

NEXTGEN WORSHIP CENTRE

# FASTING GUIDE

ANDREW BAWA

## Disclaimer

Before embarking on any fasting regimen, it is essential to consult with a qualified healthcare professional, especially if you have any pre-existing health conditions or concerns. Fasting can affect individuals differently, and medical advice is crucial to ensure your safety and well-being. This guide is intended for informational purposes only and should not replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always prioritize your health and consult a doctor before making any significant changes to your diet or lifestyle.

## What Is Fasting?

Fasting is a meaningful spiritual practice that involves a deliberate sacrifice, undertaken with the intention of seeking someone greater than oneself - God. This spiritual discipline often requires individuals to abstain from food, and at times even from water or social activities. By intentionally denying oneself of these physical comforts, individuals can cultivate a heightened awareness of their spiritual needs and desires. The primary goal of fasting is to create space for deeper intimacy with God and to seek His divine intervention in our lives.

## The Purpose Of Fasting

Fasting serves the purpose of seeking divine intervention & insight regarding specific matters and inviting the presence of God into one's life. Regardless of the individual's level of experience, fasting is inherently a sacrifice, reflecting a commitment to spiritual growth and connection.

It's important to recognize that fasting is not solely about our pursuit of God; it is also about allowing God to have more of us – our time, affection, and thoughts. In the midst of our regular daily routines, we can easily become distracted, making this surrender all the more vital for Him to tabernacle with us.

## Kinds Of Fasting

1. **Absolute Fast (Marathon Fast):** An absolute fast is one that involves abstaining from food and water. It is recorded in the Bible that Moses did an absolute fast for 40 days (Exodus 34:28). However, medical doctors advise that you do not do more than 3 days of this kind of fast. An absolute fast is often undertaken when a matter desperately in need of a solution is at hand.
2. **Normal Fast (Water Fast):** A water fast is one that involves abstaining from food for a set period of time. During a water fast, only water is consumed. It can be embarked on for durations ranging from 24 hours to 40 days.
3. **Daily Fast:** A daily fast could involve abstaining from food and water or only

abstaining from food while consuming water. It begins at the start of the day until a set time later in that same day. It can be done for a consecutive number of days or a singular day. As a church, we have our 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting, Command Your Month & Finishing Strong programs set at different times of the year that involve the daily fast for a consecutive number of days. My suggested times to our congregation is 6am until after our cooperate prayers in the evening. However, each person is at liberty to set a designated breaking time that reflects their personal sacrifice.

4. **Daniel Fast:** The Daniel fast derives its name and nature from Daniel 10:2-3. It involves abstaining from certain kinds of foods. In the book of Daniel, Daniel

and his friends only ate vegetables and drank water. It is common that people will usually only consume fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. I however believe that it does not have to be exactly like Daniel's fast in the Bible but you prayerfully consider what foods God will have you give up for the time duration.

5. **Fasted Life:** A fasted life is one that practices denying oneself from the pleasures of the flesh for edification and amplification of one's Spirit man. It goes on for the duration of one's life and may look like eating only once a day, cutting all portions of food in half, etc or as one desires.

## Corporate Fasting

Corporate fasting refers to any fasting that involves a group of believers together in a unified purpose. Corporate fasting is powerful and important because it creates a synergy among believers. (2 Chronicles 7:14-15)

In Ezra 8:21-23, a corporate fast was proclaimed for a journey mercies and God answered them and moved supernaturally among them.

In Esther 4:16-17, Esther called a fast among the Jews because destruction was looming but as they fasted, they were spared by God granting Esther favour in the sight of the king.



In Acts 13:1-2 as the disciples fasted together, God validated the call of Paul and Barnabas.

In Jonah 3, the whole city fasted and God did not carry out the destruction he threatened against them.

When we engage in corporate fasting, we can accomplish what may not have been possible on our own. Coming together amplifies our efforts, as there is strength in numbers (Matthew 18:18-20, Deuteronomy 32:30). This collective action creates a geometric progression of impact.

Corporate Fasting serves a purpose and it's beneficial to participate in corporate fasts called by your church leadership as long as it doesn't conflict with your own personal spiritual and physical commitments.

## Who Can Fast?

Fasting is a spiritual practice that can be observed by people of different ages. However, it is recommended that pregnant women and people with preexisting medical conditions seek medical advice before embarking on a fast.

People often wonder if their children can fast, and I say yes. In Jonah 3:7, the King of Nineveh gave a decree for a fast for the entire city, children and animals included. When children fast, it is recommended that they start off small as they are not able to go without food for as long as an adult is. You can introduce the habit of fasting into your children's lives by asking them to skip breakfast and resuming food consumption at lunch time.

