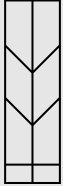


FASTING Q&A



BY DIANE S. DEW



And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the LORD my God and made my confession. *Daniel 9:3-4 (KJV)*

1. Is there a place for fasting in New Testament times?

- a. Fasting was not required of Jesus' disciples.

Matthew 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33

- b. Jesus spoke of a day when there would be a place for fasting.

Matthew 6:16-18; Matthew 9:14-15; Luke 5:34-35

2. What guidelines are set forth in Scripture concerning fasting?

- a. Fasting is to be done in a manner of humility and secrecy.

Matthew 6:16-18; Luke 18:9-14

- b. Fasting is closely related to prayer and reading of the God's word.

1 Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; Nehemiah 1:4; 9:1-3; Daniel 9:3, 20; Joel 2:12; Jonah 3:8; Luke 2:37; Acts 9:9, 11; Acts 10:30, 13:2, 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5

- c. A fast may be either absolute or partial.

- i. Examples of absolute (complete) fasts:

Deuteronomy 9:9, 18; Ezra 10:6; Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9, 27:33

- ii. Examples of partial fasts (abstinence from certain foods only):

1 Kings 17; Daniel 10:3

- d. There is a place for both corporate (group) and individual (personal) fasts.

- i. Examples of corporate fasts:

1 Samuel 7:5-6; 2 Chronicles 20:34; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 9:1-3; Joel 2:15-16; Jonah 3:5-10; Acts 27:33-37

- ii. Examples of individual fasts:

2 Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23; 1 Kings 21:27-29; Psalms 35:13; Daniel 9:3; Luke 2:36-37; Acts 9:9

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3. Fasting in itself is of no spiritual value.

Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12; 1 Corinthians 8:8; John 3:6; Joel 2:12-13; Romans 14:6, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:50

a. Only fasting that is done with the right motive, that of glorifying God, can be pleasing in God's sight.

Isaiah 58; Zechariah 7:5-6; Matthew 6:16-18; Luke 18:9-14

b. The same Bible that teaches abstaining from foods (as God leads) also warns us against testing the Lord. *Matthew 4:7*

i. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are to care for them as such. *1 Corinthians 6:9, 20*

ii. It may be profitable for us to exercise severe discipline in our bodies for a season, but we must realize that we cannot produce spiritual results - however sincere our intentions - from that which is purely flesh.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

iii. To deny the flesh of its natural desires may cause us to be more "in tune" to hear the voice of the Lord, but it also places us in a realm more easily prone to the attack of the enemy. It was when Jesus fasted for 40 days that he was faced with the greatest Satanic attack.

Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; Matthew 4:1-3, Luke 4:1-2

c. Scripture warns that in the last days there will be many "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats," but we are to "test the spirits" to see whether they are of God. *1 Timothy 4: 1-3; 1 John 4:1*

4. How long should I fast?

a. Bible personalities fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they desired (*examples of Hannah and Paul*) - or until the Lord made it evident that what they requested simply would not be obtained (*example of David*).

Hannah: *1 Samuel 1:2-18*

Paul: *Acts 9:9-19*

David: *2 Samuel 12:15-23*

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- b. The length of a fast may vary.
 - i. One night *Daniel 6:18*
 - ii. One day *1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35*
 - iii. Three days & three nights *Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9, 17-19*
 - iv. Seven days *1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 12:16-23*
 - v. Fourteen days *Acts 27:33-34*
 - vi. Twenty-one days *Daniel 10:3-13*
 - vii. Forty days
 - Moses: *Exodus 24:18, 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10*
 - Elijah: *1 Kings 19:8*
 - Jesus: *Matthew 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2*

5. When should I fast?

Many occasions for fasting are recorded in the Bible.

- a. The ordination of elders and commissioning of apostles to ministry
Acts 13:3; 14:23
- b. Intercession for the people of God
Exodus 24:18; Deuteronomy 9:8-9, 12-20, 23-27; Ezra 10:6; Daniel 9:3-4; Joel 2:12-14, 17-18; Jonah 3:5-10
- c. Humbling and chastening of oneself
1 Kings 21:27-29; Psalms 35:13; 69:10
- d. Seeking the Lord and his way
Judges 20:26-28; 2 Chronicles 20:3; Ezra 8:21-23
- e. Repentance and confession of sin
1 Samuel 7:6; 1 Kings 21:27-29; Ezra 10:6; Nehemiah 1:4-7, 9:1-3; Jeremiah 36:6-10; Daniel 9:3-5, 20; Jonah 3:5-10
- f. Receiving healing
1 Samuel 1:5-11, 18-20; 2 Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23; Isaiah 58:8; Acts 9:9, 17-19
- g. Petitioning God to withhold his hand in judgment
Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; Isaiah 58:9
- h. Preparation to receive word from God
Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; Isaiah 58:9

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j. Seeking assistance in time of fear

2 Chronicles 20:3

k. Mourning another's death; out of concern for another's safety; or when faced with threats on one's own life

2 Samuel 1:12, 3:35; Daniel 6:18; Esther 4:3; 9:1-3

l. Seeking protection

Ezra 8:21-23

m. Lacking material provision; in need

2 Corinthians 11:27

6. Fasting is an extremely valuable and important facet of the Christian life, but it is not an infallible means of “getting what we want” from God.

Jeremiah 14:12; 2 Samuel 12:15-23; 1 Samuel 15:22