

FASTING

A SHORT GUIDE



FASTING

What is fasting? Essentially, fasting is about stopping one activity to focus on another for a period of time. As Christians, fasting is to abstain from something so that we can better devote ourselves to seek God in prayer.

Why do we fast?

Scripture teaches us that prayer with fasting alongside reading God's Word helps us to focus on Him. Throughout the Bible, we see examples of God's people seeking Him in fasting:

- to seek direction from the Lord (Judges 20:16)
- for wisdom, discernment, protection, and guidance (Esther 4:16)
- Daniel fasted for strength, wisdom, and discernment (Daniel 1:12)
- for times of distress and mourning. No meat, wine, rich or pleasant food, and no oils. Fruit, vegetables, nuts, and water instead (Daniel 10:3)
- for protection in times of trouble (Ezra 8:21-23)
- to focus on repentance (1 Samuel 7:3-6, Jonah 3)
- Other Scriptural examples of fasting include Moses (*Exodus 34:28*), David (*2 Samuel 12:16, Psalm 69:10*), Elijah (*1 Kings 19:7-8*), the Israelites (*Ezra 8:21-23*), early church (*Acts 13:2-3*), Anna (*Luke 2:36-38*) and Paul and Barnabas (*Acts 14:23*).

TYPES OF FAST

SELECTIVE FAST

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet.

One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

Other examples of selective fasts are removing certain foods/drink such as coffee, fast food, sugary snacks etc.

SOUL FAST

This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health/medical reasons that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance.

For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching tv/streaming for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

COMPLETE FAST

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

If you would like to follow a complete fast, we advise doing this 1-2 days a week, especially if this is your first time fasting, or first in a long time.

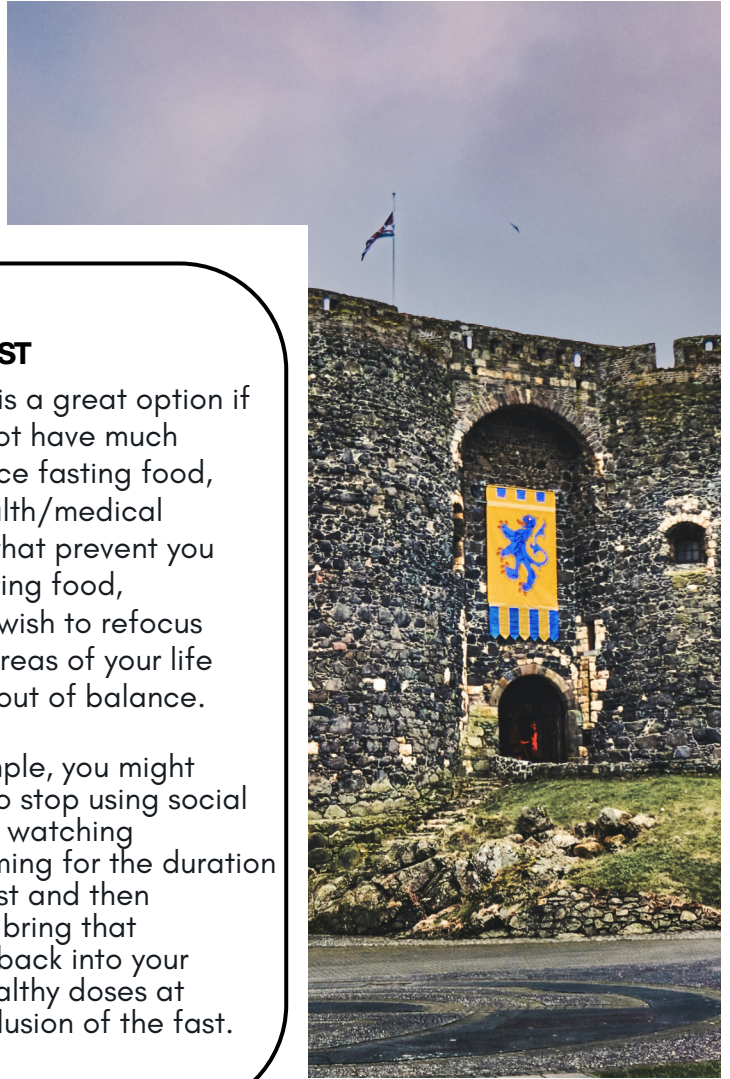
PARTIAL FAST

This involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning or afternoon.

