

Prayer & Fasting



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- ¹ Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” ³ Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

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- ⁶ When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:
- “By the decree of the king and his nobles:
- Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.” (Jonah 3:1-9)

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- Introduction
- Biblical Examples
- Right Attitude
- Practice
- Conclusions



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Biblical Examples

- Confess and Reflect (Jonah 3:1-9)
- Care about one’s country, nation (Daniel 9:1-4, 21-25)
- Seek future direction (Acts 13:1-3)
- Intercede (Mark 9:29)

Seeking Future Direction

- ¹ Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² 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." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13["]1-3)

Intercession

- **28** After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"
- **29** He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer *and fasting*." (Mark 9:28-29)

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Why Not Mentioned Much?

- Fasting is personal, between God and oneself (Matt 6:16-18)
- Many people think fasting is harmful
- Avoid asceticism and justification by deeds (Matt 4: 1-2)



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- ¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6:16-18)

Harmful to Body?

- People with diabetes or heart disease, pregnant women.
- Feeling hungry is ok
- In the beginning it is hard
- It won't affect your work; work with joy

Right Attitude

- Not using fasting and prayer to manipulate God's answer to prayer
- Deny one's desires; purify one's spirit and heart to pursue spiritual things
- Being led by God from the beginning to the end
- Rejoice, resist temptation

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Three kinds of prayer

- Absolute Fast (Esther 4:16)
- Regular Fast (Matt 4:2)
- Partial Fast (Daniel 10:3)



Absolute Fast

- "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16)

Partial Fast

- ² At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. (Daniel 10:2-3)



Frequency of Fasting

- Often
- Occasionally
- When there is a special need



Cultivate the Habit

- Do not eat too much before and after the fast
- Have fruit and vegetable in the beginning and the end of fast
- 24 hours, from afternoon to afternoon, not having two main meals
- 36 hours, not having 3 main meals

Feelings During Fasting

- First three days not feeling well
- The fourth day, less hungry, faint, feel worst
- The sixth to the seventh day, regain energy, concentration
- The ninth and tenth day, spirit lively again, all the toxics gone
- The twenty-first to the fortieth day, hunger will come back again
- When resuming eating, gradually add the portion

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