

# FASTING GUIDE

## Fellowship Community Church



### WHAT IS FASTING?

#### FASTING IS

- An individual choice to abstain from food, drink, and/or other fleshly gratifying things for a period of time in order to seek God.
- A way to turn down the noise of the world so that we can better hear the voice of God.
- A way to help us let go of things of the world and grab hold of the things of Jesus.

#### FASTING IS NOT

- A dieting method in order to lose weight.
- A way to get God to do what we want.
- A way to appear more spiritual than others.

### WHEN SHOULD I FAST?

- When in need of revival, change, or deliverance in times of drought, darkness, or confusion.
- When in need of:
  - Clarity of direction
  - Divine intervention
  - A breakthrough
  - Healing (of any kind).
- When we desire closeness and intimacy with God.

# WHY SHOULD I FAST?

By taking our eyes off the things of this world, we can more successfully turn our attention to Christ. Fasting changes us, not God.

## Some reasons why it's important to fast:

1. **A deeper relationship with God (John 6:27):** Fasting leads us to develop a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. God is never a means to an end; He is THE end.
2. **Renewed hunger for heavenly things (Matthew 5:6; Romans 12:2):** As we empty our stomachs physically, we often become more aware of the emptiness in our souls. As we begin to pay attention to the hunger pangs, the Lord often awakens us to the true hunger pangs of our hearts.
3. **Training for self-denial (Mark 8:34):** Fasting is not about being miserable for the sake of God, but about making space for more of God. Self-denial is a natural response of the heart when we begin to believe that only Jesus knows what is truly best for us in this life and in the next.
4. **Intimacy, security, and strength (Matthew 4:1-11):** The Scriptures bring about a clear connection between intimacy with God, security in our identity, and the strength needed to live holy lives in the face of temptation.
5. **Clarity in prayer (Daniel 10 & Isaiah 58):** A potential breakthrough often comes by way of answered prayer. In seasons of prayer and fasting, you can experience levels of refreshment and clarity.
6. **To seek God's wisdom (Acts 14:23):** Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted for the elders of the churches before committing them to the Lord for His service.
7. **Humility for revival (2 Chronicles 7:14):** Humility is a magnet for the presence of God and fasting has a way of bringing us low.

# WHAT SHOULD I FAST FROM?

It is often most stretching to your faith and intimacy with the Lord to fast from something you typically cling to tightly. Fasting is an excellent way to identify idols in your life or areas where you turn to for comfort rather than turning to Jesus.

## Some common things to fast from:

- **Food:** Processed sugar, meat, fast food, coffee/soda (caffeine)
- **Entertainment:** Podcasts, music, sports, video games, tv, social media
- **Social Activities:** Shopping, dating

# HOW DO I FAST?

## Some common ways of fasting:

1. **Major Fast:** Abstaining from food or drink for **24 consecutive hours or more** (Matthew 4:2, Esther 4:15-16). Check with your doctor as this type of fasting requires a certain level of physical health.
2. **Minor Fast:** Abstaining from food for a **certain amount of time** – eating only at a set time of the day (Ex. 8am-5pm or sunup to sundown). You may decide to drink liquids during the day to sustain you.
3. **Partial Fast:** Giving up only **certain foods** during your fast out of devotion to God. An example of this is the “Daniel Fast” from Daniel 10.
4. **Soul Fast:** Fasting from things **other than food** out of devotion to God.

## A DAY OF FASTING

By abstaining from food throughout the day, you can incorporate additional activities to draw you closer to the Lord. Below are a few suggestions:

**Morning:** The time you spend with the Lord first thing sets the tone for the entire day.

- Begin your day in praise and worship, listen to music or read the Psalms.
- Focus on reading and meditating on the Word of God.
- Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to examine and search your heart and life.

**Afternoon:** Use your lunchtime to check in with God and realign your will with His.

- Read and meditate on Scripture.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Meet up with others who are fasting to pray, read Scripture, and worship together.

**Evening:** End your day in unhurried time with God.

- Avoid or limit outside distractions such as television, internet, or social media.
- Spend time physically on your knees in prayer alone in a closed room.
- Reflect on your fasting experience, writing your thoughts in a journal.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The following are helpful questions to ask yourself when fasting:

1. What sin(s) is the Holy Spirit bringing to light in your life? Are you confessing these sins to Him?
2. Who do you need to confess your sin(s) to? (James 5:16)
3. Who do you need to forgive and/or reconcile with? (Matthew 5:23-24)
4. When you feel empty or restless, what do you do to try to fill the emptiness? What does this tell you about your heart?
5. What thoughts or worldly cares interrupt your prayer life?
6. What is the Holy Spirit revealing to you about your temptations? What is He asking you to give up or let go of?
7. What idols is the Lord revealing to you? Are you willing to surrender and repent from them?
8. What do you fear the most? What brings you anxiety? Do you need to confess them and cast them upon Jesus? (1 Peter 5:6-7 & Philippians 4:6-7)
9. Where do you operate from an entitlement mentality? How can you wean yourself from this way of life/thinking?
10. What changes or breakthroughs do you hope to experience through fasting?
11. Do you know God's will for your life? If so, what is it? If not, are you asking God to reveal this to you?
12. How are you using your time, talent, and resources for the Kingdom of God?