

REFUGE

C H U R C H

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Introduction to Fasting

Fasting is abstaining from something (usually food), or not eating food over a period of time. Biblical fasting is a form of self-denial for the sake of pursuing our relationship. It is a deliberate abstinence from something for a spiritual purpose. When we fast, we choose to break with our routine in order to draw closer to God. As such, fasting demands a deep level of commitment and sacrifice. Fasting isn't a spiritual requirement; it doesn't make us better than anyone else, nor more spiritual. Fasting is a choice to seek the Lord's face and His presence in a deeper way for a short season.

When we fast, we are following Jesus' example (Matt. 4:2). As we fast, we humble ourselves before the Lord, being very prayerful and meditating in the Word. This is a time to really devote ourselves to constant, consistent praying (1 Thess. 4:17). Ultimately, fasting is waiting on God. Fasting allows us to embrace emptiness and our need for God. Fasting is a way to press in, to break away from the "norm," quiet ourselves before God, and use our time to wait upon the Lord with greater intensity (Gal. 5:24).

Fasting isn't just about what we put in our stomachs, but what we feed our souls and spirits as well. Two powers are at work when we fast: our human will, and the supernatural power of God. Fasting grinds on the flesh (Rom. 8:13) because the flesh fights against the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-8; Gal. 5:17). Realize that our flesh will fight back: grumpiness, headaches, stomach growling, thoughts drifting to food, getting cold, being tired from the toxins being released from your body. It takes work to get our flesh under

submission! As the flesh weakens, we become more and more sensitive to the Spirit and the things of God.

Additionally, fasting has several benefits. It helps to root and ground us in faith to the promises of God (Eph. 3:17; Col. 2:7). It can sharpen and hone our spiritual sensitivity to the things of God. Fasting is beneficial for spiritual cleansing as well, as times of prayer and fasting can sever the spiritual bonds of addictions. Fasting also has medical and physical benefits that the medical community has recognized for centuries: fasting allows the digestive system to rest and allows the body to cleanse itself from toxins.

Fasting brings about miraculous results (Gal. 6:8)! As we fast, we empty ourselves and weaken our flesh, that the power of God may be available to us in greater amounts. It is through fasting that God tends to reveal and release His supernatural power: God-inspired creativity (new ideas, God-given plans), His wisdom made available in certain situations, spiritual resources to endure and overcome, and even birth revival and unique outpourings of the Spirit's power!

Fasting and prayer brings us closer to God and also yields some long-term rewards. During this fast, we are expecting God to speak through His written Word, dreams, visions, Spirit-directed impressions, and God-inspired ideas. Some of the things that God is going to speak are going to be crucial and critical to our walk with the Lord, or instructions for closing the gaps in our lives this year, and even personal healing and deliverance.

An effective time of spiritual fasting and prayer requires determining in advance:

- Why am I fasting?

Determine the reason for your fast, what is your focus/reason for seeking the Lord?

Some Examples:

- *Freedom from addictions or besetting sins*
- *Provision/stewardship wisdom with financial troubles*
- *Victory over negative emotional feelings & habits*
- *Wisdom/to know God's will for major life decisions*
- *Physical healing*
- *Favor in a major Kingdom-/work-related venture*
- *Protection and victory in spiritual warfare*

As the Lord confirms in your heart and mind what this fast is for, write it down!

- How long should I fast?
- Decide that you WILL succeed!

How we will do this

This fast will be a 21-day fast with a media option and a food option, beginning at midnight on January 11th, and ending at midnight on February 1st. Feel free to select either or both options.

• Option 1: Media Fast

Abstain from media that is not work related or essential. This means that we'll cut out radio, television, podcasts, web-surfing, superfluous texting, movies and social media for the full 21 days of this fast.

• Option 2: Daniel Fast

The Daniel Fast is an opportunity for you to draw closer to God through fervent, focused prayer. It involves a 21-day commitment to a partial fast, which means you restrict commonly enjoyed foods as an act of worship and consecration to the

Lord. It focuses on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, and water, while avoiding meat, dairy, sugar, processed foods, caffeine, and alcohol for spiritual growth, prayer, and drawing closer to God.

During these 21 days, and whenever our bodies let us know they desire food, or whenever we seek distraction through media, we are committing ourselves to prayer, worship, and study of the Word. The desire to watch, surf, scroll or be preoccupied with some form of noise is a call to prayer!

Finally, use this fasting guide for food lists, shopping guidance, resources, and tips.

