



FASTING GUIDE

START WHERE YOU ARE

We are all at different points in our spiritual journey, and our daily lives and health conditions vary, placing different demands on our energy. Whether you're a seasoned faster or a first-timer, it's crucial to start where you are. Your personal fast should be challenging, but it's equally important to listen to your body, explore your options, and most importantly, seek God's guidance through prayer. The Holy Spirit will lead you in your fasting decisions. Remember, fasting is not just about abstaining from food. It's about drawing closer to God.

FIND YOUR FAST ZONE

When most people start fasting, there is typically some level of discomfort. However, getting used to the fasting routine pretty quickly is possible. You must learn to fast in a way that works for you. While any fast does involve abstinence from food or at least certain types of food, different fasting combinations typically work better for different people. The goal of having a successful fast is all about finding what we like to call your Fast Zone, and that is different for everybody and can change depending on the season you are in.

Your Fast Zone is more than just a physical state. It's a spiritual sweet spot where you feel light and in tune with God. Your mind is easily focused on spiritual matters, and you experience an increased spiritual energy. This is the zone where you can feel the fast working, much like a runner feels the benefits of their physical training when they hit their target heart rate. Finding your Fast Zone is a journey, but the spiritual benefits make it a worthwhile one.

Discovering your Fast Zone is key to choosing the right type and duration of fast. For instance, if you opt for a Daniel fast (only fruits and vegetables), should you include beans? If beans keep you in your Fast Zone, go for it. But for some, beans might take them out of the zone. Should you indulge in peanut butter? Probably not. It's more of a treat, and not everyone can stay in their Fast Zone while indulging. Should you cut out caffeine completely? It depends on your Fast Zone.

The great thing is when you fast, your body automatically craves less caffeine. If you can stay in your fast zone with some caffeine, that would be great. If you are going on a longer fast and want to completely cut it out of your diet, that's great too. But ease yourself off and make it your goal to be completely caffeine-free about two-thirds of the way into your fast.

If you drink coffee regularly, one of the worst mistakes you can make is to fast for one to three days and cut caffeine out abruptly and completely. Please don't do that, or you will spend this time defeated and in withdrawal instead of enjoying God's presence. Mixing things up a bit during a thirty-day fast is what typically works best for people. For example, do a fruits and vegetables fast for a week. Then do all liquids for a while. Maybe even mix in a few days of only water if you think you are ready for that. Then go back to fruits and vegetables for a few days.

There isn't one approach that works the same for everyone. Follow the Holy Spirit, mix it up, find what works for you, and stay in your Fast Zone! Some people can't stay in a Fast Zone eating any type of solid food, so they prefer all liquids. With today's protein drinks and juicing machines, it is so easy to get a healthy dose of all your nutritional needs even while taking in only liquids. Certain people can't do anything other than drink only water. If they eat a salad or drink a glass of juice,

they get out of their zone. Or if they allow themselves to eat cantaloupe, they will end up eating twenty cantaloupes a day! Prepare your hearts for finding your zone.

CHOOSE YOUR TYPE OF FAST

While preparing for your fast, it is important to choose ahead of time what type of fast, or what combination, you will pursue. Not only will this help with making the necessary preparations to implement your plan, but as you commit to a specific fast ahead of time and know how you're going to do it, you will position yourself to finish strong. This is your personal decision and should be prayerfully considered. There are different types of fasts:

FULL FAST

Drink only liquids – especially water. On this type of fast you may also take in clear broth and 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices in order to maintain your strength. You establish the number of days for your fast in your prayer time.

PARTIAL FAST

There are many options for partial fasts. Below are just a few for you to select from. The most frequently used example of a partial fast is found in Daniel chapter 10. The Daniel Fast is a fast from meats, sweets, breads and any drink, except water, for a specific time period (Daniel 10:2-3). The easiest way to think of this fast is eating only vegetables and fruits, and drinking only water. The following are examples of other types of partial fasts: giving up one item of food or drink such as caffeine, coffee, soft drinks or sweets giving up one meal a day for a specific amount of time, one meal a week, etc. fasting for a specific number of days [one day, three days, so on] choosing to fast from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. or from sun-up to sundown.

