

February 18, 2026 - April 3, 2026

40 *day* *fast*

A Guide for Fasting

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Why Should We Fast?

Purpose



Fasting is a Biblical practice of worship intended to strengthen your faith, commitment, and dependence upon God. By fasting we express worship to God, practice a reliance on God, and pause to examine our lives and repent of any ways that may be leading us away from God's purposes for our lives. A fast can take many forms. The most traditional form is to fast from food or certain foods. Other options include fasting from technology, from the internet, from tv, or any other regular habit of life. Choose an option that is both challenging and realistic as you seek to honor God with your fast.

Biblical Reasons to Fast:

- Humbling yourself before God – 1 Kings 21:27
- Expressing passionate devotion to God – Psalm 69:9-10
- Being open to the Lord speaking to you – Acts 13:2
- Asking for healing – 2 Samuel 12:16; Psalm 35:13
- Seeking guidance for conflict or danger – 2 Chronicles 20:3; Judges 20:26
- Asking for protection from danger or affliction – 2 Chronicles 20:1-9; Ezra 8:22-23
- Asking the Lord for favor with someone – Esther 4:16; Nehemiah 1:3-11
- Mourning a loss, death or defeat – 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; Esther 4:3
- Entrusting appointed leaders to God's care – Acts 14:23
- Expressing regret for sin and commitment to change – 1 Kings 21:27; Nehemiah 9:1

Jesus' Fast — In scripture, Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness before beginning His public ministry (Matthew 4:1–2). Those forty days echo a Biblical pattern of preparation and dependence on God—Moses fasted forty days on Mount Sinai, Elijah fasted forty days on his journey to Horeb, and Israel spent forty years in the wilderness learning to trust the Lord. Jesus' fast was not about willpower or self-denial for its own sake, but about deep communion with the Father, sharpening spiritual focus, and declaring that “man does not live on bread alone.” When we choose a forty-day fast, we step into that same rhythm of scripture, setting aside normal comforts to seek God more fully, align our hearts with His, and make space for spiritual renewal and transformation.

Partial Fast — There are many ways to do a partial fast. For instance, you could choose to fast a specific meal of the day each of the 40 days of the fast (e.g. breakfast or lunch). Another way to do a partial fast is to choose to give up one kind of food or drink (e.g. fasting from all desserts or fasting from any alcohol or soda). Another way to do a partial fast is to choose to fast on a specific day of the week (e.g. every Wednesday). The point of a partial fast is to participate in a realistically challenging way with some freedom to adjust for your circumstances. Remember that fasting is not a way to prove yourself but a way to give your attention to God.

Media Fast — This kind of fast is a great option if you have health issues that prevent you from fasting from food or certain foods. In this option, decide to refrain from all or specific forms of media. Take a 40 day break from Facebook, Instagram, and other social media sources. Decide not to watch TV, News Programs, Netflix, or other forms of on-screen entertainment. At the end of the fast, you can choose how to return to those forms of media.

Other Options — Fasting can take many forms. Other options include not making any non-essential purchases for 40 days, or refraining from following sports (games, news, etc.). Ask the Lord to give you another idea of what you might fast from in order to more deliberately devote your attention to Him.

Complete Fast— A complete fast is only drinking liquids (water or juice) while abstaining from all food. To be clear, we are not calling you to fast from all food for 40 days. However, one option is to do a complete fast for 1 day per week (for example, maybe Saturdays) and then possibly a partial fast (e.g. fasting from lunch) then other days of the week. You should only choose this option if you do not have any health reasons that would preclude you from doing so. If you are uncertain, then either choose a different form of fasting or speak with your doctor. Be sure to consider the health tips given below under the heading, Be Healthy. Please remember that whatever option you choose is intended to facilitate worship, not prove your physical or spiritual abilities.

You can make the most of fasting by having a plan. While fasting, you will recognize your appetite, desire, or impulse to do the things you have committed not to do; when that happens, take a moment to acknowledge your devotion and dependence on God. Plan to spend extra time praying, reading scripture or journaling. The point of fasting is not to experience emptiness, but to receive a greater fullness of what God offers you. Consider the following actions that can help you make the most of fasting:

Pray— Spend time praying instead of whatever you are fasting from. In place of a meal, pray. Instead of checking your news feed, pray. Instead of watching tv, pray. Take advantage of the increased time you have to pray while fasting. Follow the weekly prayer guide for a variety of prayer requests to present to the Lord.

Read the Bible— While you are fasting, spend time feeding your soul with the Word of God. When Jesus fasted for 40 days, He responded to temptation by speaking truth from the Bible. If you already have a Bible reading plan that you are doing, you can continue on with your selected plan. However, if you do not have a plan, then consider reading 1 chapter a day from the gospel according to Luke, then also Colossians, James, and Psalms 1, 23, 27, 37, 46, 51, & 91. That is 40 total chapters from the Bible which you will complete if you read and prayerfully reflect on 1 chapter per day.

