

# Fasting

## Definition

Fasting means to withhold food and/or drink from your body in order to be more sensitive to God. In doing this, you deny yourself and "mortify" your flesh. "Mortify" means "death." In other words, there is less concentration on the body and more concentration on the spirit.

You may decide to fast because of your personal circumstances, or God Himself may prompt you. Either way, fasting is of no spiritual value unless you do it deliberately, with no desire but to seek God: "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." [Job 23:12](#)

## There Are Three Basic Types Of Fast

I. **Absolute** (Total) - Meaning no food (solid or liquid) and no water. This is the "Esther" fast for three days only. (You cannot survive more than three days without water. But with plenty of water, many have gone 40 days or more.)

II. **Normal** - Abstaining from all food (solid and liquid) for a limited time, but not water.

III. **Partial** - Described in [Daniel 10:3](#). Abstaining from selected foods and drinks, but not complete abstinence from all foods and drinks (e.g. juice diet).

## What Scripture Says

**The Absolute Fast or The "Esther" Fast (three-day fast):** "Then Saul (Apostle Paul) arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank." [Acts 9:8-9](#)

**The Normal Fast:** Jesus led the way. He ate nothing, but it is assumed He drank water as it was for an extended period of time. "...being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry." [Luke 4:2](#)

**Partial Fast:** "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." [Daniel 1:8](#)

## Examine Your Motives

The Bible stresses the importance of fasting. But it is just as important to know why you are fasting. [1 Corinthians 4:5](#)

Jesus tells us that the hypocrites fast to show other people that they are fasting. As Christians, we are called to fast for spiritual purposes in secret. [Matthew 6:16-18](#)

Your fast should be motivated by a sincere desire to communicate with God. It is a time when you stop and give Him your attention and respond from the heart to His word for you. If you don't do this, your fast may be motivated by self-interest.

Other godly motivations for fasting include intercession for a specific need for yourself or others. For example, you may be fasting on behalf of the country, its leaders, or the dire circumstances or financial problems of yourself or others for whom you are burdened. Godly motives for fasting are spoken of in [Isaiah 58:6-7](#).

## How To Know God Is Speaking

You may be seeking God's Word to you for a particular need. If so, ask God to help you be sensitive to His Spirit during the time of fasting. Be particularly sensitive to Scripture you read, as well as sermons, teachings and anything spoken to you during times of ministry. Take notes, recording any spiritual insights you receive or any revelation concerning your

own status and relation to God. At the conclusion of the fast, look for a theme running through your notes. You may find that God is speaking to you through them.

## How To Know Your Fast Is Honored By God

When your sense of burden is lifted, this is normally an indication that your fast should end and God is honoring it. It is assumed that you were serious and determined in your spirit (versus an effort by human willpower only) and that your fast was prompted by the Holy Spirit.

If you were fasting for a particular need, expect some indication sooner or later that the circumstances for which you fasted are changing. Keep in mind that a seemingly unrelated circumstance may occur which will ultimately change the immediate ones. Thank and praise God for all you observe, hear, read and experience: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." [Romans 8:28](#)

Expect to find that your fast was edifying to you personally as well as beneficial to whomever or whatever you were fasting for. The results of a chosen fast of God are shown in [Isaiah 58:8](#).

**Special Note:** Whether you decide to fast one meal, an entire day, or a longer period of time, it is advisable to drink plenty of liquids. If you have serious questions about your health, or if you are under a physician's care, you should consult your doctor before you abstain from food or change your diet.

## Suggested Reading

Read *The Adventures of Fasting* by James Beall, *God's Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis, and/or *The Coming Revival* by Bill Bright.

Motive and reward of fasting. [Isaiah 58](#)

Fasting and God's commission to serve. [Acts 13:2-3](#); [Acts 14:23](#)

Fasting enjoined. [Joel 1:14](#); [Joel 2:12](#)

Fast privately. [Matthew 6:17-18](#); [Matthew 17:21](#)