## Reasons People Fast

1. **Desire for More of God:** A yearning for His presence and power.
2. **Ministering to the Lord:** Expressing love for Jesus, as seen in Acts 13:1-2.
3. **Seeking Divine Intervention:** Turning to God in times of desperate need for oneself or one's family.
4. **Stopping the Hand of the Enemy:** Breaking the cycle of negative patterns in one's life that they wish to end.
5. **Interceding for Others:** Fasting for children, parents, friends, or coworkers – seeking their salvation and healing.

## What You Can Expect During A Fast

Fasting offers numerous spiritual benefits and opportunities for growth, but the devil is aware of this and will do everything in his power to disrupt your progress. When you commit to fasting, be ready for challenges to arise.

Interestingly, many people can go through their day without even realizing they haven't eaten until late afternoon. Yet, on the days they've chosen to fast, they often struggle to make it past the morning without experiencing hunger pangs.

Additionally, you might wake up to discouraging news that makes it harder to stay committed to your fast, rather than inspiring

you to persevere. This contrast highlights how obstacles often seem to appear precisely when you set your intentions. Remember, these challenges can be seen as tests that pave the way for deeper resilience and spiritual growth.

Fasting provides various physical benefits that can enhance overall quality of life, as noted by medical professionals. Some of these health advantages include better heart health, enhanced brain function, and detoxification of the body, among others.

## **Spiritual Effects of Doing A Fast**

1. Denying the flesh and becoming more attuned to the spirit, anticipate hearing God with greater clarity.

2. A newfound ease in understanding the Word of God.
3. Supernatural encounters in the form of visions & revelations.
4. Spiritual promotions & greater discernment as your spirit man is being built up by prayer and sacrifice.
5. Supernatural speed. Pray for others and witness rapid results.

## **Physical Effects of Doing A Fast**

1. Headaches, stomach aches & dizziness can often arise. These can be linked to low blood sugar from not eating, caffeine withdrawals, increase in stomach acidity due to no food intake, etc. If your fast allows for water intake, make sure to stay hydrated by drinking

warm water. The discomfort you may experience is not a divine sign that you need to end your fast; rather, it is your body adjusting to a shift in its usual energy source.

2. Be mindful of unpleasant breath that can result from inactivity in your mouth during a fast. Consider using mints or brushing your teeth frequently. If you're fasting for an extended period, be cautious with sugary mints, as the sugar can quickly enter your bloodstream without food in your stomach.
3. If you're participating in an absolute fast or a water fast for an extended period – what we call a "marathon fast" at NextGen Worship Centre – be aware of your energy levels. Some may feel more energetic on the second day,

while others may experience a boost on the third. Experienced fasters often adjust their schedules based on these patterns. If this is your first marathon fast, it's best to avoid high-intensity tasks until you feel well adjusted.

4. During a marathon fast, particularly one lasting 7 to 10 days, I have found that men may experience an increased sex drive. I personally recommend that married couples refrain from intimacy during fasting. For daily fasts, it's best to wait until after breaking the fast to be intimate. In the case of a marathon fast, hold off on intimacy until the fast is over.



## Emotional Effects of Doing A Fast

During a fast, it's common to experience fluctuating emotions. This does not indicate that you are fasting poorly; rather, the hunger from abstaining from food can trigger feelings of irritability and anger, as well as other negative emotions. This is the perfect opportunity to practice self-discipline (1 Corinthians 9:27, Proverbs 25:28, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Don't let fluctuations in your emotions make you feel defeated and cause you to break your fast. Just like in flying, where turbulence happens when moving between different cloud levels, view these ups and downs as part of your journey toward spiritual growth. (2 Peter 1:5-8, Philippians 1:6)

When you notice these feelings arising, respond by submitting them to the Lord in prayer, asking Him to renew your mind (2 Corinthians 10:3-4, Romans 12:2). Additionally, it's important to proactively guard your heart and shift your focus (Proverbs 4:23-27). Maintaining focus is essential during fasting (James 1:6-8).

## How To Fast

While abstinence from food and/or water is a major characteristic of fasting, it is not the sole activity that makes a fast. A fast that aims to create space for deeper intimacy with God, gain insight and seek His divine intervention must involve prayer and communion with God.

Engaging in a daily fast that concludes at 6 PM, then waking at noon to fill the hours with

movies and idle conversation until 5 PM, only to offer a brief "Thank you Jesus, for the success of this fasting" is less a genuine fast and more a form of hunger strike or dieting.

Prayer in the spirit and in your understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14-15) is an important aspect of fasting. As you deny your flesh of its gratifications, it is important that you feed your spirit with what it requires - time in the presence of God.

1. **Establish your intentions.** Consider the reasons behind your fast: what do you hope to achieve? Reflecting on Habakkuk 2:2-3, "Write the vision", take the time to articulate your motivations for fasting. Document your goals, the outcomes you wish to witness, and the

signs that will indicate your fast has been successful.

