



Do you want to know God in a deeper way in 2023?

Are you seeking God for direction in your life? For healing? For breakthrough? Whatever you need, you can bring it to the Lord in prayer through **the Daniel Fast** and find wisdom, peace, and strength.

**The Saint Stephen Church Family
21-DAY THE DANIEL FAST
January 8 – 28, 2023**

The entire Saint Stephen Family is invited to participate in the Daniel Fast.

WHAT IS THE DANIEL FAST?

The Daniel Fast is an opportunity for you to draw closer to God through fervent, focused prayer. It involves a 21-day commitment to a **partial fast**, which means you **restrict commonly enjoyed foods as an act of worship and consecration** to the Lord.

The Daniel Fast is not a diet, although some people do lose weight as they make healthier food choices. **The Daniel Fast is a unique, life-changing experience.** Participating in the Daniel Fast can result in many wonderful spiritual and physical benefits.

The Daniel Fast was first observed by the prophet Daniel in the Bible. On one occasion, Daniel was greatly concerned for his people and sought the Lord's wisdom during a time of prayer and fasting. Daniel 10:2-3 says, *"At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips."*

The idea behind **the Daniel Fast** is not to duplicate Daniel's menu but to imitate his spiritual hunger. Daniel's passion for the Lord caused him to seek spiritual food rather than physical food, which should be the desire for anyone doing **the Daniel Fast**.

Five Steps to Your Successful Fast

1. **Pray** – before you fast, seek the Lord through prayer and ask Him to show you the purpose for your fast. Dedicate this time to Him and invite Him to lead and direct you during your fast.

*The Saint Stephen Family is asked to **Pray daily at 12:00 noon** for the next 21 days.*

2. **Plan** – establish the purpose for your fast and clear your calendar of as many obligations as possible.
3. **Prepare** – for the next six days taper off caffeine, sugar and processed foods to avoid withdrawals when you begin your fast. Gather study materials, create a daily schedule, collect recipes and plan one week's menus before you begin your fast.
4. **Participate** – this is where it all begins . . . you participate in the fast. Examine yourself as you fast and use this valuable experience as a time of learning and growth.
5. **Praise and Process** – You will gain valuable lessons on the fast that you will want to carry forward into your everyday life. Thank God for the good things you've received during your fast and evaluate your experience so you can grow from this amazing experience.

THE DANIEL FAST FOOD LIST

Try not to get too hung up on what you should and shouldn't eat during the fast. **The most important part of the Daniel Fast is that you deny yourself physically so that you may seek the Lord in prayer and grow closer to Him.** Your fast may look a little different than someone else's, and that's fine. Some people may need to be stricter than others in their food choices so that their fast is a sacrifice for them. **These food guidelines are meant to be just that – a guide. They are given to help you create boundaries for your fast.**

FOODS ALLOWED TO EAT ON THE DANIEL FAST:

- · **All fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- · **All vegetables** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- · **All whole grains** – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- · **All nuts & seeds** – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.
- · **All legumes** – canned or dried; black beans, black eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.
- · **All quality oils** – avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut.
- · **Beverages** – distilled water, filtered water, and spring water.
- · **Other** – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg's Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.

FOODS TO AVOID ON THE DANIEL FAST:

- · **All meat & animal products** – bacon, beef, eggs, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.
- · **All dairy products** – butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt.
- · **All sweeteners** – agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups, stevia, and sugar.
- · **All leavened bread & yeast** – baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey).
- · **All refined & processed food products** – artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, and white rice.
- · **All deep-fried foods** – corn chips, French fries, and potato chips.
- · **All solid fats** – lard, margarine, and shortening.
- · **Beverages** – alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea, tea.

A TIME OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Entering a consecrated period of extended prayer and fasting is a life-changing experience as you focus more of your time and thoughts on God and His ways. Think of the Daniel Fast as a journey, a spiritual journey. The more you prepare and engage in the experience, the more you will gain by this powerful discipline.

Closer Walk with God: During your fast you will want to focus more of your attention on God and your life with Him. The greatest blessing is an improved relationship with the Lord. You will want to plan one or more times each day to meet with your Father for prayer and communion with Him.

Focused Prayer (12 noon daily): During your fast, you will have a more focused time of prayer. This is at the heart of your fast where you will concentrate on one or two specific areas for prayer, study and contemplation.

Improved Health: The Daniel Fast is a very healthy way of eating. You may experience some uncomfortable feelings on the first few days of your fast as your body goes through a detox. This can be avoided by proper preparation undertaken prior to your fasting start date. Many people experience significant improvements to their health including lower cholesterol, reduction in pain, balanced blood sugar levels, weight loss and much more. You will also notice a surge in energy and a sense of greater well-being.

A New Start: God's mercy is everlasting and opening your heart to Him and seeking His wisdom and direction can result in massive changes in your life. Many people use the Daniel Fast at the New Year as they purpose to draw closer to God and experience growth and change.

Remember, the Daniel Fast is a method of spiritual fasting. While we change the way we eat, having food at the center of the fast is missing the point. We want to be wise, prudent and simple in our eating habits. And while doing, we stick to the guidelines developed from the Scriptures.

If you have health issues then be sure to follow the advice of your earthly physician as you pray to your Great Physician. Due to medical needs or special issues, you may need to modify the fast. Keep the core of the fast and make slight adjustments. This is the same for pregnant/nursing mothers and for athletes who expend a lot of energy.

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. Look at the list of ingredients on the label. The contents should be free of all sweeteners and free of all man-made chemicals. Keep this in mind as you review the list of allowable foods for the Daniel Fast.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE FINAL STRETCH

While the Daniel Fast is centered around our food intake over a 21-day period, it is vital to remember that it is also about the transformation of our mind and spirit. Our mindset during the Fast is key. How we think can determine whether or not we are successful, whether it's a joyful or joyless experience, and whether or not our fasting is effective.

