



South Euclid
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FASTING GUIDE



FASTING GUIDE

 South Euclid
COMMUNITY CHURCH
Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins (Pastor & Teacher)



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WELCOME TO THE DANIEL FAST

Beloved,

I greet you in the mighty and matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am so glad you have decided to participate in an extended time of prayer, fasting and personal devotion. There really is no better way to reset our spiritual compass and bring about a refreshing in every area of our lives than through prayer and fasting.

This guide is intentionally designed to be flexible so that you can participate at any level. Whether you have completed a season of prayer and fasting before, or if this is your first time, you can start where you are and experience what God has in store for you in a powerful way.

The tools provided in this guide are practical guideline to help you navigate through your personal journey. As you read over the information, please consider how it applies to you and your personal circumstances and convictions.

It is my prayer that you will experience the presence and power of God in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to spiritual growth over the next 21 days.

May God continue to bless you and enlarge your territory as you make your relationship with Christ your top priority!

Called for the Purpose of the Kingdom,



Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins
Senior Pastor & Teacher
South Euclid United Church of Christ

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”

Colossians 2:6-7



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THE POWER OF PRAYER

As you prepare for the next several days, it can be tempting to start thinking of a laundry list of prayers you'd love to see answered. But we really want to encourage you to keep this simple. Think about the top two or three things most pressing on your heart and zone in on those with God. Write these down in the space provided below and be open to hearing what God wants to show you in those areas. The breakthroughs, miracles, and answers to your prayers will be byproducts of drawing closer to Christ.

When praying, make your primary goal to know Christ more and experience Him.

Pray prayers of total surrender and aim to glorify God with your life. Focus first on what's right about the God we serve, such as God's goodness, God's greatness and God's faithfulness. Try to begin your prayers by seeing everything through that filter.

Most simply, make time to pray daily. Don't overcomplicate this! Just talk to God. Have that place and time where you can seek God every day. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. If you find it a challenge to disconnect from the busyness of your day, engaging in worship music is a great way to prepare your heart for prayer.

Consider praying with the rest of the congregation. Throughout the 21 days we will have a daily prayer call Monday through Friday. It will begin at 6:00 AM. You can access the call by dialing (216) 273-8883. A leader will be assigned each day to lead us in prayer. The call should last no more than 15 minutes.

Corporate prayer is not required. It is simply an opportunity for you to unite in prayer with others who are using this time to focus their attention on God.



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FASTING 101

***Important Note:** Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.

As you prepare to fast, it is important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. While this section provides some general information about different types of fasts, as well as some suggestions on how to create your own fasting plan, it is important to mention that there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another.

These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do. Do not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. Keep the main thing the main thing, which is drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God. Here are a few tips to keep in mind before getting started:

1. Start Where You Are

We are all at different places in our walk with God. Likewise, our jobs, daily schedules, and health conditions are all different and place various levels of demands on our energy. So most importantly, whether you've fasted before or this is your first time, start where you are.

Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but it's very important to know your own body, know your options and, most importantly, seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Remember, the goal of fasting is not just to do without food. The goal is to draw nearer to God.

2. Find Your Fast Zone

When most people start fasting, there is typically some level of discomfort. However, it is possible to get used to the fasting routine pretty quickly. Quite simply, you must learn to fast in a way that works for you.

While any true fast does involve abstinence from food or at least certain types of food, typically, different fasting combinations work better for different people. The goal to 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.



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The best way to describe your Fast Zone is that it's the place where you feel light and spiritually in tune. Your mind is easily focused on God and spiritual things. You have an increased spiritual energy—you can feel the fast working. Just like runners know what their target heart rate is to see the benefits of their physical training, the Fast Zone is similar in a spiritual sense.

Finding your Fast Zone helps you choose both the type and length of fast. Let's say you choose to go on a Daniel fast (only fruits and vegetables). Should you eat beans? If you can eat beans and stay in your Fast Zone, go ahead. But for some people eating beans takes them out of the zone. Should you eat peanut butter? Probably not. Peanut butter is more of an indulgence and not many people can stay in a Fast Zone while enjoying indulgences.

Should you completely cut out caffeine? It depends. The great thing is, when you fast, your body automatically craves less caffeine. If you can stay in your Fast Zone with a little caffeine, great. If you are going on a longer fast and want to cut it out of your diet completely, 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 grumpy and in withdrawal instead of enjoying God's presence.

Mixing things up a bit during a 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. Consider only having fish 1 or 2 nights a week if going without "meat" is overwhelming to you. 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!

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3. The Daniel Fast

The Daniel fast is a great model to follow and one that is extremely 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. It pretty much boils down to a vegan diet.

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 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.

Foods to include in your diet during the Daniel Fast...

All fruits: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch for added sugar).