THE DANIEL FAST

The Daniel Fast is a great model to follow and highly effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline, and purification of the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred-to fasts; however, within the Daniel fast, there is room for broad interpretation. In the book of Daniel, we find two different times where the prophet Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he only ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods, as well as no meat or wine. So, based on these two verses, we can see that either of these, or combinations of the two, constitute a Daniel fast. Again, it is important to mention that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Just remember: find your personal Fast Zone.

SPECIFIC FOOD AND/OR ACTIVITY FAST

In this type of fast you omit a specific item(s) from your meal plans. For example, you may choose to eliminate all red meat, processed or fast food, or sweets. Most people can incorporate this type of fast relatively easily. It can also prove to be a great solution for people with specific dietary needs or medical conditions that may cause certain limitations. While fasting typically refers to refraining from specific food items, you may also find it extremely beneficial to fast from a regular activity or habit. This might include things such as television, social media, and the like. Prayer and fasting are not just about connecting to God but also about disconnecting from the world. Try to tune out some of the regular distractions from your day as much as possible. Replace that time with things that will nourish you spiritually.

JUICE FAST

A juice fast is simply consuming vegetable and fruit juices and water instead of solid food. Many people include whey protein in their liquid plan as well. This is one of the most popular and effective fasts. Even if you choose not to make your entire fast liquids only, substituting one or two meals for liquids is a great alternative.

WATER FAST

A water-only fast is the normal fast referred to in the Bible. This is how Jesus and the New Testament church fasted. A water fast is just that—no eating of any food or drinking of any liquids except water. Periodic water fasts can be very beneficial, but extreme precautions should be taken. We recommend consulting your physician first, and water fasting only for a day or two unless you can get away or your job allows you to really disconnect so you can give your best energy to the fast. Remember, when Jesus went on His forty-day fast, He went by Himself out into the wilderness. Having said all that, there are some people who can water fast and work, and they function fine without much fatigue and are able to work well. You are blessed if you are one of these people.

TOTAL FAST

A total fast is where nothing—neither liquid, solid food, nor even water—is consumed for a very short period of time. There are examples of this type of fast in the Bible. It was an Old Covenant type of fast associated with mourning, or deep grief, such as when David engaged in a total fast for a week, hoping that God would spare the child he had with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12). Under the New Covenant, we do not fast to mourn or to seek forgiveness. God has already forgiven us, and we are commanded to celebrate Jesus because He is alive. Plus, complete abstinence of food and water can be very dangerous to our health. Attempting to go without water for any period of time can be extremely harmful to the body. We strongly discourage the total fast.

PREPARE YOUR HEART, MIND, BODY & SOUL

Depending on the type of fast you choose, it is very important to prepare your body ahead of time before beginning the fast. Take a week or so to transition into your fast; otherwise, you could get sick. For example, if you would like to go on a fruits and vegetables or juice fast, start eliminating meat, white grains, and refined sugars from your diet the week before. Also start to cut back quite a bit on dairy products and some of your caffeine intake. The same principle applies to breaking your fast. When your fast is over, add foods back in very gradually. Please don't break your fast with a greasy cheeseburger! Because your body is so cleansed and detoxified, you will most likely get sick if you do that. There are also several supplements you can take that will help support the detox process during your fast. Your health-food store can give you recommendations.

FINAL TIPS...

To keep your energy up throughout the day, it's important to eat or drink every two and a half to three hours. If you go longer than that, you can experience an energy lull and be tempted to over-stuff yourself at your next meal.

Even if you're fasting on fruits and vegetables, over-stuffing is never a smart thing to do. It is very important to drink lots of water while fasting. Drinking about one hundred ounces of water per day will help to support your critical liver function. The liver is the filter for the body, so when you don't drink enough water, the liver doesn't function at its highest capacity.

Select your food items wisely. The key is to prepare a plan ahead of the fast, to not get legalistic about it, and to choose menu items well. For example, if you prefer dressing on your salads, choose a healthy, organic option with natural ingredients—and don't pour a gallon of it on your plate. If you're drinking fruit juices, try to go as natural as possible, and don't drink ones heavily processed and laden with sugar. Remember to not let food become the focus of your fast, but make wise eating choices.