



FRESH START: The Power of Prayer & Fasting

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¹⁶“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:16-18 NLT

What is Fasting?

Biblical fasting is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose.

² Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. ³ Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NLT

Why Should We Fast?

We fast to draw near to God.

²⁵“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ... ³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Matthew 6:25, 31-33 NLT

We fast and pray over a crisis or major decision.

¹ After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat. ... ³ Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. ⁴ So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD's help.

2 Chronicles 20:1, 3-4 NLT

"Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die."

Esther 4:16 NLT

We fast to express sorrow for our sins.

⁷ Then the king and his nobles sent this decree throughout the city: "No one, not even the animals from your herds and flocks, may eat or drink anything at all. ⁸ People and animals alike must wear garments of mourning, and everyone must pray earnestly to God. They must turn from their evil ways and stop all their violence. ⁹ Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will change his mind and hold back his fierce anger from destroying us." ¹⁰ When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened.

Jonah 3:7-10 NLT

Why Prayer is So Important During Fasting

Prayer deepens our connection with God.

But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Matthew 6:6 NLT

Prayer brings clarity and guidance.

One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:2 NLT

Prayer releases spiritual breakthrough.

"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Matthew 17:21 NKJV