



CORPORATE LENTEN FAST 2024

February 20th - March 31st

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Introduction

From Tuesday, February 20th - Sunday, March 31st our church will be participating in a forty-day corporate Lenten fast. The bible always emphasizes the attitude of the heart during fasting. Genuine repentance, humility, and a sincere desire for God should accompany the act of fasting. As we embark on this forty-day Lenten journey together, let us set aside specific times for prayer, meditation, and reflection on God's Word. Let this season be a time of spiritual growth, renewed commitment, and a deepening of our relationships with one another and with God. During our forty-day fast, join us at 5:30 AM (CST) every Monday thru Friday for our morning prayer call.

Morning Prayer Call

712-432-3900

Access Code: 122330#

WE FAST BELIEVING

- Each member of our church will find a connection to Christ and their divine calling.
- There will be peace in all war zones across the world and the establishment of justice as a ruling principle.
- Each member of our church will help to build the #BelovedCommunity
- In personal salvation, deliverance, breakthrough, repentance, consecration, and spiritual formation.

Reasons to Fast

In the Bible, people fast for various reasons and fasting is often associated with spiritual purposes, seeking God, repentance, and expressing devotion. Here are some common reasons for fasting as found in the Bible:

- **Seeking God's Guidance:** Fasting is often practiced when individuals or communities seek divine direction, wisdom, or clarity. For example, in Acts 13:2-3, the leaders of the church in Antioch fasted before sending Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey.
- **Repentance and Confession:** Fasting is a way to express sorrow for sin, seek forgiveness, and demonstrate a genuine desire for repentance. In Jonah 3:5-10, the people of Nineveh fasted as a sign of their repentance, leading to God's mercy.
- **Expressing Humility and Dependence on God:** Fasting can be a way to humble oneself before God and acknowledge dependence on Him. In Psalm 35:13, King David humbled himself with fasting as he prayed for his enemies.
- **Mourning and Grief:** Fasting can be a response to times of mourning, grief, or distress. In 2 Samuel 1:12 and 2 Samuel 12:16-23, fasting is associated with mourning, whether over the death of a loved one or during a time of crisis.
- **Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance:** Fasting is sometimes connected with spiritual warfare and seeking deliverance from spiritual bondage. In Matthew 17:14-21, Jesus speaks about the need for prayer and fasting to overcome certain spiritual strongholds.
- **Expressing Devotion and Dedication:** Fasting can be an expression of devotion, consecration, or dedication to God. In Luke 2:37, Anna, a prophetess, served God with fasting and prayers.
- **Preparing for Ministry or Service:** Fasting is mentioned in the context of preparation for ministry or specific tasks. Jesus, before starting His public ministry, fasted for 40 days and nights (Matthew 4:1-2).
- **Solemn Assembly and Corporate Repentance:** Fasting is used in a corporate setting, such as a solemn assembly or national repentance. In Joel 2:12-15, a call to fasting and repentance is issued for the entire assembly.
- **Expressing Sincerity in Prayer:** Fasting can accompany fervent prayer as a way to demonstrate sincerity and intensity in seeking God's intervention. In Nehemiah 1:4, Nehemiah fasts and prays for the restoration of Jerusalem.

Types of Fasts

In the Bible, various types of fasts are mentioned, and they are often associated with spiritual practices, repentance, seeking guidance, or expressing devotion. Here are some types of fasts mentioned in the Bible:

1. **Normal Fast:** This involves abstaining from all food but not necessarily from water. An example can be found in Daniel 1:8-16.

2. **Absolute or Total Fast:** This type of fast involves abstaining from both food and water. It is a more extreme form of fasting and is rarely mentioned due to its challenging nature. An example is found in Esther 4:16.

3. **Partial Fast:** In this type of fast, certain foods or meals are restricted, but there is not a complete abstention from food. For instance, the Daniel Fast involves abstaining from certain foods and is based on the diet of Daniel and his companions (Daniel 10:2-3).

4. **Corporate Fast:** This is a fast observed by a group of people, such as a community or congregation. It is mentioned in Joel 2:15-16 as a call for the entire assembly to gather and fast together. This is the type of fast we are currently on as a church.

5. **Private Fast:** A fast observed by an individual for personal reasons, seeking God's guidance, repentance, or personal spiritual growth. Jesus, in Matthew 6:16-18, provides instructions for a private or secret fast.

How to Fast

Fasting is a personal and spiritual discipline that involves abstaining from certain foods, activities, or pleasures for a specific period. The way individuals fast can vary, and it's essential to approach fasting with a clear purpose and in a manner that aligns with your health and personal circumstances.

