



THE GATHERING HARLEM

GUIDE TO FASTING

WHAT IS FASTING?

We fast to temporarily remove things from our lives in order to focus more on God. Fasting is a time to humble yourself before God by intentionally abstaining from food or certain foods for the spiritual purpose of seeking after God. Fasting can also sometimes bring revelation from the Holy Spirit, leading to brokenness, repentance, and change. The ultimate goal of fasting is not to get something from God, though we often fast with a specific request or prayer. The goal is to focus ourselves on God by abstaining from something. With that being said, do not become so caught up in whether or not you are able to adhere to the rules of the fast 100% of the time. It's not about rule keeping, but be more aware of the presence of the Lord and developing a deeper relationship with Him.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FASTING?

We fast to ask God to hear our urgent prayers.

- *"21 And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before God. We prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled. 23 So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer." - **Ezra 8:21, 23***

We fast to pray for others.

- *30 I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one." - **Ezekiel 22:30***

We fast to pray for breakthrough in our personal lives and in society.

- *6 No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; the chains that bind people. 7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. 8 "Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. - **Isaiah 58:6-8***

HOW DO WE FAST?

Fast Discreetly. Jesus assumed that we would practice fasting & he taught us to fast discreetly. You can tell others that you are fasting if you want, but the point is to not draw attention to how spiritual you are with a bragging attitude. During a corporate fast, you can definitely discuss it with others at TGH.

- *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 6:17-18***

Fast with Faith. Fasting is a spiritual exercise, not just a physical one. We enter into a spiritual fast not to affect our weight or body image, but to seek after God.

- *6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. - **Hebrews 11:6***

Have a plan. Deciding to fast should be a spiritual decision that includes a plan for how long you will fast, what you will fast from, and what your motivation is for fasting. Ask questions like:

- When will I fast? (what days, times of day, how many days, etc.)
- What will I fast from? (food, certain foods, meals, all food, etc.)
- How will I prepare? (grocery shopping, financial planning, etc.)
- How will I break my fast? (reintroduce heavy foods slowly)

However, you can be flexible with your fast! If your health is ever at risk, if you become sick, or if an unexpected or urgent circumstance comes up, you can break your fast early or modify it. Make a plan, and then allow the Lord to lead you through it. *For the TGH corporate fast, we encourage you to fast for 21 days using the “Daniel Fast” below.

Fasting & Prayer. Incorporate intentional prayer into your fast. Remember, we fast to temporarily remove things from our lives in order to focus more on God. Fasting from meals gives us time & opportunity for prayer. Fasting also creates a yearning & desperation for God. When we feel hunger pangs or cravings, we are reminded to pray. When Jesus fasted for 40 days and was tempted by the devil, he answered him with an Old Testament scripture:

*4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" - **Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3***

To incorporate prayer into your fast, ask questions like:

- What will be my prayer focus? (corporate focus as a church, a specific request for yourself or someone else, deeper intimacy with Jesus, breakthrough or deliverance, discernment, etc.)
- When will I pray? (in place of meal times, when you feel food cravings, with others, etc)
- What scriptures will guide you? (repeating a scripture when you feel a craving, study one passage the entire fast, etc)
 - *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
- **Matthew 5:6**

Fasting as Spiritual Practice. Like all spiritual practices you have to practice them. The first time you fast, it will probably be a challenge! But as you practice it, it will get easier. Fasting can be practiced on a regular basis - weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. Let the Lord lead you.

Also, like all spiritual practices, don't let fasting become law in your life. Fasting is simply a tool to help us focus our attention on God. Whether you fast on a regular basis or once a year, God is ultimately concerned with your heart, not your practices.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FASTS?

Before you fast, it is very important to know your body, dietary needs, & options. For some it would not be healthy or wise to fast in certain ways.

Always consult a healthcare professional with any questions or concerns.

Here are a few types of fasts:

Daniel Fast: This is inspired by Daniel 1 in the Bible. It is a plant-based fast that involves removing certain elements from your diet: animal products, added sugar, refined grains, processed and fried foods, caffeine, and solid fats. Water and juice are allowed for fluids, and fruits, nuts, seeds, beans, legumes, vegetables, and whole grains are allowed for food. *This is the one that TGH is encouraging us to use for the corporate 21 day fast at the beginning of each year. There are many recipes online. A great place to get started is: <https://ultimatedanielfast.com>

Partial Fast: This fast involves abstaining from eating any type of food for a certain meal(s). It could also correlate to specific times of the day, like 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM, or from sunup to sundown.

Soul Fast: This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting from food or have health issues that don't allow you to fast from food. Instead, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast.

Complete Fast: In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option. Consult with a healthcare professional for extended fasts.

Regardless of which fast you choose, the secret to living free is in God's Word and through the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are living and active, and will show you how to live in freedom every day.

Remember, the ultimate purpose of fasting is not to get something from God. We fast to temporarily remove things from our lives in order to focus more on God.

