

## WHAT IS FASTING?

*“Every time I fasted I established a new spiritual dimension in my life and had new spiritual authority with people.” George Pitt*

- Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His followers to fast and He said that God rewards fasting. Fasting, according to the Bible, means to voluntarily reduce or eliminate your intake of food for a specific time and purpose.

*When you give up eating, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They make their faces look sad to show people they are giving up eating. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give up eating, comb your hair and wash your face. Then people will not know that you are giving up eating, but your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

Often in the Bible, God's people fasted immediately before a major victory, miracle, or answer to prayer. It prepared them for a blessing!

- **Moses fasted before he received the Ten Commandments.** Exodus 34:28
- **The Israelites fasted before a miraculous victory.** 2 Chronicles 20:2-3
- **Daniel fasted in order to receive guidance from God.** Daniel 9:3,21-22
- **Nehemiah fasted before beginning a major building project.** Nehemiah 1:4
- **Jesus fasted during His victory over temptation.** Luke 4:2
- **The first Christians fasted during-decision making times.** Acts 13:2-3

## WHY FAST?

There are many good reasons, and even health benefits, for fasting. However, our WEEK OF PRAYER & FASTING is for three primary reasons:

1. Fasting gives you more time for prayer. You can use the time you'd normally spend eating as time in prayer for what God wants to do among us during this Campaign. In the Bible, fasting is always connected with prayer.

*While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called*

*them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Acts 13:2-3*

2. Fasting demonstrates the depth of your desire when praying for something. It shows you mean business with God – that you are serious enough about your prayer request to pay a personal price. God honors deep desire and praying in faith.

*Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. Joel 1:14*

*Even now," declares the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Joel 2:12*

3. Fasting releases God's supernatural power. It is a tool we can use when there is opposition to God's will. Satan would like nothing better than to cause division, discouragement, defeat, depression, and doubt among us. United prayer and fasting has always been used by God to deal a decisive blow to the enemy!

*So we fasted and prayed to God about this, and He answered our prayer. Ezra 8:23*

*God says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6*

## **TWO CAUTIONS**

1. Remember that fasting is not "earning" an answer to prayer. We are not trying to "twist God's arm." God cannot be blackmailed by human effort. God wants to reveal His love to us and to answer our prayers, and He answers out of grace. Fasting simply prepares us for God's answer. Fasting enlarges and expands our heart and increases our capacity to hear and receive from the Lord.
2. Fast only if your health allows it at this time. If you are able **only** to do a partial fast - do it in faith and God will honor your intentions.

## **DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF FAST YOU'LL FOLLOW**

**(Note:** You should always drink water while fasting.)

### **Possible Options:**

A Normal Fast – skip the next three meals

A Partial Fast – skip one or two meals

A "Juice" Fast – drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times

A "Daniel Fast" – eating only vegetables and drinking water and juices for a period of time

A Media Fast – remove the distractions of media by turning off television, radio, etc. for a period of time in order to be released to hear more clearly what God is speaking.