



FASTING AND PRAYER

THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2020

"MORE THAN ANY OTHER DISCIPLINE, FASTING REVEALS THE THINGS THAT CONTROL US."

RICHARD FOSTER

Fasting is voluntarily giving up something we normally consume or do so that we can increase our focus on God.

Most commonly, fasting is linked to food and can mean not eating, or giving up a specific food for a period of time.

Fasting is an act of worship - we show Jesus that we love Him more than our own comfort.

Jesus expects us to fast and suggests that there are answers to prayer we will be unable to get without fasting.

Why fast?

There is a very simple answer – Jesus did it (Matthew 4:2, NIV) and he expects his followers to do the same (Matthew 6:16-18, NIV).

What fasting is

- When the Holy Spirit prompts you, it is a means of advancing spiritual objectives (Mark 9:29 NIV).
- It is an effective weapon in a spiritual battle (Daniel 10:3, 12-13)
- It is a sacrificial form of prayer warfare that produces results available in no other way.
- A spiritual discipline.

What fasting isn't

- To try to earn God's favour or improve our status with God.
- A religious exercise

When to fast

People turned to fasting;

- At times of public disaster (2 Samuel 1:11-12)
- For healing (Psalm 35:13)
- When in danger (Esther 4:16)
- In repentance (1 Samuel 7:6; Nehemiah 1:2)

Practical considerations

You may want to spend today or some of today fasting and here are a few practical considerations before you start;

- For health reasons total food fasts for a day or more aren't recommended for anyone under 16, expectant or breast-feeding mothers, or anyone with a medical disorder affected by diet, like Diabetes.
- We also recommend that food fasts should not be entered into by anyone with a history of eating disorders. Fasting should be a positive dedication to God, so discuss your motivation for fasting before committing to it.

If food is an inappropriate fast for you, then there are many other (sometimes more challenging) ways to deny yourself, such as:

- Television
- Your phone
- Social media
- Speaking
- Sleep

However you choose to fast, prioritise spending time in prayer and worship when you do it - focus your mind and energy on God; and be encouraged as you do so. Today's video may help you with this.

Suffolk in Prayer would love to hear the results of your fasting time. Feel free to go to the Suffolk in Prayer Facebook group to join the group, share, like and or comment at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/360976731898621>.

(Information taken from 40 days of Prayer for Ipswich by Liz Beaton and 27-7 prayer.com/fasting.)