

Fort Washington Baptist Church
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Sermon Series: “Prayer & Fasting”
Causes of Prayer and Fasting

I. People fasted and prayed to God for deliverance:

- a. From Demonic possession (Matt. 17:14-22; Mk. 9:28-29);
- b. From Natural Dangers (Acts 27:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:5, 11:26-27).

II. People who were devout and committed to serving God fasted and prayed:

- a. Anna the prophetess served God by fasting and praying (Lk. 2:26-37).
- b. Jesus fasted for 40 days prior to entering into His ministry (Mt. 4:1-3; Lk. 4:2).
- c. The disciples fasted, prayed, and laid hands on persons before sending them into ministry (Acts 13:1-3; 14:19-23).
- d. Couples fasted to devote time to God and pray (I Cor. 7:5).
- e. **New:** Moses communed with Lord forty days and forty nights fasting (Ex. 34:28).
- f. The Prophet Daniel fasted so as not to become defiled before God (Dan. 1:8-13).
- g. King David fasted and prayed for those who committed evil against him (Ps. 35:9-16).
- h. The Prophet Zechariah prophesied of a day of fasting with joy and gladness for Judah (Zec. 9:18-23).

III. People who were in fear of someone or suffering in some way fasted and prayed:

- a. Jesus Christ said His disciples would fast because He would be taken away from them (Matt. 9:14-17; Mk. 2:18-22; Lk. 5:33-39).
- b. King David fasted and prayed for the life of his child (2 Sam. 12:15-23).
- c. Fearing death, the men of Israel put on sackcloth and ashes, wailed loudly and bitterly, and mourned with fasting (Est. 3:13-4:3).
- d. Queen Esther told all Jews to fast for her when she knew she might perish while seeking to intercede for the lives of her people (Est. 4:13-17; 9:29-32).
- e. King Jehoshaphat called all Judah to fast and seek the Lord when he realized a multitude was coming to attack Judah (2 Ch. 20:1-13).
- f. The Prophet Ezra told the people to fast that the Lord might protect the people from their enemies when they traveled (Ezra 8:21-23; I Esdras 8:50-53).
- g. The sons of Israel wept, fasted, offered sacrifices, and prayed after having 18,000 men killed in battle (Jdg. 20:24-28).
- h. The men of Israel fasted, wept, and mourned after King Saul was killed because of his transgressions against the Lord (I Sam. 31:13; 2 Sam. 1:11-16; I Chr. 10:11-14).
- i. The Prophet Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed when he heard how his brothers were suffering (Neh. 1:1-11).



- j. King David wept in his soul with fasting because of his suffering from others (Ps. 69:9-12).

IV. People fasted and prayed when repenting of sin:

- a. The Prophet Samuel and Israel fasted and confessed their sin of idolatry to the Lord (I Sam. 7:3-11).
- b. King Ahab put on sackcloth and fasted before the Lord after he had allowed his wife to influence him to follow idols and knew God was going to destroy him (I Ki. 21:21-29).
- c. King Josiah called a fast after hearing the words of the Lord and the calamity that would come on Judah because of their sin of idolatry (Jer. 36:1-10).
- d. The Prophet Daniel fasted, prayed, and confessed sin to God for Israel (Dan. 9:1-19).
- e. The Prophet Joel told the priests to call a fast and cry out to the Lord because of the coming destruction as a result of turning from the Lord (Joel 1:13-2:17).
- f. The Prophet Nehemiah led the sons of Israel to fast, put on sackcloth, confess their sins, read the book of the Law, and worship God (Neh. 9:1-38).

V. People can fast and pray in godly and ungodly ways:

- a. Ungodly fasting is fasting that is done for the purpose of being noticed by people (Matt. 6:16).
- b. Ungodly fasting is fasting that leads to self-righteousness (Lk. 18:9-12).
- c. Ungodly fasting is fasting while committing acts of evil against others (I Ki. 21:6-10).
- d. Godly fasting is fasting with repentance and acts of mercy and kindness (Is. 58:1-12). God responds to this kind of fasting.
- e. Godly fasting is fasting that includes the giving of alms and acts of righteousness (Tobit 9:7-10).
- f. God promises not to respond to the prayers of his people when there is ungodly fasting (Jer. 14:10-12).

VI. Each person must decide on how they will fast and pray:

- a. You can do a complete fast ~ no food or drink (Matt. 4:1-3; Ex. 34:27-28).
- b. You can do a partial fast ~ no meat – just vegetables and water (Dan. 1:8-13).
- c. You can do a partial fast ~ only 2 small meals per/day (I Ki. 17:1-7)
- d. You can do a partial fast of bread and water each day (I Ki. 17:11-16).
- e. All fasting should be godly (refer to V).
- f. While fasting expect some weakness initially and weight loss (Ps. 109:24).
- g. While fasting expect various temptations (Matt. 4:1-12).
- h. While fasting expect that you will change (Ex. 34:27-35).
- i. While fasting expect that you will hear the Lord speak to you (Ex. 34:27-35).
- j. While fasting expect God to bless you (Is. 58:1-12).



TYPES of Fasts

Jesus' Fast

Communion with God, no food, no drink for 40 days and nights while being prepared for ministry (Mt. 4:1-3; Lk. 4:2).

Moses' Fast

Communion with God, no food, no drink for 40 days and nights while listening to God for direction and instruction to share with His people (Ex. 34:28).

Daniel's Fast

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah fasted so as not to become defiled before God. (Dan. 1:8-13). They communed with God, ate only vegetables and drank only water.

King David's Fast

Communion with God, no food for seven days at a time, then a meal, worship and prayer. The time was spent seeking God to spare the life of a loved one (2 Sam. 12:15-23).

Queen Esther's Fast

No eating or drinking for three days at a time while seeking God to intercede on a national crisis. On the fourth day there would be a meal/meals; then three days no eating or drinking. You may modify this slightly and drink broth or/and water or teas (Est. 4:13-17; 9:29-32).

Israel's Fast

No food or drink from morning to evening; a meal at the end of the day. Time was spent seeking God, crying out to God, and offering sacrifices to God (Jud. 20:24-28).

Nehemiah's Fast

Nehemiah fasted for days. (i.e., 2-3 days) and then ate. During his fast he communed with God, interceded for others with prayer, confessed sin, repented, and sought the Lord's compassion (Neh. 1:1-11).

Isaiah's Fast

Fast from doing wickedness, release people from debts, share your food with the hungry, house and feed the homeless, clothe those without clothing, and refuse to yield to the desires of the flesh (Is. 58:1-12). God responds to this kind of fasting.

Elijah's Fast

This fast consists of only consuming a small portion of bread meat and water twice a day (I Ki. 17:1-16). Time is spent learning how to trust God for one's provisions.

Exodus Fast

No bread, no wine, no strong drink, no shopping for new clothes items; food includes water, light crackers and small portions of meat (Ex. 15:25; 16:4; De. 29:6)



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