Journal— Keep a record of what you experience and observe while you are fasting. Trust the Lord to take this opportunity to speak to you, reveal truth to you, encourage you, or even correct you. Keep track of what you are praying, reading in the Bible, or noticing in your time spent with Jesus.

- Write about what you are praying (write out a prayer or list prayer requests).
- Write out a verse of scripture you want to remember.
- Write a name or idea you have, and ask the Lord for a reason or action to take.
- Write a list of concerns you want to share with God.
- Write a list of reasons you are thankful.

Be Prepared

There are responsible ways to fast. Pay attention to how you are responding physically, mentally, and emotionally.

- Prepare for physical strain. When you fast from food your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Be sure to drink plenty of water.
- Prepare for emotional strain. You may find emotions rise while you are fasting because you are denying your body the comfort of food. Be careful not to burden others with those emotions and instead offer your thoughts, emotions, prayers, etc., to God.
- Wean yourself off of caffeine a few days prior to the fast to reduce headaches while fasting.
- Identify a place of solitude [a bedroom, patio, or a quiet route to stroll in your neighborhood] where you can periodically retreat for quiet moments while fasting.
- Share your plan for fasting with at least one person who is close to you if only for them to be aware in case unexpected health concerns arise.
- Identify, as best you can, where in your life you would most like to know God more - being one with Him and with other followers of Jesus. Share your hopes with God in prayer telling Him why you are fasting and what you are hoping to experience.

While Fasting

- Once you begin to fast, expect your body to give you signals of hunger mostly at mealtimes. This is a good time to go to a solitary place and pray.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the fast. Being well hydrated will reduce headaches.
- Limit your activity and exercise only moderately.
- If you begin to experience health concerns during your fast that cannot be remedied simply with a little rest, then stop fasting, begin to slowly eat some fruit and/or vegetables and consider contacting a health professional.
- Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God.
- Pray as often as you can throughout the day.
- Expect God to move in your heart as you draw close to Him.

Ending Well

- Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. No Double Doubles from IN-N-OUT! Start with something light — a salad, or fresh fruit are good options.
- Begin eating solid food gradually and start with small portions.
- Reflect on how fasting allowed you to draw closer to God and to rely more on Him. Review any words, prayers or memories you captured in your journal.
- Consider any change or action you recognize God is urging you to take.
- Share with someone you can trust to help confirm what God has spoken or revealed to you, and what change or action you want to take.
- Make a commitment to follow through in response to God.

Be Healthy

If you have concerns about your physical ability to fast, please consult a physician before you choose an appropriate form of fasting. Your doctor can provide advice on how you can participate in a 40 day fast.

Reasons NOT to Fast from Food:

- Pregnant
- Nursing a baby
- Diabetic
- Suffer from a heart condition
- Poor health

You can choose a form of fasting that does not require altering a healthy diet.

Reasons to Stop Fasting from Food: If you experience any of these symptoms, stop fasting and consider talking with a doctor.

- Becoming abnormally dizzy
- Having chest pains
- Your heart begins to race, or you feel jittery
- Severe health conditions arise such as vomiting, diarrhea or shortness of breath.

Sundays

Christian Assembly — unity of the church; Men's Ministry; Women's Ministry; CA Young Adults; Counseling; Growth & Recovery; Stewardship; Worship Arts; leadership (our pastors, elders, life group leaders and their groups, and all volunteers who serve and lead across the life of our church family); pray for even more people of those who are lost to be saved through our efforts together.

Mondays

Government Officials — city, county, state and national leaders; guidance and wisdom for elections; peace in our nation.

Tuesdays

Work — co-workers; the unemployed seeking jobs; productivity; provision; joy at work; opportunities to have spiritual conversations and share the gospel with your coworkers.

Wednesdays

Children & Youth — students; schools, teachers; parents; CA Kids; 678 (our middle school ministry); CA Students (our high school ministry); the foster care system; pray for even more kids and students who are lost to be saved through our efforts together.

Thursdays

Evangelism — the lost to be saved by the power of the gospel; the unconvinced to accept Jesus; the unbelieving to trust God's offer of forgiveness and new life; our church planters and their churches; our Kingdom partners both locally & globally.

Fridays

Healing — those who are sick; those who are grieving; those who are suffering mental illness; for relational healing among marriages, families, friendships, classmates, or coworkers where needed.

Saturdays

Biblical Justice — needs in our cities; homeless, poor, or disadvantaged neighbors; safety in our neighborhoods; our Kingdom partners serving the needy both locally & globally.

