

This Season

A Simple Guide on Prayer and Fasting



Written by Beaux Hinote

for FBC Justin's Seasons of Called Prayer and Fasting



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PROLOGUE

It's no surprise that we so often pass over the uncomfortable passages of Scripture, the text where the Word of God is challenging us, maybe even rebuking us, and then fixate only on the more tender, more pleasing words of encouragement. However, the reality is this:

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- 2 Timothy 3:16, ESV

And this single verse brings us to the subject at hand, fasting, where we may have overlooked the command and instruction of Jesus Christ Himself and have yet to practice fasting as an essential spiritual discipline. Look at this verse from the gospel of Matthew, chapter 6,

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” - **Matthew 6:16-18, ESV**

“When you fast,” Jesus says. We now see the question is not *if we, as Christ-followers, should fast*; the question is, *are we fasting in obedience to His Word?* After all, Christ Himself fasted for 40 days before He began His ministry; if we follow His example, knowing that He perfectly lived for God while living as a man on this earth, we should fast as well.

*For His glory and the gospel — May He be exalted as we
seek His face through much prayer and fasting.*

FASTING

WHAT IS FASTING

Fasting is voluntary abstinence from something or things for an extended period. Fasting, in its purest practice, is abstinence from food or drinking. Fasting can be more than what we bodily consume through food or drink; fasting could be eliminating anything we consume that is a distraction, or merely an obligatory task, from your relationship with God and what He desires to speak into your life.

TYPES OF FASTING

Complete Fast - This fast would eliminate all food consumption, and only liquids would be allowed. This fast could include more than water, though, allowing the consumption of beverages like light juices, broths, or even light soups.

Concise Fast - This fast would eliminate particular food and liquids consumption while others would be allowed. This could mean a person would fast from all pleasant foods, like desserts or comfort dishes, or maybe habitual foods or drinks, like coffee or soda.

- The Daniel Fast, outlined in the Old Testament book of Daniel chapter 1, where Daniel and his three friends resolved themselves only to eat vegetables, drink water, and abstain from the king's food (food declared unclean by the Law of Moses). There are many good sources on the internet on Daniel Fasting; two good places to start are <https://ultimatedanielfast.com> and the book, *The Daniel Plan* by Rick Warren.

Jewish Fast - This fast would eliminate consuming any food from the morning until the evening, from sunrise to sunset.

Focus Fast - This fast would benefit all of us in this modern society. It may also be necessary for one with health issues and who can not fast from food to do this fast in place of dietary fasting. This fast could be eliminating media, such as streaming channels or movies, from social media like FaceBook or Twitter, or spending/shopping, hunting, or golfing. Whatever is keeping one from abiding in God's presence untethered.

TRUTHS AS YOU FAST

- (1) This isn't work that earns you any credit with God; fasting eliminates distractions so one can hear from God more clearly.
- (2) Fasting is a spiritual discipline. Spiritual disciplines bring us closer to God to experience Him intimately and powerfully. They should be joyously engaged, not drudgery, for they bring us closer to our loving God.
- (3) It's about God and abiding in His presence. Ask, "What is keeping me from hearing God and seeing His will for my life more clearly?"

As Richard Foster says in his book, *The Celebration of Discipline*, "Fasting must forever center on God."¹

This should be our prayer that we can powerfully experience God as we seek His face, listen for His voice, and look for His movement, united in the 21-day season of fasting and prayer.

¹ Foster, Richard, "Celebration of Discipline" (Harper Collins: New York, NY: 1998) pg. 54.

PRAYER

WHAT IS PRAYING

Prayer is communicating with God; those who walk by faith in Christ can pray and expect to receive answers to their prayers. Praying involves talking to God and praising Him through prayerfully reading His Word and listening for His voice.

Jesus gives the perfect model prayer in Matthew's gospel:

*“Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. - **Matthew 6:9-48, CSB***

TYPES OF PRAYER

There are several types of prayer presented throughout God's Word. Each one with a specific purpose and focus. These types are Prayer of Worship, Prayer of Thanksgiving, Prayer of Faith, Prayer of Intercession, Corporate Prayer, Prayer of Consecration, and Prayer of the Holy Spirit.

(Taken from: <https://www.orbcfamily.org/blog/prayer/7-different-types-of-prayer-in-the-bible/>)

RESOURCES ON PRAYER

On Prayer by E.M. Bounds, Whitaker House, 1997.

Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation by DA Carson, Baker Academic, 2015.

GUIDELINES FOR FASTING AND PRAYING

1. Commit to the LORD your time with Him through fasting and praying.
2. Plan and set a schedule for the season of fasting and praying.
3. Let your family know so they can encourage you as you fast.
4. Don't brag about your fasting; fast with the correct heart and motives.
5. Give prayer, solitude, and studying God's Word more time this season.
6. Don't get discouraged; as stated above, "Your Father will reward you." (Matt. 6:18)
7. Before fasting, consult a physician for medical advice.

GOALS FOR THIS SEASON

- Pray for those still lost in sin in our city. *Would you commit to praying for the lost in your life daily? Would you also commit to sharing the gospel with those you pray for? Would you invite them to church? Would you be burdened for the lost?*
- We encourage you to commit to prayer walking through your neighborhoods as LIFE Groups, FBCJ ministries, and families. As your elders, we hope to minister to our community by covering each street and home in prayer, lifting greater Justin before the Lord together. And as we do, we will keep track of the city prayer progress as you report on when and where you have walked in prayer.
- Reclaim intimacy in your relationship with God and others. While you fast and pray this season, do not replace your extra time and energy and focus on other trivial things of this world, but focus on Christ's command, "to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength" and then "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39-40). And then experience how God draws you closer into His presence.
- Pray in unity with us by signing up for a 30-minute prayer slot on September 9-10. I encourage you to wait for the next person to come to pray and spend a moment praying together. It will bless you, them, and the heart of God.

FBC Justin's Schedule for THIS SEASON

- 9/10 FBC Justin's Called Fast Begins**
- 9/11 Prayer Meeting @7:00 pm**
- 9/15-16 24-Hour Prayer Vigil (Fri. 7 am - Sat. 7 am)**
- 9/18 Prayer Meeting @7:00 pm**
- 9/25 Prayer Meeting @7:00 pm**
- 9/30 FBC Justin's Called Fast Ends**

* All month-long prayer walking, personal prayer, and fasting, special calls to prayer during worship, elder-led prayer.