APPENDIX: SCRIPTURES TO HELP YOU FAST AND PRAY

When you're fighting for freedom

- *"It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect."* - **2 Samuel 22:33**
- *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts.* - **Zechariah 4:6**
- *"For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."* - **Romans 6:6**
- *"For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace."* - **Romans 6:14**
- *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."* - **2 Corinthians 3:17-18**
- *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* - **Galatians 2:20**
- *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."* - **Galatians 5:1**
- *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires."* - **Galatians 5:24**
- *"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."* - **Ephesians 6:13**
- *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* - **Philippians 4:13**

When you need to remember that God is with you

- *The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* - **Exodus 33:14**
- *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in-trouble."* - **Psalms 46:1**
- *"But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you when you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west."* - **Isaiah 43:1-2, 5**
- *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."* - **Hebrews 13:5**

When you need to surrender and practice humility

- *"Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."* - **Matthew 10:38**
- *"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* - **Matthew 10:39**
- *"Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* - **Matthew 18:4**
- *"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."* - **Matthew 23:12**
- *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* - **Galatians 2:20**
- *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."* - **Philippians 2:3**
- *"All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."* - **1 Peter 5:5-6**
- *"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody."* - **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**
- *"For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."* - **James 3:16**

When you need to remember you are made new

- *"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."* - **Psalms 51:10**
- *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."* - **Psalms 119:9**
- *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."* - **Proverbs 4:23**
- *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."* - **Matthew 5:8**
- *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."* - **Romans 12:2**
- *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* - **2 Corinthians 10:5**

- *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."* - **Philippians 4:8**
- *"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!"* - **Hebrews 9:14**
- *"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."* - **Hebrews 10:22**

When you feel ashamed

- *"Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be—you get a fresh start, your slate has been wiped clean."* - **Psalms 32:1**
- *"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."* - **Psalms 103:10**
- *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."* - **Psalms 103:12**
- *"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."* - **John 15:3**
- *"For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."* - **Ephesians 1:4-7**
- *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* - **Hebrews 8:12**
- *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* - **1 John 1:9**
- *"If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."* - **1 John 2:1**

When you are overcoming temptation

- *"I will set before my eyes no vile thing."* - **Psalms 101:3**
- *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."* - **Matthew 26:41**
- *"Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."* - **Romans 13:14**

- *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."* - **1 Corinthians 10:13**
- *"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."* - **1 Corinthians 9:27**
- *"All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."* - **Ephesians 2:2-6**
- *"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."* - **2 Timothy 2:22**
- *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good."* - **Titus 2:11-14**
- *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* - **James 4:7**

When you feel condemned

- *"They looked to Him and were radiant; their faces were not ashamed."* - **Psalms 34:5**
- *"Do not be afraid, you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated; you will forget the shame of your youth."* - **Isaiah 54:4**
- *"Instead of your shame you shall have double honor."* - **Isaiah 61:7**
- *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."* - **John 3:17**
- *"But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, He straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her . . ." Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."* - **John 8:7, 10-11**

- *"When he [satan] lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies". - **John 8:44***
- *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." - **Romans 8:1***
- *"For the accuser of our brothers [satan], who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down" - **Revelation 12:10***

When you need healing for a broken heart

- *"I am the Lord, who heals you." - **Exodus 15:26***
- *"He is near to those who have a broken heart and saves those who are crushed in spirit." - **Psalms 34:18-19***
- *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." - **Psalms 147:3***
- *"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." - **Isaiah 61:1-3***
- *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." - **Matthew 11:28-30***
- *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." - **Romans 8:35, 38-39***

When you need to move beyond your past

- *"Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." - **Isaiah 43:18-19***
- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" - **2 Corinthians 5:17***
- *"But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." - **Philippians 3:13-14***

When you need to endure trials

- *"Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."* - **Nehemiah 8:10**
- *"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."* - **Psalms 30:5**
- *"My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?' Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God."* - **Psalms 42:3**
- *"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit."* - **Psalms 51:12**
- *"Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy."* - **Psalms 126:5**
- *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* - **Romans 8:18**
- *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."* - **James 1:2-3**

When you need a reason to rejoice

- *"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* - **Psalms 16:11**
- *"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."* - **Psalms 118:24**
- *"For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."* - **Isaiah 55:12**
- *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* - **Luke 15:10**
- *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."* - **John 15:11**
- *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* - **Romans 15:13**
- *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"* - **Philippians 4:4**

If you have further questions regarding prayer and fasting, please reach out to admin@thegatheringharlem.com.

FOODS TO EAT

ALL FRUITS: fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned.

ALL VEGETABLES: fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned.

ALL WHOLE GRAINS: amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and unleavened bread.

ALL NUTS AND SEEDS: almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.

ALL LEGUMES: canned or dried; black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.

ALL QUALITY OILS: avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut

BEVERAGES: distilled water, filtered water, spring water, fresh fruit or vegetable juices

OTHER: unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, soy milk; herbs, Bragg's Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu

FOODS TO AVOID

ALL MEAT AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS: bacon, beef, buffalo, eggs, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.

ALL DAIRY PRODUCTS: butter, cheese, cream, milk and yogurt.

ALL SWEETENERS: agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups and sugar.

ALL LEAVENED BREAD AND YEAST: baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey).

ALL DEEP-FRIED FOODS: corn chips, french fries, and potato chips

ALL SOLID FATS: lard, margarine and shortening.

BEVERAGES: alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea and tea.

A great resource for more information: ultimatedanielfast.com



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