Tips for Fasting

- Pray as often as you can throughout the day or seek to increase the frequency of daily prayer time. Fasting does not work if you do not pray!
- Fast with a cause; never fast casually (hit-or-miss attitude). Some causes include:
 - *Spiritual warfare, victory over demonic oppression (Mark 9:29)*
 - *Direction and protection (Ezra 8:21-23)*
 - *Social justice and righteousness (Isa. 58)*
 - *Guidance, protection, to hear God's voice (2 Chron. 20:3)*
 - *Revelation/illumination (Acts 10:30)*
 - *Courage, obedience, and wisdom (Esther 4:16)*
 - *Confirmation of ministry direction (Acts 13:2-3)*
 - *Physical healing (Psalm 35:13; 2 Sam 12:16)*
 - *Emotional healing, deliverance from negative emotions/habits (Ps. 139:23-24)*
 - *Deliverance from addictive behaviors and cycles (Heb. 12:1)*
 - *Financial breakthrough or provision (Deut. 28:1-2)*

- *Revival, salvation for the lost (1 Sam 7:13; 2 Chron. 7:14; Joel 2:12-17)*
 - *Favor in a major Kingdom-/work-related venture (Neh 1:4-2:8)*
 - *Wisdom/to know God's will for major life decisions (Est 4:16; Acts 9:9)*
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- Unless it's a prayer partner, a spouse, or somebody who is supporting you during your fast, do not share that you are fasting with others. By talking about our fast to others, we risk losing any spiritual benefits that come from fasting (Matt. 6:16-18, NLT). Keep your fast to yourself, rather than seeking to use it as a way to impress others or get compassion for your struggle.
 - If you don't already have an established daily quiet time with the Lord, then this is an excellent opportunity to do so. Starting your day with God is a habit that will support your faith and growing intimacy with the Lord.
 - Integrate listening to praise and worship music before your Bible study time, after it, or as a part of your prayer time.
 - Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face. Avoiding distractions of media will allow you to focus on your relationship with God.
 - Reserve time in your daily schedule for Bible study.
 - Do not push to extremes physically or spiritually.

How to Prepare for the Fast

HOW TO PREPARE PHYSICALLY

For the final week of the fast, make your meals somewhat lighter for a few days leading up to your fast.

Make some decisions about your time/daily schedule before starting the fast and figure out how to alter your routine in order to prioritize time for prayer and study of the Word. This is going to have to involve some sacrifices in order to prioritize time for God!

HOW TO PREPARE SPIRITUALLY

Prepare spiritually by confessing your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness of those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

Start with a clear personal goal in addition to our corporate goals. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and clarity to your purpose for your fast.

Use the Prayer & Study Guide (available at refugechurchmiami.org under the 'resources' tab) for 21-days worth of scripture, prayer focuses, and devotional thoughts to help guide your personal prayer and Bible study time.

Make up in your mind that you WILL succeed, you WILL hear from the Lord, that you WILL experience breakthrough, revelation, and depth in your relationship with the Lord Jesus!

What to Expect during a Fast:

PHYSICALLY

When you fast, your body detoxifies, or eliminates toxins, from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains.

Limit your activity and exercise moderately.

Expect your sleep patterns to be thrown off, so take time to rest, or even nap when/if you can. Don't be too hard on yourself if your productivity comes only in spurts!

SPIRITUALLY

Expect to experience resistance from your own body, as well as the enemy, but expect to get to know the Lord better, and for His power to increase in your life.

Be ready for the Lord to speak to you! Purchase a little journal or notebook, or use your notes app on your phone to write down what the Spirit of God has spoken to you. Put the journal or notebook close to your bed to record the things He speaks to you during the night or during your prayer times. Take it with you to work or school so that you can capture whatever He wants to communicate to you during this time of consecration!

RECOMMENDED FOODS AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Foods to include in your diet during the Daniel Fast

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review this list of acceptable foods.

ALL FRUITS (These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch for added sugar)

Apples	Melons
Apricots	Limes
Avocados	Mangoes
Bananas	Melons
Berries	Mulberry
Blackberries	Nectarines
Blueberries	Oats
Boysenberries	Olives
Breadfruit	Oranges
Cantaloupe	Papayas
Cherries	Peaches
Coconuts	Pears
Cranberries	Pineapples
Dates	Plums
Figs	Prunes
Grapefruit	Raisins
Grapes	Raspberries
Grenadine	Strawberries
Guava	Tangelos
Honeydew melons	Tangerines
Kiwi	Watermelon
Lemons	

ALL VEGETABLES (These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch salt content)

Artichokes	Mushrooms
Asparagus	Mustard greens
Beets	Okra
Broccoli	Onions
Brussels sprouts	Parsley
Cabbage	Peppers
Carrots	Potatoes
Cauliflower	Radishes

Celery
Chili peppers
Collard greens
Corn
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Garlic
Ginger root
Kale
Leeks
Lettuce

Rutabagas
Scallions
Spinach
Sprouts
Squashes
Sweet potatoes
Tomatoes
Turnips
Watercress
Yams
Zucchini

LEGUMES

Dried beans
Black beans
Cannellini
Pinto beans
Split peas
Lentils
Black eyed peas
White peas

