

The Call to Declare a Fast!

The tone for Lent is established in the Prayer Book during the Ash Wednesday service in this way, “Show favor to your people, O Lord, who turn to you in weeping, fasting, and prayer.” “...in your wrath you remember mercy. Spare your people, good Lord, spare us...”

It is an age-old biblical pattern to call for prayer and fasting. Prayer deepened by fasting is powerful medicine for personal renewal in the Lord and for the renewal of our land. Biblically speaking, fasting combined with prayer makes our prayers before the Lord more effectual.

From Joel chapter 2, we read these words on Ash Wednesday, “15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast,”

Jesus simply assumed that Christians would take time to fast and to pray. Jesus says, “...when you pray...”

(Matthew 6:5) Again he says, “...when you fast...” (Matthew 6:16) Jesus commented to His disciples, “This kind (of evil spirit) can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” (Mark 9)

So, my question for you is - do you fast? Will you consider combining fasting and prayer this Lenten season?

The Fruits of Fasting

- ☐ Fasting leads to **deeper intimacy** with God as we deny our carnal (fleshly) nature in order to be filled with the desires of God.
- ☐ When we fast, we gain **wisdom and guidance** as our minds and souls are cleared away from the cares and concerns of this life so that we might better discern God’s direction for our lives.
- ☐ When we fast, we open our hearts to **spiritual revival**. Churches, nations, and peoples have been revived and healed through the combination of prayer and fasting.
- ☐ Fasting helps to overcome - seemingly - **helpless situations and to gain victory** over our enemies. (Judges 20:26)
- ☐ Fasting **expresses our grief** as Nehemiah did when the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the Jewish people were disgraced. (Nehemiah 1:1-4)
- ☐ Prayer and fasting can breakdown **Satanic strongholds** in lives and institutions. (Mark 9)
- ☐ Fasting may be used to express our deepest **repentance** before the Lord. (Jonah 3:10)
- ☐ Finally, fasting leads to deeper, more **authentic worship**. (Luke 2:37)

Reasons for Fasting

There may be burdens on your heart that are so deep that you need to devote yourself to a season of fasting so that you might focus spiritually on that issue. Reasons may include things like (but not limited to):

- ☐ For the affirmation of life and the protection of life from conception to the grave.
- ☐ To express grief and repentance over racial and political divisions which threaten our national unity.
- ☐ Praying for God’s victory in overcoming personal addictions or for a season of spiritual purification and rededication to the Lord.
- ☐ For the healing of family divisions, for children and grandchildren, people we love with health challenges, financial burdens, for forgiveness and restoration to someone in our lives.
- ☐ To overthrow oppression or depression caused by some life trauma or even caused by the underworld and the Evil One.
- ☐ Finally, simply insert your burden this Lent...begging for God’s mercy, intervention, and saving grace.

Types of Fasting

- ☐ The Daniel fast is a great fast that produces both bodily cleansing as well as spiritual growth. For more details, check out <http://a.co/fXGlacA> (or *The Ultimate Daniel Fast* on Amazon)
- ☐ *How to Successfully Fast* by Derek Prince
- ☐ *Fast and Simple* by Jentezen Franklin
- ☐ A great online resource by John Piper can be found at <https://www.desiringgod.org/topics/fasting>
- ☐ Fasting may simply be turning away from time wasting things; and instead, turning to the Bible and to prayer. Consider fasting from social media and other computer outlets, T.V. or video games that sap your time away from your worship and devotion toward God.

The bottom line is do what is helpful for you! Find a fast that will deprive you of something fleshly, in order that you might grow in the Life of the Holy Spirit. And remember, God will not love you any more than He does right now if you fast, but fasting just might increase the power of your prayers and move your heart deeper in love for Jesus!