Apples	Cherries	Kiwi	Papayas
Apricots	Coconuts	Lemons	Peaches
Avocados	Cranberries	Limes	Pears
Bananas	Dates	Mangoes	Pineapples
Berries	Figs	Melons	Plums
Blackberries	Grapefruit	Mulberry	Prunes
Blueberries	Grapes Grenadine	Nectarines	Raisins
Boysenberries	Guava	Oats	Raspberries
Breadfruit	Honeydew melons	Olives	Strawberries
Cantaloupe		Oranges	Tangelos
			Tangerines
			Watermelon

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Vegetables: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch salt content).

Artichokes	Collard greens	Mustard greens	Sprouts
Asparagus	Corn	Okra	Squashes
Beets	Cucumbers	Onions	Sweet Potatoes
Broccoli	Eggplant	Parsley	Tomatoes
Brussel sprouts	Garlic	Peppers	Turnips
Cabbage	Ginger root	Potatoes	Watercress
Carrots	Kale	Radishes	Yams
Cauliflower	Leeks	Rutabagas	Zucchini
Celery	Lettuce	Scallions	
Chili peppers	Mushrooms	Spinach	

Legumes:

Dried beans	Lentils	Peanuts (includes natural peanut butter)
Black beans	Black eyed peas	Beans
Cannellini	Green beans	Lentils
Pinto beans	Green peas	Lupines
Split peas	Kidney beans	White Peas

Seeds:

All nuts (raw, unsalted)	Cashews	Sesame
Sprouts	Walnuts	Almonds
Ground flax	Sunflower	Natural Almond Butter

Whole Grains:

Whole wheat	Rolled Oats	Whole wheat pasta
Brown rice	Plain Oatmeal (not instant)	Whole wheat tortillas
Millet	Barley	Plain Rice cakes
Quinoa	Grits (no butter)	Popcorn (no butter)
Oats		

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Liquids:

Water (spring, distilled, filtered) Unsweetened Soy Milk	Herbal (caffeine free) Tea 100% Fruit/Vegetable Juice (no added sugar)
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Other:

Tofu Soy products (Morningstar Farms, etc.) Herbs Small amounts of Honey	Small amounts of Sea Salt Small amounts of Ezekiel Bread Small amounts of Olive Oil Spices (read the label to be sure there are no preservative)
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Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast...

All Animal products, meat, poultry, fish, etc. White rice White bread All deep-fried foods Caffeine Coffee (including decaf b/c contains small amount of caffeine) Carbonated beverages Energy drinks Foods containing preservatives, additives, etc. Refined foods Processed foods Food additives Refined sugar Sugar Substitutes	Raw sugar Syrups Molasses Cane juice White flour Margarine Shortening High fat products Butter All leavened breads Baked goods All dairy Milk Cheese Yogurt Cream Eggs Alcohol Mayonnaise
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Frequently Asked Questions

What about prepared foods?

Read the labels of all prepared foods. Remember the Daniel Fast is sugar-free, dairy-free and chemical-free. So, if you use any canned fruits, vegetables, packaged foods, or prepared sauces you must read the label to be aware about just what is in there.

What about pasta?

Make sure the label says whole grain pasta with no additives (watch for sugar). Whole grain pasta offers 7 grams of protein per serving (3/4 cup of dried pasta).

I know it says raw, unsalted nuts, but what about roasted nuts?

The goal would be to stick to raw, unsalted nuts. But these are harder to find so in a pinch just make sure you get plain roasted, unsalted nuts with no preservatives.

How do I get enough protein in my diet while on the fast?

The following are protein-rich foods that are allowed on the Daniel Fast... almonds, sunflower seeds, lentils, quinoa, brown rice, split peas, whole grains, and tofu. You can also drink protein shakes.

What kind of peanut butter is allowed?

A natural peanut butter with no additives...watch for sugars including molasses. Smucker's creamy natural peanut butter has nothing but peanuts in it.

What about popcorn?

Corn is listed in the vegetables to eat list. You can use a pot on the stove...here is a recipe.

1. Put two tbsp. of olive oil in the bottom of a large pot.
2. Add enough popcorn to cover the bottom of the pan.
3. Turn heat to medium high. Look for the first popcorn kernel to pop.
4. Put the lid on the pot. Using potholders shake the pot over the burner.
5. Continue shaking until you no longer hear kernels popping. Remove from heat.



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How can I identify whole grain foods?

Typically, if the ingredient lists “whole wheat”, “rolled oats”, or “whole corn” as the first ingredient, the product is a whole grain food item. Another way to identify whole grains in the foods you eat is to look in the nutritional facts information and check if the food item contains dietary fiber. If it contains a significant amount, it most likely contains whole grains. “Wheat flour” is not a whole grain and therefore does not indicate a whole grain product. Consider almond flour as a viable substitute.

What about salad dressing?

Olive oil and lemon or lime are options. Try to find salad dressings with 5 carbs or less. Make sure sugar is not in the first 3 ingredients.

Do I need to eat organic foods while on the fast?

