

Information on Fasting

Fasting – a voluntary abstinence from food (Vines), a common practice among Jews, and was continued among Christians;

- The Hebrew word **tsom** means “to cover over” as pertaining to the mouth.
- Webster’s 1828 defines it “to abstain from food, beyond the usual time; to omit to take usual meals, for a time; as to fast a day or a week; to abstain from food voluntarily, for the mortification of the body or appetites, or as a token of grief, sorrow and affliction; to abstain from food partially, or from particular kinds of food; as, the Catholics fast in Lent.”

Scripture Reference to Fasting

- Ezra 10:6, 10:10-11
- Matthew 4:1-3
- Daniel 1:8-17
- Esther 4 – 8
- 2 Chronicles 20:1-29
- 1 Kings 17:5-7
- Acts 9:7-19
- Ezra 8:21-23,31
- Matthew 3:4
- Exodus 34:28
- Joel 1:13-14, 2:12, 15, 18-27
- 1 Corinthians 7:5
- Deuteronomy 9:9-29, 10:1-11
- Daniel 10:2-3

Complete Fast: Is No Food or Drink

A normal fast is no food, but beverages are allowed (caffeine is to be avoided water preferred). Unless supernaturally sustained, you should not do a complete fast for more than 3 days and nights.

Before starting a longer fast (3 days or more):

- Divine direction – don’t copy others; be sure you are led of the Lord as to what type of fast and how long.
- No caffeine – discontinue a few days BEFORE the fast
- Eat less the day before a fast to help your body adjust
- Eat fruits as a last meal before the fast
- Temptations – know that the evil one will try to discourage and distract you during the fast. Be sure to trust God, not your feelings during this time.

During the fast:

- Dress warmly – you can expect to feel colder during a fast, especially in your hands and feet
- Use warm, not hot, water for showers and baths
- Avoid ice cold beverages
- Exercise regularly, but moderately – if you experience weakness, discontinue
- Fast in secret – don't tell others you are fasting; it is between you and the Lord. You can talk about the benefits or reasons why you fast, but do not give details about a particular fast.

After the fast:

- Avoid starches for a few days
- Chew your food well
- Stop eating when you feel full
- Don't become physically active too soon
- Eat healthy food

Here is a suggested schedule for reintroducing food after a complete fast:

- **DAY 1:** Liquids every couple of hours in small amounts; fruit juices are great
- **DAY 2:** Consume small quantities of fruit, milk and yogurt
- **DAYS 2 and 3:** (Note: the longer you fast, the more time you should allow before introducing these foods)
 - Consume in small quantities: salads, homemade vegetable soup without grease, cooked vegetables
- **After a few days:** Cheese, nuts, eggs
- **Lastly:** Fish and meat

DO NOT UNDERTAKE A COMPLETE FAST IF YOU ARE:

- A Diabetic
- Malnourished
- Pregnant or Nursing
- On Medication