.
- **3 Day Fast** – A fast that lasts for three days.
- **Daylight Fast** – Fasting from dawn until dusk. Some folks will fast for the day and then at dusk will have a small meal.
- **Combined Fast** – Fasting over a longer than three-day duration. One could combine a partial fast with a full fast. For example, a person could start with three days of partial fasting then three days of a full fast.

Fasting Side Effects:

There are a few natural side effects with fasting that are easily dealt with. One thing to remember though is that the first three or four days of the fast tend to be the hardest with the most side effects. *Firstly*, and most obviously, hunger. It is very natural to be very hungry for the first three or four days of a fast. This passes and you start to feel better with more energy after the first few days have passed. *Secondly*, headaches. It is very common to have some headaches rise when you start your fast. Your body is detoxifying and that can cause headaches. A reasonable dose of a pain killer helps with the pain, and they do settle down after the first couple of days. *Thirdly*, dizziness. Dizziness can be a result of sugar levels dropping. This can be helped with taking care in our exertion and drinking natural fruit and vegetable juices.

WATER WATER WATER

Finally, it is important to drink lots of water. It is a filler of the stomach and helps with hunger pangs. But also, it is imperative that you maintain your hydration during the fast. Try to drink 2 litres of water every day during the fast. It will help with your energy levels and keep you hydrated while you fast and pray.