



### THE SPIRITUAL PURPOSES OF FASTING

Fasting is a spiritual practice of abstinence accompanied with prayer that trains followers of Jesus to increase their dependence upon God, to sharpen their focus on His presence, to heighten their appetite for His Word, to experience the power of His Spirit and to reveal what controls them in order to bring their whole life under Jesus' functional leadership. According to the Apostle Paul, it is in our weakness that Jesus shows His strength. Fasting has also been used to help us to focus in prayer on a desperate need.

### WHAT TO DO

- Determine your fasting goal through prayer (e.g. for increased intimacy with God, for spiritual breakthroughs in your Church, for a struggling family member, for the health of your marriage, for overcoming an addiction, for wisdom in a decision, for a physical need, for your finances, etc.)
- Discern what the Holy Spirit would like you to fast from. Historically, it has been from eating food. However, there are also spiritual benefits to fast from TV/movies/shows, social media, online shopping, hobbies/sports, certain types of reading materials, drinks, people, or habits.
- Commit to pray during the times you would usually engage in what you are fasting from. The power and effectiveness of Christian fasting is its connection to spending extra time in prayer.
- Commit to attending Prayer Summit, AM Prayer Gatherings and other prayer related engagements.
- Commit to a type of fast (see the second point above, as well as "Types of Fasts" point 5)
- Commit to reading Scripture. Feed on the living Word!
- Commit together with your LifeGroup. For example, you can fast on the day of your LifeGroup meeting or you can fast and pray for the same things. Discuss this with your LifeGroup and encourage each other. Pray for each other about your fasting at your LifeGroup gatherings.
- As you fast, monitor the inner attitude of your heart. At first you'll focus on the physical aspects of the fast but it is most important to monitor the inner attitude of the heart. Outwardly you perform regular duties of the day, but inwardly you will be in prayer, adoration, song and worship to God!



### TYPES OF FASTS

#### Partial Fast (particularly if you have never tried fasting before)

1. 24 hour Partial Fast
  - A full day of fasting, from one meal to the same meal on the next day, for example, lunch to lunch
  - You can drink fruit or vegetable juices
  - You can fast 1 day per week or 1 day a month, etc.
2. One-Meal-Per-Day Fast
  - Fast one meal per day for one or more days per week
3. Daniel Fast
  - A partial fast where you eat only foods like vegetables, nuts, fruit, water,
  - This is usually a 21 day fast
4. Medical Condition Fast
  - If you have physical reasons why you should not fast food, for example: diabetes, hypoglycaemia, expectant mothers, heart patients, etc., you may still be able to do a modified fast e.g. junk food, coffee, etc.
  - If you have a medical condition always seek medical advice
5. Non-Food Fasts
  - solid food, TV/movies/shows, social media, online shopping, hobbies/sports, certain types of reading materials, drinks, people, or habits



## FASTING INFORMATION

### **24hr Full fast: (if you've done partial fast before)**

- Drink only water or clear juices for 24 hours
- You will feel some hunger pangs or discomfort before the day is over, this isn't real hunger. Your stomach has been trained through years of conditioning to give hunger signals at certain times of the day. Ignore these signals; we are to be masters of our stomachs, not its slave!
- If family obligations permit it, devote the meal times to prayer and reading of the Word!

### **3+ Day Fast** (if experienced 24hr fasts, ask Lord about number of days He is leading you into)

- Follow the same guidelines as for 24hr full fasts
- Don't "stock up" on food leading up to the fast; have lighter, high-fibre meals beforehand
- Be careful when ending your fast, your stomach has shrunk so eat lighter meals that are easy to digest, easing back into a normal eating routine
- If entering into a **long term fast**, please read the following to understand and anticipate what occurs during the process. Please check with your doctor before committing to a long term fast!



## FASTING INFORMATION

### WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BODY?

#### DAYS 1-3

These days are the days of a fast where we feel initial physical hunger and discomfort. We are breaking routine habits and deprive our bodies of natural desires that are usually satisfied quickly. The body is beginning to rid itself of toxins — an uncomfortable process. Some people experience a white coating on the tongue and bad breath (brush your teeth or rinse with mouthwash more often . If you are drinking water only, you may experience headaches during this time, especially if you are an avid coffee or tea drinker — these symptoms will pass, though uncomfortable for the time. Many people feel cold when fasting because the body's metabolism is not producing the usual amount of heat — take care to keep warm.

#### DAY 4—6

Often by this day the hunger pains begin to subside, although you can have feelings of weakness and/or occasional lightheadedness dizziness, which is often temporary. If you are struggling with weakness, try rest as the remedy. Be careful to not over-exert yourself these days, the most difficult period of the fast.

#### DAYS 7+

Often by this point in the fast you will begin to feel stronger and more alert. Hunger pains often diminish and even disappear after 7 or 8 days. By this point the body will have eliminated the bulk of toxins and you'll feel good with your concentration sharpened. Some people feel like they could fast indefinitely by this stage. Physically this is the most enjoyable part of the fast, and actually find increased energy.

[edited from Bill Bright's, *7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting & Prayer*. Orlando, FL: New Life Pub, 1995]

If you would like more information on Prayer and Fasting, or have specific prayer requests, please email our Prayer Team at: [prayer@summitcommunity.ca](mailto:prayer@summitcommunity.ca)