

A Call To Corporate Fasting 4093

Fasting is abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.

I. Four Reasons For Fasting

- A. *Jesus fasted.* He is the pattern.
 - 1. Luke 4:1–2, 14—Why did Jesus have to fast? He had to deal with the devil before He could go forth into His ministry.
 - 2. John 14:12—To do the works that Jesus did, we must start where He started
- B. *Jesus expected His disciples to fast*
 - 1. Matt. 6:16—Fasting is on a level with giving and praying—“when” not “if”
 - 2. Mark 2:18–20—Fasting a mark of true disciples until the Bridegroom’s return
- C. *The early church fasted* (particularly in making decisions about leadership)
 - 1. Acts 13:1–4—For sending out apostles
 - 2. Acts 14:21–23—For ordaining elders
- D. *God’s people have fasted from Moses onwards*
 - 1. Lev. 16:29–30—An essential part of the Day of Atonement
 - 2. Acts 27:9—Identified in the New Testament as “The Fast.”
 - a. The Jewish people have observed the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) by fasting more than 3000 years, and still do today.
 - b. We generally learn the benefit of what God requires us to do *by doing it*

II. Four Things That Fasting Does

- A. Way to humble ourselves
 - 1. Ps. 35:13—Example of David
 - 2. Ezra 8:21–23—Example of Ezra
 - a. Natural vs. supernatural: key to supernatural is afflicting our souls through fasting.
 - b. Fasting is the appointed way to suppress the rebellious, self-assertive “ego” (biblical “soul”).
- B. Fasting purifies our faith
Esther 4:15—When *theology* and *emotion* are used up, all we have left is *faith*
- C. Brings insight into spiritual realm
 - 1. 2 Cor. 4:17–18—Temporal vs. eternal
 - 2. Practice fasting with *right motives* (Is. 58, 2 Cor. 5:7)
- D. Makes a way for the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Eph. 3:20—It takes the Holy Spirit to make our prayers effective
 - 2. Gal. 5:17—The “spirit” and the “flesh” are in opposition to each other
 - 3. It is important to *invite/invoke* the Holy Spirit
 - 4. Fasting helps us to *depend* on the Holy Spirit
 - a. Program of Joel:
 - (1) Joel 1:6–7, 10–12—*Desolation*
 - (2) Joel 2:12, 15–17—*Restoration* initiated by *corporate fasting*
 - b. 2 Chron. 7:14
 - (1) God asks His people to:
 - (a) Humble themselves (fasting)

- (b)** Pray
- (c)** Seek God's face
- (d)** Turn from wicked ways
- (2)** On this basis, God will:
 - (a)** Hear from heaven
 - (b)** Forgive their sin
 - (c)** Heal their land

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