



## Refocus - 3 Days of Fasting

Hello Rock Family,

When was the last time you entered into a spiritual fast? A few months ago for most of us. We believe that fasting is ultimately an expression of humility and dependence on God. Fasting is more about **replacing** than it is about **abstaining**. Fasting teaches you how to control your appetite and desire for things that don't benefit the body or your spiritual growth. It is about replacing the daily intakes of food, entertainment, and negativity with focused times of prayer, feeding on large amounts of the Word of God and spiritual listening. One of the great benefits of spiritual fasting is a heightened awareness of God's presence and power in our lives. Fasting has a great way of moving us towards a deeper spiritual dependency on God and away from willful self-dependency. Take a few minutes this week and read through the scriptures, insights and reflective questions to sharpen the spiritual discipline of fasting in your life.

This is a fast mandated by God and given to Pastor Eric Hallback for The Rock Faith Center. This is not your individual fast, but a fast for all disciples of The Rock. This is not for you to pass or fail, but to help build your spiritual discipline for the journey ahead. Please don't look so far into this that you get lost and lose sight of why we are fasting. **We are fasting specifically for the purpose of Refocusing our ministry (The Rock Faith Center) and our personal lives. We will be praying for the strength and ability to control our appetites from the things that tempt the flesh, and that God continues to keep us focused on His plan for our lives.**

### A few scriptures on fasting:

#### **Joel 1:14**

"Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD."

#### **Ezra 8:23**

“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.”

#### **Mathew 6:16-18**

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

#### **Acts 13:2**

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’”

#### **Acts 14:23**

“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.”

#### **Some insights:**

“Like all the Spiritual Disciplines, fasting hoists the sails of the soul in hopes of experiencing the gracious wind of God’s Spirit. But fasting also adds a unique dimension to your spiritual life and helps you grow in Christlikeness in ways that are unavailable through any other means. If this were not so, there would have been no need for Jesus to model and teach fasting.” Donald Whitney

“Fasting is not about changing God. It is not a mystical exercise to gain God’s approval. Fasting is not about changing my world, but about letting God realign my heart toward his purposes.” Alex Gee

“Fasting is calculated to bring a note of urgency and importunity into our praying, and to give force to our pleading in the court of heaven. The man who prays with fasting is giving heaven notice that he is truly in earnest... Not only so, but he is expressing his earnestness in a divinely appointed way. He is using a means that God has chosen to make his voice to be heard on high.” Arthur Wallis

#### **8 Steps to fasting effectively:**

- 1. Fast SENSIBLY.** Don’t feel that you must fast many days to be effective. Many biblical fasts were “until evening” (Judges 20:16; II Samuel 3:35; Acts 10:30).
- 2. Fast SENSITIVELY.** When Israel fasted before a crucial battle, the Bible says they “inquired of the Lord.” (Judges 20:23; I Samuel 23) When we fast we should take special time to hear God speak.

(Acts 13:1-2)

3. **Fast SYSTEMATICALLY.** When Jesus taught His disciples about fasting, He began with the words “when you fast” (Matthew 6:16). He was suggesting that believers should have regular times of fasting, whether one day a week or a portion of a day each week.

4. **Fast SACRIFICIALLY.** If we normally do not eat breakfast it is not really a sacrifice to fast breakfast. A true fast must be a sacrifice. David said, “My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt” (Psalm 109:24). True fasting must have a humbling effect on us (Ps 35:13).

5. **Fast SPECIFICALLY.** God said to Israel, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? (Isaiah 58:6). We must ask God to direct us in the focus of our fasting.

6. **Fast SUPERNATURALLY.** The very nature of fasting requires dependence on God’s supernatural power to see us through. When the early church fasted before sending out workers, the Bible says, “The Holy Spirit came” (Acts 13:2,3). We need God’s Spirit as we fast.

7. **Fast SOBERLY.** Jesus cautioned His disciples not to make a spectacle out of fasting like the religious leaders did. This type of fasting only gets the attention of men and not of God. (Matthew 6:16-17)

8. **Fast SECRETLY.** Jesus cautioned His disciples never to boast about our times of fasting but rather to keep our times of fasting as a personal commitment (Matthew 6:18).

### Types of Fasting

1. **The Partial Fast:** In this type of fast, the emphasis is placed on restriction of diet, rather than abstaining completely from eating. The partial fast is exclusive to a specific group of foods for the duration of the fast like fruits and vegetables, wheat, rye or flat bread and water, plain rice, or juices. I recommend fresh fruit and vegetable juice fast for a few of the partial days for those who want to take the challenge. The partial fast consist of the **FOODS TO AVOID** as well.

2. **The Normal Fast:** In this type of fast the person abstained from food but not water. The duration can be that which the individual or group feels led to set. Jesus fasted for 40 days (Matthew 4:2). However, the more common practice of a normal fast appears to be from one to three consecutive days.

3. **The Absolute Fast:** An absolute fast is one in which the person refrains from both food and water. This type of fast is not to exceed three consecutive days. Exceptions to this three-day limit (1 Kings 19:8; Deuteronomy 9:9-18 and Exodus 34:28) were based upon direct, divine guidance and care. Examples of the absolute fast are: Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9-18 and Exodus 34:28); Elijah (1 Kings 19:8); Ezra (Ezra 10:6); Esther and her household (Esther 4:16); and Paul (Acts 9:9).