Green beans
Green peas
Kidney beans
Peanuts
Beans
Lupines
Peas

SEEDS

All nuts (raw, unsalted)
Sprouts
Ground flax
Cashews
Walnuts

Sunflower
Sesame
Almonds
Natural Almond Butter

WHOLE GRAINS

Whole wheat
Millet
Quinoa
Oats
Rolled Oats
Plain Oatmeal- not instant
Popcorn (homemade)

Brown rice
Barley
Grits (no butter)
Whole wheat pasta
Whole wheat tortillas
Plain Rice cakes

LIQUIDS

Water (spring, distilled, filtered)
Unsweetened Soy Milk
Herbal (caffeine free) Tea
100% Fruit/Vegetable Juice (no added sugar)

OTHER

Tofu

Soy products
Herbs
Small amounts of Honey, Guava, or stevia
Small amounts of Sea Salt
Small amounts of Ezekiel Bread
Small amounts of Olive Oil
All quality oils including but not limited to olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.
Spices (read the label to be sure there are no preservatives)

Resources for recipes:

www.ultimatedanielfast.com
www.daniel-fast.com

www.danielfast.wordpress.com
www.caringcarrot.com

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

During this fast, we are going to be abstaining from certain kinds of food. We want to eat right and avoid certain foods. This will produce dual purposes. The first is spiritual. It helps to produce a clear mind causing us to be light in the spirit and to be focused. The second is physical. It will help you to maintain a healthy life style.

All animal products including all meat, poultry, fish...
White bread
White rice
All deep fried foods
Caffeine
Carbonated beverages
Coffee (including decaf b/c contains small amount of caffeine)
Energy drinks
Foods containing preservatives, additives
Refined foods
Processed foods
Food additives
Refined sugar
Sugar substitutes
Raw sugar
Syrups
Molasses
Cane juice
White flour
Margarine
Shortening

High fat products
Butter
All leavened breads
Baked goods
All dairy
Milk
Cheese
Yogurt
Cream
Eggs
Alcohol
Mayonnaise

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SPECIAL NOTE

If you have health issues, please be sure to contact your health professional for advice before committing to any fast including the Daniel Fast. If you would like a list of the foods included and excluded in the Daniel Fast to show your doctor, just copy the contents of the previous pages.

PREGNANT WOMEN AND PEOPLE ON MEDICATIONS

Pregnant women, persons on medication, with ulcers, and those under a physicians care for diagnosed medical conditions, should consult their necessary doctor for recommended foods and drinks. You can still participate in the fast by eating and drinking very lightly, or choosing something else to fast from.

PARENTS

Parents, please make sure you feed your children. Change their diet and eating habits to something light and nutritious. Include them in your family prayer and Bible reading time. Explain to them why we are fasting. If they are old enough, allow them to express what they also would like God to do regarding their own prayer requests on this fast.

BREAKING THE FAST

When the fast is over, you may want to consider beginning with very light foods, like vegetables. Start by drinking some fluids to relax your intestines before having eating. Drink fluids such as light juices, warm water or warm soup. Overdoing and over-indulging will do more harm than you think.

Common FAQ's

What about prepared foods?

Read the labels of all prepared foods. Remember the Daniel Fast is sugar-free and chemical-free. So, if you use any canned fruits, vegetables, packaged foods, or prepared sauces you must read the label to be aware about just what is in there.

What about pasta?

Make sure the label says whole grain pasta with no additives (watch for sugar). Whole grain pasta offers 7 grams of protein per serving (3/4 cup of dried pasta).

I know it says raw, unsalted nuts, but what about roasted nuts?

The goal would be to stick to raw, unsalted nuts. But these are harder to find so in a pinch just make sure you get plain roasted, unsalted nuts with no preservatives.

How do I get enough protein in my diet while on the fast?

The following are protein-rich foods that are allowed on the Daniel Fast... almonds, sunflower seeds, lentils, quinoa, brown rice, split peas, whole grains, and tofu.

What kind of peanut butter is allowed?

A natural peanut butter with no additives...watch for sugars including molasses. Smucker's creamy natural peanut butter has nothing but peanuts in it.

How can I identify whole grain foods?

Typically if the ingredient lists "whole wheat", "rolled oats", or "whole corn" as the first ingredient, the product is a whole grain food item. Another way to identify whole grains in the foods you eat is to look in the nutritional facts information and check if the food item contains dietary fiber. If it contains a significant amount, it most likely contains whole grains. "Wheat flour" is not a whole grain and therefore does not indicate a whole grain product.

What about salad dressing?

Olive oil and lemon or lime are an option.

Do I need to eat organic foods while on the fast?

No, but it is suggested because organic foods are produced without the use of feed or fertilizer of plant or animal origin and without employment of chemically formulated fertilizers, growth stimulants, antibiotics, or pesticides.

What about bread?

The bread should be prepared without yeast.

How much can I eat?

As long as they are the appropriate foods, we are recommending eating until satisfied with no limits.