2. **Acknowledge and repent of any known sins.** Psalm 66:18 reminds us that unconfessed sin can obstruct our communication with God. While we may not be fully aware of all our shortcomings, the Lord has the power to reveal them to us (Psalm 139:23-24; Psalm 19:12-13). As He brings these sins to light, take the time to confess and renounce each sin, iniquity, and transgression.
3. **Gather your writing materials.** As you pray and immerse yourself in God's presence, the Holy Spirit will start to impart instructions, guidance, and revelations. While our memories vary, no one possesses perfect recall. Keeping a journal and pen, or an electronic note-

taking device, allows you to capture these insights, providing a valuable resource to revisit the revelations you receive later on. (Jeremiah 33:3, Isaiah 30:21)

4. **Obtain a Bible.** During your fast, as you abstain from food, it's essential to nourish your spirit with God's written Word. In this heightened state of spiritual sensitivity, you may find that the Holy Spirit grants you deeper insights into scripture. By immersing yourself in the Word, your faith will also be strengthened. (Matthew 4:4, Romans 10:17, John 1:1)
5. **Create an atmosphere of worship.** You can achieve this by ministering to the Lord through song or by playing a playlist of gospel music. However, worship extends beyond music; it

encompasses our words, actions, and thoughts. (John 4:23-24, Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:15)

6. **Establish a quiet space where you can be still before the Lord.** Retreating to a place that is free from distractions allows you to fully engage with what God is communicating to you. This solitude is essential for deepening your connection with Him. (Psalm 46:10, Luke 5:16)

## **How To Prepare Your Body In The Days Leading Up To A Marathon Fast**

1. Begin reducing your food intake days before you embark on your fast. Resist

the temptation to overindulge; it's unwise to overeat the night before a marathon fast. Unless you are an experienced faster, you may find it difficult to begin the fast the day after overfeeding.

2. Focus on consuming more fruits and vegetables to cleanse your system.
3. Stay well hydrated and ensure you get plenty of rest.
4. If you exercise frequently, it's best to avoid high-intensity workouts since your body may not have the nutrients needed for full recovery during fasting periods. Instead, consider opting for low-intensity exercises.
5. Remember, the Lord will sustain you.

## How To Break A Marathon Fast

When breaking a fast, remember that you're not trying to make up for the food you've missed. In the early days of my Christian journey, I used to request that my breakfast and lunch be saved to eat with my dinner later. Avoid doing that. The challenge of your growth extends to the moment you break your fast, and this is often where people stumble. When breaking your fast, your self-control is put to the test. It's important to avoid breaking your fast with gluttony. (Philippians 3:19, 1 Corinthians 10:31)

- Break your fast gradually. At this point you will need to exercise watchful self-control. Break your fast on a meal that is light and easy to digest (i.e., a pound



of grapes, a shredded apple, watermelon, or steamed vegetables).

- When breaking a fast of ten days or more, the break-in period should be extended one day for every four days of fasting.
- A fast of three days or more should never be broken by eating a normal meal (including animal proteins, bread, sugar, dairy, and processed foods) because these heavy foods put a severe strain and shock on the digestive organs which have been resting throughout the fast. Eating too heavily after a fast can produce serious discomfort (stomach cramps, nausea, and weakness) and can nullify the physical benefits of fasting; it can also cause serious irreversible complications or even death.

- After breaking an extended fast, continue drinking fruit or vegetable juices because the stomach is continuing to detoxify.
- During any fast exceeding two days, your stomach will shrink. Do not over-expand it again by overeating. If you have been prone to eating too heavily, guard against going back to this habit. If you train yourself to eat more lightly, your stomach will adjust itself accordingly.
- While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:
  - 1st-3rd day after the fast (increase number of days for extended fast): Eat fruit and raw/steamed vegetables only. Example meals for the first few days are a pound of fruit,

a baked or boiled potato without butter, steamed vegetables, or a vegetable-only salad without oil-based dressing. Avoid bananas for the first few days; they have no juice in them and can easily cause constipation.

- Thereafter, you may return to heavier foods such as animal proteins, but maintaining a healthy diet after the fast will promote lifelong health and allow you to fast correctly in the future.
- Take extra care in breaking a water fast. Begin with drinking fruit or vegetable juices and gradually ease into eating fruit and steamed vegetables.

- It is important after a fast to begin to discern between real hunger and cravings so you do not feed your cravings.

## **Breaking a fruit fast or Daniel fast**

- Ease back into your “typical diet.” This is especially true with caffeine, sugar, fatty foods, meat and dairy products. Small portions are wise and go slow, perhaps just one or two foods per day.
- For caffeine beverages, drink one small cup or glass and then see how your body reacts. Don’t be surprised if you get the “jitters.” Consider starting with decaf.

