

Isaiah Chapter 58  
From the Message Bible

Your Prayers Won't Get Off the Ground

58 1-3 "Shout! A full-throated shout!

Hold nothing back—a trumpet-blast shout!

Tell my people what's wrong with their lives,  
face my family Jacob with their sins!

They're busy, busy, busy at worship,  
and love studying all about me.

To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people—  
law-abiding, God-honoring.

They ask me, 'What's the right thing to do?'  
and love having me on their side.

But they also complain,

'Why do we fast and you don't look our way?

Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?'

3-5

"Well, here's why:

"The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit.

You drive your employees much too hard.

You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight.

You fast, but you swing a mean fist.

The kind of fasting you do  
won't get your prayers off the ground.

Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after:  
a day to show off humility?

To put on a pious long face  
and parade around solemnly in black?

Do you call that fasting,  
a fast day that I, God, would like?

6-9

"This is the kind of fast day I'm after:

to break the chains of injustice,  
get rid of exploitation in the workplace,  
free the oppressed,  
cancel debts.

What I'm interested in seeing you do is:  
sharing your food with the hungry,  
inviting the homeless poor into your homes,  
putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,  
being available to your own families.

Do this and the lights will turn on,  
and your lives will turn around at once.

Your righteousness will pave your way.

The God of glory will secure your passage.

Then when you pray, God will answer.

You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'

### A Full Life in the Emptiest of Places

9-12

"If you get rid of unfair practices,  
quit blaming victims,  
quit gossiping about other people's sins,  
If you are generous with the hungry  
and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out,  
Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness,  
your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight.  
I will always show you where to go.  
I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—  
firm muscles, strong bones.  
You'll be like a well-watered garden,  
a gurgling spring that never runs dry.  
You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew,  
rebuild the foundations from out of your past.  
You'll be known as those who can fix anything,  
restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate,  
make the community livable again.

13-14

"If you watch your step on the Sabbath  
and don't use my holy day for personal advantage,  
If you treat the Sabbath as a day of joy,  
God's holy day as a celebration,  
If you honor it by refusing 'business as usual,'  
making money, running here and there—  
Then you'll be free to enjoy God!  
Oh, I'll make you ride high and soar above it all.  
I'll make you feast on the inheritance of your ancestor Jacob."  
Yes! God says so!