Guidelines on How to Fast

1. Set a Clear Purpose:

Determine the purpose of your fast. Whether it's for seeking guidance, repentance, spiritual growth, or another reason, having a clear intention will help you stay focused during the fast.

2. Choose a Type of Fast:

Decide on the type of fast you want to undertake. It could be a normal fast (abstaining from food), a partial fast (limiting specific foods or meals), or other variations like the Daniel Fast, which involves abstaining from certain foods for a set period.

3. Consult with a Healthcare Professional:

Before starting any significant dietary changes, especially if you have pre-existing health conditions, it's advisable to consult with a healthcare professional. They can provide guidance on how to fast safely.

4. Select a Duration:

Determine the length of your fast. Fasts can range from a few hours to several days. Beginners may start with shorter durations and gradually increase as they become more accustomed to fasting.

5. Prepare Mentally and Spiritually:

Take time to prepare mentally and spiritually for the fast. Reflect on your purpose, set realistic expectations, and commit to the discipline with a prayerful and humble attitude.

6. Plan Your Meals Before and After the Fast:

If you are doing a food-related fast, plan your meals before and after the fast carefully. Gradually ease into and out of the fast to avoid digestive issues.

7. Stay Hydrated:

Whether you're abstaining from food or certain types of food, it's crucial to stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water throughout the fast to maintain proper hydration levels.

8. Pray, Meditate, and Read Scripture:

Use the time during the fast for scripture, prayer, meditation, and reflection. Seek spiritual guidance, express gratitude, and focus on your relationship with God.

9. Listen to Your Body:

Pay attention to your body's signals. If you experience severe discomfort, weakness, or other adverse effects, it's okay to modify or end your fast. Your well-being is important.

10. End the Fast Gradually:

When concluding your fast, especially if it was an extended one, reintroduce food gradually. Start with light, easily digestible meals to avoid digestive issues.

11. Reflect on the Experience:

After completing the fast, take time to reflect on the experience. Consider what you've learned, how you've grown spiritually, and whether you achieved the goals you set for the fast. Remember that fasting is a personal journey, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. It's essential to tailor your fast to your individual needs, health considerations, and spiritual goals.

40-Day Fasting and Spiritual Growth Plan based on Isaiah 58

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that involves abstaining from certain foods or activities for a set period, often accompanied by prayer and seeking a deeper connection with God. Isaiah 58 provides valuable insights into the type of fasting that pleases God. This 40-day plan is inspired by the principles outlined in Isaiah 58 and aims to cultivate spiritual growth, self-reflection, and a closer relationship with God.

Day 1-3: Preparation and Reflection

- Begin by praying and dedicating these 40 days to God's guidance and transformation.
- Reflect on your current spiritual state, identifying areas that need improvement.

Day 4-7: Selfless Service

- Engage in acts of kindness and service to those in need.
- Reflect on how your actions align with the principles of Isaiah 58:6-7.

Day 8-12: Honest Self-Assessment

- Reflect on areas of your life that need change, acknowledging your shortcomings.
- Pray for humility and a contrite heart, as Isaiah 58:3-5 teaches.

Day 13-16: Seek Justice

- Choose a cause/initiative to support.
- Study social injustices around you and find ways to advocate for change.
- Pray for a heart that longs for justice and equality, in line with Isaiah 58:6-12.

Day 17-20: Replace Negative Habits

- Identify negative habits that hinder your spiritual growth.
- Replace them with positive actions and behaviors that honor God.

Day 21-24: Renewed Relationship with God

- Spend extra time in prayer and meditation.
- Seek a renewed sense of intimacy with God, inspired by Isaiah 58:9-11.

Day 25-28: Humility and Repentance

- Reflect on your past sins and shortcomings.
- Pray for forgiveness and repentance, as Isaiah 58:9 emphasizes.

Day 29-32: Prayer for Healing and Restoration

- Pray for healing and restoration in your personal life, relationships, and community.
- Trust God's promise of restoration from Isaiah 58:8.

Day 33-36: Breaking Chains

- Identify any bondage in your life (addictions, fears, doubts, etc.).
- Pray for freedom and deliverance, reflecting on Isaiah 58:6.

Day 37-40: Spiritual Renewal

- Dedicate the final days to seeking spiritual revival.
- Meditate on Isaiah 58:12, focusing on how you can be a "repairer of the breach."

At the end of the 40 days, take time to reflect on the changes you've experienced, the insights gained, and your deepened relationship with God.