If you are normal, you've no doubt had thoughts of quitting by now. The thought may be fleeting, but it does cross your mind now and then. You've likely felt so bad that you've not had the desire or energy to pray. You've struggled with others' opinions of your fast. You've battled discouragement and doubt as to whether your fast is accomplishing anything (other than making you miserable).

We're human. When we fast, we're going to struggle with one or two of these things, if not all of them. But when we stop and remember the purpose and proposed outcome, we should be encouraged. However, a little more encouragement may be necessary to actually take some pressure off of "performance" and enable us to enjoy what God is doing through our fast!

1. IF YOU MESS UP, GET UP AND KEEP GOING.

Did you mess up on your fast? Did you eat something you weren't supposed to? Just get up and keep going. This is a marathon, not a sprint. The race isn't over because you fall. Don't quit or let the enemy discourage you. Pick up where you were (day five, day ten, etc) and persevere to the finish line!

2. DON'T LET OTHERS BE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT.

Don't let people be your fasting police. Don't let their expectations, approval, or disapproval determine what you do or don't abstain from during your fast.

Fasting is not a legalistic effort. It's something between you and God. We fast to please God – not others...and not even ourselves. Let the Holy Spirit of God guide you in what to abstain from.

3. COMBINE FASTING WITH PRAYER AND THE WORD.

Otherwise it's just a diet! Make sure that food consumption, or lack thereof, isn't taking precedence over your conversation with God. Make time for reading God's word! Internalize it. Don't just sit in front of the TV!

4. DON'T EXPECT ALL RESULTS TO BE IMMEDIATE.

Don't get discouraged if you haven't experienced immediate results. There are some immediate results, such as discovering what bottom line desires have been controlling you, but there are also long term results. It's the same with fasting. Know that if you are fasting with a pure heart and the right motives, you have an investment that is accruing during these

twenty-one days. You can't feel it, see it, or touch it, but pay victory is coming! Remember that victory often comes after the fast. Jesus returned in the power of the spirit after his fast. Many men and women in the Bible experienced results after a period of fasting.

5. DON'T JUDGE YOUR RESULTS BASED ON HOW YOU FEEL.

The course of the fast might be rough, filled with pain, discomfort and frustration. If so, it's a sign that your fast is working! It is well to know the process your body goes through in the course of a longer fast. The first few days are usually the most difficult in terms of physical discomfort and hunger pains; headaches and withdrawal symptoms may occur, even weakness and dizziness. The body is ridding itself of the toxic poisons that have built up over years of poor eating habits. Do not be disturbed by these symptoms; rather be grateful for the increased health and wellbeing that will result.

You may not have felt like focusing on prayer and the Word. But stick with it. When things clear up, you'll be in a deeper place with God. Remember that fasting is a continual prayer before God. You may have expected that on your fast your communion with God would be so strong, so passionate, so clear that it would be like seeing heaven opened up and hearing angels sing. However, your energy may have been so sapped that all you could do was barely breathe a prayer to God. You may have had no glorious prayer times and felt too bad to be acutely aware of God speaking to you., but remember that fasting is a continual prayer. It is body-talk expressing your heart hunger for Him. If you feel bad physically, don't be discouraged. When you feel better (and you will!), you will be in a deeper place with God. For right now, trust that God is working!

6. WHEN YOU FAST, EXPECT RESISTANCE!

Expect it. Be prepared. The enemy will try to send things that will get you discouraged and get you to stop fasting. He will try to get you focused on how you feel or on what others are doing. If you've felt too weak and sick with a headache to sense God's presence extra-super-gloriously these couple of weeks, the enemy will try to get you focused on that — he'll try to get you to conclude fasting is hopeless and give up.

Remember that fasting puts the power of God at work inside of you; power to overcome the temptations! If you've felt discouragement and opposition during your fast – or if you do at any point in the coming days – remember that Daniel had a similar experience and what God did for them, He will do for you!

HOW TO END YOUR FAST

CONGRATULATIONS! We made it! Many of us are completing the Daniel Fast today! We've heard many comments from fasters who struggled and contemplated throwing in the towel. But God reminded us that this was a marathon, not a sprint; if you fell, we pray that you got back up and ran to the finish line. And now...here we are! Let's make sure that we finish well!

How to End Your Fast Physically

If you've been on the Daniel Fast for twenty-one days, be careful how you reintroduce food to your system. There is a period of adjustment. This is because two things have happened to the digestive system during a prolonged 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 de-caf.
- • Don't be surprised if you feel tired after you start eating the "typical foods" again. 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.

How to End Your Fast Spiritually

Although you can relax physically, do not relax spiritually! You can't afford to. Your enemy, the devil, prowls like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8-9). You must remain alert and vigilant. The "thief" will be on the prowl to steal the increased intimacy with Christ you've gained during your fast.

No doubt, as you've fasted and subjected your flesh to the Spirit, your spiritual ears have become more alert to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, you're now far more sensitive to even the smallest disobedience and sin in your life...maybe even things you used to do on a daily basis that grieved Him and quenched His presence. Satan will now try to get you to cater to your flesh once again. He'll try to clog your spiritual hearing and get you back into areas of disobedience and unyieldedness. It will be subtle. It won't even seem like it's happening. After all, eating returns to normal...why not everything else?

Be careful! Be alert! Be intentional! Be disciplined! Stay disciplined in your prayer time and pursuit of God. Stay disciplined in your submission and quick obedience to the Lord. And, if at all possible, stay disciplined in your eating and continue to honor these earthly temples given to us by God.