- Don't be surprised if you feel tired after you start eating the "typical foods." Your body has been detoxed over the 21-day Daniel Fast and it might scoff at what it has to digest!
- Continue to drink lots of filtered water, at least 1/2 gallon a day.

Also, consider the lessons you've learned and the good habits you've adopted on the Daniel Fast. Don't leave them behind, but let them become a regular part of your life. This includes your prayer and study time with the Lord as well as improved eating habits.

## Important Medical Information

- Years of fasting incorrectly can cause permanent physical damage to your body. These negative effects are not typically felt at a young age, but they will accumulate after years of fasting. In their zeal, some people have begun fasting in an extreme way before understanding how fasting physically affects the body; increasing your understanding and taking care of your body while both fasting and eating will ensure your ability to live the fasted lifestyle for many years to come.
- Pregnant or nursing mothers should never fast all food and/or drink, as fasting could be very dangerous to their baby's development and health, and

their own personal health. Pregnant or nursing mothers could engage in types of fasting such as giving up certain kinds of food. However, women who are nursing or pregnant must always maintain a balanced diet. Any kind of fasting which leads to detoxification could be dangerous to the baby as the toxins can affect the baby via the mother's milk or her bloodstream.

- People who have struggled with eating disorders in the past should undertake any fasting with wisdom and caution. Fasting should not be used as a motive for weight-loss; it is important to enter back into "normal" healthy eating after a long fast (as described in the previous section).
- If you have a diagnosed illness and/or are taking prescription medicine,

fasting should only be done under the direct supervision of a doctor or healthcare professional.

- Some people have trouble fasting and become extremely hungry, dizzy, and nauseous because they have undiagnosed low blood sugar, so they should drink fruit and vegetable juices to help keep the blood sugar stable during short fasts. If the juice contains too much sugar for your system, dilute it by 50 percent with water or drink a “green drink” (made by juicing carrots, celery, spinach, and parsley). If these or any symptoms persist, you should stop fasting and seek immediate professional help from a doctor or healthcare professional.
- If you are having digestive trouble after breaking a fast (e.g., diarrhea), mix a



cup of unsweetened applesauce with a cup of cooked brown rice. This should stop the diarrhea. Also, take digestive enzymes (inquire with your healthcare provider) to aid your stomach's digestive transition.

## FAQs

### **If I'm fasting for something and I receive it, should I end my fast?**

David fasted for his son's life, and when he learned of his son's death, he showered, went to the temple to give thanks, and broke his fast (2 Samuel 12:16-20). In his case, he received a clear message from God regarding the situation he was fasting for, even though it wasn't the outcome he had hoped for. Recognizing that no one can alter God's will, he ended his fast.

When you know your prayers have been answered, you have the choice – between you and God – whether to continue or break your fast. However, it is vital to be certain that your prayers have truly been answered. From

personal experience, I've prematurely broken fasts after interpreting a single sign as confirmation, only to realize later that hunger was my motivation to end the fast. If you are confident that you have received an answer, consider using the remaining days of your fast for a time of worship and gratitude to God.

## **Will fasting always change my circumstances? What if I fast and nothing changes?**

I believe that every time you fast, something occurs. It may be that what you desired to see doesn't happen, but you can never fast without any effect. Fasting gives you control in the spiritual realm, and certain things you weren't aware of or didn't specifically pray for can still come to fruition.

Consider someone who desires marriage and prays for it, yet struggles with anger – an emotion that is not a fruit of the Spirit. After their fast, they may find that they no longer react with anger as readily to situations that once triggered them. This change occurs because, while seeking God's presence, they may not have received an immediate answer regarding a spouse, but God provided a different solution by instilling more of the fruits of the Spirit, such as patience, gentleness, and self-control. Something always occurs during fasting; it just may not be what you want or how you envisioned it. (Proverbs 3:5-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 29:11)

View your fast as a seed you are planting. There will always be a harvest, and at unexpected moments, God will ensure that it manifests.

Often, God works behind the scenes, addressing matters we cannot perceive.

## Epilogue

Congratulations on completing the **Fasting Guide**! You are now embarking on a profound journey that can transform your life (physically and spiritually) in ways you not have imagined. Fasting is not just a physical discipline; it's a sacred & Biblical practice that fosters a deeper connection with God and cultivates spiritual growth. As you integrate fasting into your daily life, you will discover newfound clarity, strength in challenges, and a deeper sense of peace.

Welcome to a new chapter of your life. May the transformative power of fasting lead you to profound insights and experiences that enrich your relationship with God and others. Thank you for allowing this guide to accompany you – may your path be filled with blessings as you seek Him wholeheartedly.