No, but it is suggested because organic foods are produced without the use of feed or fertilizer of plant or animal origin and without employment of chemically formulated fertilizers, growth stimulants, antibiotics, or pesticides. However, we recognize that buying organic can be cost prohibitive.

Where can I go out to eat?

Well, we think you can go anywhere and order cautiously, asking lots of questions to the wait staff, knowing ahead of time that you may be ordering a salad with olive oil and a baked potato with no extras.

What about bread?

We are recommending the Ezekiel bread found in the freezer section of your grocery/health food store.

How much can I eat?

As long as they are the appropriate foods, we are recommending eating until satisfied with no limits.

Additional Resources:

- www.christ-web.com/missions/farho/daniel-fast www.danielfast.wordpress.com www.hacres.com/recipes/recipes.asp
- <http://www.vega-licious.com/books/daniel-fast-recipes-menu-planner/>



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4. Beginning and Breaking the Fast Well

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.

Creating Your Personal Fasting Menu

Check out our accompanying Recipe Guide where we will share a few simple menu options for your use. Your plan could include one of these menu ideas or even a variation of all of them. You could even mix it up, doing something different food-wise on the weekends or on certain days of the week. Again, pray about this and find what works for you.

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 overstuff yourself at your next meal. Even if you're fasting on fruits and vegetables, overstuffing 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 to preparing is to 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.



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Fasting While Nursing or Pregnant

Strict fasting while pregnant or nursing is not recommended. If you are in this incredible season of life but would like to participate in the twenty-one-day plan, here are some great options for you to consider—with the approval of your physician:

- a modified Daniel fast including whole grains, legumes, whey protein, calcium, and iron supplements
- fasting sweets and desserts
- fasting red meat
- fasting certain diversions (television shows, movies, social media—such as Facebook/Twitter, video games, and so on)

If you are a pregnant or nursing mother, your priority is the health and the development of the baby God has entrusted you with. Make that your guideline and go from there. And please consult your doctor.

Fasting and Eating Disorders

If you have struggled with an eating disorder, fasting can be a unique place to find yourself. Remember, fasting is a tool used to get closer to God and it actually should keep us from being preoccupied with food. If your method of fasting is going to cause you to obsess about what you eat in any way, you will need to change your approach. There are many distractions and ways we try to stay in control that we could eliminate from our daily routine. We do these things to distract ourselves from the real issues hurting us. If you can identify such other things, perhaps you can give those up instead of food.

Final Fasting Tips

Here are some other ideas that can help make your fasting experience more pleasant and helpful:

- As you select your type of fast, make a fasting calendar that fits your plan. Determine what each day and week will look like.
- Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with the items you need. Being unprepared to fast sets you up to give into temptation. Choose well when selecting products, stick to raw food as much as you can, and limit artificial ingredients.



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- Make it a priority to attend church during your twenty-one-day fast. Being around other believers will encourage you to keep on going when fasting gets difficult.
- If you mess up, don't get discouraged. Just get right back on track and keep going. God's mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22–23). God wants you to finish, and God will give you the grace and strength to do it.

Fasting Alternatives (Daniel may not be my style)

Everyone is different and that is ok. You may find that the Daniel Fast isn't a good fit for you. If that's the case, consider fasting from the following (you can choose one or a combination):

- Sweets
- Social Media
- Music (Great for people who keep the radio on while working or riding in the car)
- Unnecessary Spending (See below)
- Modified Daniel Fast (Consider fish two nights a week)
- Television
- Alcohol or smoking
- Fast Food
- No eating out
- Dairy Products
- Eating after 7:00 PM
- All beverages except water (coffee, tea, soda/pop, smoothies, etc.)
- Only eating 1 meal a day
- Electronic devices not needed for work
- Take the stairs and leave the elevator

Youth might consider giving up

- Television
- Video Games
- Computer (games, social networking, etc.)
- Soft drinks
- Candy/Sweets
- Going out on Friday or Saturday night

Whatever you decided to give up should be something you do daily and enjoy.



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Financial Fast

Our financial health is important. From a Biblical perspective, how we manage our finances affects every aspect of our lives. The Bible has over 2300 verses that deal with finances. In fact, it is the most referenced topic in the Bible. This makes sense since the leading cause of divorce is financial stress.

The purpose of this financial fast is to help you gain a new perspective on how you use money and gain a new level of discipline in your use of credit. You will be encouraged to keep a journal and create a budget so that you can become a better steward of your finances.

As with most fasts, the first couple of days will be difficult. It is a detoxification process as you learn to rely less upon credit and debit cards. However, if you push through this fast and embrace it, you will experience a new level of financial freedom.

For 21 Days, you will refrain from any non-emergency or non-essential spending. An emergency (or essential item) is defined as food, hygiene, school supplies, cleaning supplies, medicine/medical supplies only.

This includes:

- No going to the mall, retail establishments, online or window shopping.
- No restaurant, carry out or delivery meals including fast food and coffee.
- No movies or purchasing gifts or gift cards.
- No credit card or debit card use. Use cash only.