Fasting cleans the body and refocuses and refreshes the soul. During a fast the body cleans, purifies,

and essentially resurrects itself. Fasting is NOT starvation. It is reasonable for a healthy individual to fast for 2 or 3 days without supervision.

### **A Few Precautions**

- 1. DO NOT BEGIN YOUR FAST TOO FORCEFULLY.** The body grows accustomed to fasting gradually.
2. Reduce food intake gradually from three times a day to two times, then once a day, and into the fast.
3. Clean the digestive tract prior to fasting. Some recommend the last meal before a fast to be fruits. A person that has problems with constipation should take a laxative.
4. Stop taking coffee or tea a few days before a long fast, to get over the caffeine-withdrawal headache before you start.

### **During The Fast**

1. Drink water (preferably distilled or filtered). Be careful not to drink too much water at one time. A glass several times a day is ideal. Water is a purifying agent and is necessary to wash out the toxins from your system.
2. Drink 100% fruit and vegetable juices. They are full of nutrients and provide instant nutrition and are rapidly absorbed by the body. (**Naked Juice is a great one**)
  - Fruit juices are energizers and body cleansers. Dilute with water because fruit juices are high in natural sugar that could make you feel a little dizzy during fasting.
  - Mixing and matching too many fruit juices during a fast will only put unnecessary strain on the digestive system. The common recommendation is to mix apple with any of these fruits: grapefruit, mango, peaches, guava, kiwi, papaya, pear. All melons (honeydew, rock melon, watermelon) should be taken alone.
  - Vegetable juices are building blocks that supply the body with the necessary vitamins and minerals to build strong bones and tissues. Drink in small quantities (1 cup) to avoid any discomfort.
  - All juices should be sipped slowly.
  - Anyone who has to limit sugar intake in their diet should consume fruit juices sparingly.
3. Refrain from taking excessively **hot baths**. Having a very hot bath during a prolonged fast can cause dizziness, and you may be unable to continue. Instead bathe in lukewarm water. It is important to shower or bathe regularly during a fast as many impurities are secreted through the pores of the skin and cause a foul odor. **Also be sure to brush your teeth often as fasting produces bad breath.**

4. Do not engage in excessive work or exercise if possible. Some light exercise (e.g. walking, light weight, or body weight exercises) is beneficial.
5. Walk, read, pray or worship at mealtimes to help overcome the great temptation to satisfy the eating instinct. If possible, avoid looking at food and coming to the table at meal times. If you remain where eating is taking place, the temptation to break the fast will be very great.

### **FOODS TO AVOID (READ CAREFULLY)**

- **NO MEAT**
- **NO FRIED FOODS**
- **NO ARTIFICIAL DRINKS OF ANY KIND**
- **NO ENRICHED BLEACHED WHITE FLOUR PRODUCTS**
- **NO CAFFEINE** (I suggest you stop a few days before to help with withdrawals)
- **NO REFINED SUGARS** (candy, chocolates, cookies, etc.)
- **NO EXCESSIVE MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT** (TV, Facebook, Internet, Video Games, Movies, etc.) **NO SOCIAL MEDIA OR TV ON NORMAL OR ABSOLUTE DAYS**
- **AVOID ALL NEGATIVITY** (Don't defeat yourself before you start the day or your fast)
- **AVOID UNGODLY CONVERSATIONS** (Gossip, emails, phone calls, social media)
- **AVOID FIGHTS AND ARGUMENTS**

### **What are we doing?**

- **WE ARE FASTING FROM DECEMBER 10, 2018** (beginning at 12am) **THROUGH DECEMBER 12, 2018** (ending at 11:59pm)
- **WE WILL BE PRAYING, MEDITATING AND READING OUR DAILY EMPOWERMENTS AT LEAST 1 HOUR DAILY.** Times to pray and meditate are: **6am, 12pm, and 6pm** (Monday – Wednesday) **Choose a time and come by the church or find a quiet place if possible**
- **We will be anointing with oil at the top of the hour and then we will go into prayer for the first 30 minutes and then into a personal teaching time with Pastor Eric for the last 30 minutes**
- **WRITE DOWN YOUR EXPERIENCES EVERYDAY** (things God revealed, situations that turned around, miracles that happened, etc.)

### **Here is what's happening everyday:**

- **MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY - (PARTIAL FAST WITH NO MORE THAN 1HR OF TV OR**

**SOCIAL MEDIA)** - (This time does not include watching any of our services live or archived)

- **TUESDAY** - 6am - 6pm (**ABSOLUTE OR NORMAL FAST WITH NO TV OR SOCIAL MEDIA ALL DAY**) – (There are no live services on this day)

**REMEMBER THAT THE TIME WITHOUT FOOD SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH PRAYER, READING, WORSHIP AND FOCUSING ON WHAT IT IS YOU DESIRE FROM GOD.**

**WHENEVER YOU ARE EATING AFTER THE TIME OF THE ABSOLUTE OR NORMAL FAST, YOU ARE ON PARTIAL FAST.**

### **Daily Empowerments**

**Day 1: Monday, December 10, "God as the Center", Jeremiah 7:23**

**Day 2: Tuesday, December 11, "Looking back", Isaiah 43:18**

**Day 3: Wednesday, December 12, "Thrive", Proverbs 13:19-20**

Let's Refocus,

Eric C. Hallback, Sr.

Pastor, The Rock Faith Center