This can either correlate to specific times of the day such as 6am - 3pm or from sunup to sundown.

NOTE:

While not everyone can/should fast food, we encourage everyone to 'soul fast' something for 21 days. Whatever you feel led to do, remember...



...Biblical fasting is about obedience, not sacrifice!

God wants our obedience, not our sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). It doesn't matter to him what you fast.

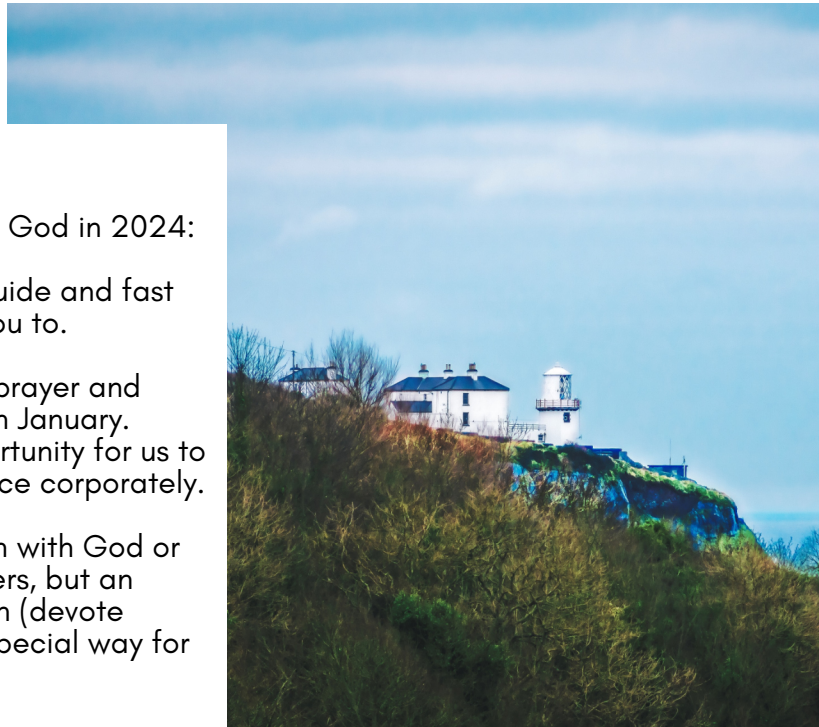
What matters to him is that you are willing to make the effort to set aside something you desire in the flesh for something only He can give you.

A "proper" biblical fast is anything that allows you to replace what you want for a chance to draw closer to God. It is that simple.

NEXT STEPS

Together, let's take the next steps in seeking God in 2024:

- 1. Commit** to praying through the 21 days guide and fast (set aside) what God is asking you to.
- 2. Calendar:** why not make Sunday night's prayer and worship gatherings a priority in January. These nights are a great opportunity for us to pray and pursue God's presence corporately.
- 3. Consecrate:** fasting is not a competition with God or about comparison with others, but an opportunity for consecration (devote ourselves to the Lord) in a special way for these 21 days.



WHAT IF

- What if for a period of time we disciplined ourselves to set aside something to pursue Christ?
- What if instead of mindlessly scrolling social media, we instead reach for our Bible?
- What if our desire for more of God overshadowed our desire for temporary physical satisfaction?

What might the Lord do in and through us?

A PRAYER FOR BEGINNING OUR TIME OF PRAYER AND FASTING

I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'



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