



THE LENTEN GUIDE TO

# FASTING



Church of the Servant

# ***Think Fast!***

*“Do you wish your prayers to fly toward God?  
Give them wings by fasting.”  
– Saint Augustine*

## **WHAT IS FASTING?**

Fasting is the voluntary withdrawal from something for the purpose of drawing closer to Christ. It is a spiritual discipline that has the potential to bring a deeper love and devotion for Christ, an authentic humility and a clearer focus for our individual lives and the life of our church.

## **FASTING IN THE BIBLE**

- *Moses fasted twice, for forty days each time. The first time he fasted, he received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:27,28). After his second fast, his face shone with the glory of God (Deuteronomy 9:9,18,19).*
- *Hannah fasted and prayed that she could have a child. She did and offered him to God for God's use (I Samuel 1:7,8).*
- *Elijah fasted for 40 days while fleeing from Jezebel, who had threatened to have him killed. God gave him clear instructions and the boldness to do what He had instructed (I Kings 19).*
- *David fasted on many occasions, including before he was crowned, when his child was ill, when his enemies were ill. He fasted to be forgiven of his sins.*



- **King Jehoshaphat** fasted then he and his army were surrounded by enemies and destruction seemed eminent. They had victory over their enemies (II Chronicles 20).
- **Ezra** proclaimed a fast in order to solve a problem prior to a very perilous journey to Jerusalem (Ezra 8).
- **Nehemiah** fasted for the restoration of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4).
- **Queen Esther** asked an entire nation to fast when they were on the brink of annihilation (Esther 4).
- **Daniel** fasted 21 days and received a vision of the end times (Daniel 9).
- **The King of Nineveh** called for fasting and national repentance (Jonah 3).
- **Isaiah 58** offers fasting as a means of accomplishing God's justice and caring for the poor.
- **Jesus** set the example of fasting when he fasted for forty days after his baptism (Matthew 4:2). For Jesus, it was a matter of **when** believers would fast not **if** they would. He spoke in terms of "**When** you fast..."
- **John the Baptist** and his disciples fasted often (Luke 5:33).
- When **Anna** was a widow in her eighties, she "never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying" (Luke 2:36, 37).
- **Prophets** and teachers fasted at Antioch (Acts 13:2).
- **Paul** fasted for three days after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). **He** later wrote that he "fasted often" (II Corinthians 11:27).
- There is frequent fasting in the Book of **Acts**. There was fasting to send out missionaries (Acts 13). They fasted about the appointment of elders (Acts 14).





*Some of the  
many reasons to*

# **FAST:**

- To gain a more intimate relationship with Christ, to rivet our attention on God.
- To experience a renewed sense of God's presence.
- To find the will of God, to gain direction, to make a major decision, individually or as a congregation.
- To solve a problem.
- To get perspective on our lives.
- To gain spiritual strength, empowerment to do something difficult.
- To intercede on behalf of someone else, to pray for healing for the sick and suffering.
- To repent of sin and seek God's forgiveness.
- To free ourselves from slavery to habit
- To let God shape our character.





# HOW SHALL I FAST?

1. Make a solid commitment to it.
2. Pray and seek God's direction for the type of fast you might do. Consider a one-meal fast, a 24-hour fast, a repeated weekly experience (i.e. Mondays), or a daily fast of some type. Plan to drink water or juices. If you are unable to fast from food, you might want to consider fasting from other things to which you are attached – television, music, movies, video games, the Internet.
3. Through prayer, determine a beginning and end to your fast.
4. Arrange a time and a place where you will seek God and express your desire to draw closer to Him. Devote yourself to that time regardless of how you feel or what distractions may come. If you are fasting from food, this time to draw close might be during the time you would have normally eaten. Be clear about protecting this time.
5. When you meet God, offer Him praise and worship. Sing, if you wish.
6. Read the Scriptures.
7. Ask God to reveal your sins, confess them and ask for God's forgiveness.





8. Pray for:

- People: The sick, hurting, those needing direction, those who don't know Christ, your family and loved ones. Go to <https://servantokc.org/care-support> for our church's prayer list.
- Our church: Our journey in discovering God's will, the fulfillment of our desire to reach people for Christ, our future, the stewardship of God's resources. Pray for the wise selection of our new pastor.
- Our world: God's will on earth, our leaders at every level, the spread of the Gospel throughout the world.
- Yourself: Offer your whole self to God for His will and work in you.

9. Be attentive to ideas and scriptures that come to you during your prayer time and write them down.





*Fasting can be feasting!*

*In experiences of fasting we are not  
so much abstaining from food as we are  
feasting on God and His Word. When the  
disciples brought lunch to Jesus,  
assuming he would be starving,  
Jesus declared,*

*‘I have food to eat of which  
you do not know.’*

*Jesus was being nourished and  
sustained by the power of God.*

*That is the reason for His counsel on  
fasting in Matthew 6. We are told not to act  
miserable when fasting because, in point of  
fact, we are not miserable.*

*We are feeding on God and, just like  
the Israelites who were  
sustained in the wilderness  
by the miraculous manna  
from heaven, so we are  
sustained by the Word of God.*





CHURCH OF THE  
**SERVANT**

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**SUNDAY WORSHIP**  
10:00 AM | Celebration Center