

Fasting begets prophets and strengthens strong men. Fasting makes lawgivers wise; it is the soul's safeguard, the body's trusted comrade, the armor of the champion, the training of the athlete.

- Basil, Bishop of Caesarea (AD 330-379).

With this call to enter into extended fasts, we must prepare ourselves adequately so that the fast can honor God and fulfill its purpose. Here are some items to help and encourage you.

1. Seek advice and permission before the fast. Seek medical advice before the fast, especially if you have any existing medical concerns or conditions. If you are under 18 years of age, discuss your desire to fast with your parents. Spiritual covering, submission, and unity are important factors when fasting. Discuss your plans with your church leaders. Remember, fasting is an attitude of the heart! Ask them if they would consider fasting with you!

2. Fast and pray in order to humble yourself and purify your worship. In fasting we are not trying to get something from God, but rather seeking to realign our hearts' affections with His. In fasting we can more readily say, "We love you Lord, more than anything in the world." Lust of any kind is perverted worship, but fasting enables us to cleanse the sanctuary of our hearts from every other rival.

3. Don't boast about your fast. Let people know you won't be eating only if you need to (Matthew 6:16-18).

4. Do the fast with someone else. Two are better than one! We encourage parents and kids to consider fasting together. Several generations fasting together has a powerful impact!

5. Have a clear target as your prayer focus. Without a vision (a clear, prophetic prayer goal) the people perish. Write down your vision, so you can run with it (Habakkuk 2:2).

6. Make your commitment and determine the length. You can fast in many different ways. Pray and ask God what he will give you faith for as far as the length of time.

* A Daniel fast, with vegetables and water, is good for those carrying a heavy workload.

* A fruit or vegetable juice fast allows you to enter into fasting but still gives enough energy to function. Many people have done a 40-day juice fast. Out of consideration for their health and metabolism, I would encourage teenagers to use juice and protein drinks to sustain them. If you have sugar sensitivities or problems, consult your physician before attempting this fast.

* A water-only fast has been done by many people. We would not encourage this without strong medical supervision, particularly for youth. Depending on your weight and metabolism, you can go forty days on water alone.

* A total fast is without water. Do not go beyond three days without water. Discuss your plans with your doctor, church leaders, and spouse or parents. We do not encourage this type of fast without specific confirmation from the Lord through your parents and church leadership.

7. **Prepare physically.** Two days before you fast, limit your intake of food to fruit and vegetables. Fruit is a natural cleanser and easy to digest. Stop drinking coffee before the fast. Drink lots of water to help your body detoxify. Prepare yourself for mental discomforts such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety. Expect physical discomforts. You may experience dizziness, headaches and different kinds of pains. The headaches are not a sign to stop fasting. Your body is working to cleanse itself of impurities.

8. **Take time to pray and read the Word.** This may seem obvious, but busyness and distractions can keep you from devotions. Reading books with testimonies of victories gained through fasting will encourage you, too. *Changing History through Prayer and Fasting* by Derek Prince, *Fast Forward* by Lou Engle and *God's Chosen Fast* by Author Wallis are just some of the books about fasting that are available.

9. **Expect to hear God's voice** in the Word, dreams, visions and revelations. Daniel prepared himself to receive revelation through fasting (Daniel 10:1-2). There is a fasting reward (Matthew 6:18).

10. **Prepare for opposition.** On the day of your fast you can bet donuts will be at the office or in class. Your spouse (or your mom) will suddenly be inspired to cook your favorite meals. Press through. Many times you may feel more tension build at home. Satan tempted Jesus on the fast, and we must expect the same. Discouragement may come in like a flood, but recognize the source and take your stand on the victory of Christ.

11. **If you fail, don't give in to condemnation.** The "to fast or not to fast" dilemma can be a major tool of the enemy. Even though you may fail several times, God always extends grace. Just hit the "delete" button and continue on your fast!

12. Feel free to **rest a lot** and continue to exercise with supervision.

13. **Breakthroughs often come after a fast, not during it.** Do not listen to the lie that nothing is happening. It is my conviction that every fast done in faith will be rewarded.

14. **Break the fast slowly,** over several days with fruit juice or light soups. On a light juice fast or a water fast your digestive system shuts down. This can be dangerous if you eat too much too soon. Break the fast with several days of diluted, non-acidic juice, then regular juice, followed by fruit and vegetables.