



Fasting

Fasting is the self-denial of normal necessities in order to intentionally attend to God in prayer. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer. This physical awareness of emptiness is the reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy.

Explore: To let go of an appetite in order to seek God on matters of deep concern for others, yourself, and the world.

Scripture: ○ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting ...But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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

Includes: ○ Abstaining from food, drink, shopping, etc. to intentionally be with God.
○ Abstaining for media: TV, radio, music, email, cell phones, and computers to allow space for listening to the voice of God.
○ Seeking strength to persevere, obey and serve.
○ Addressing excessive attachments or appetites and the entitlements behind them, and partnering with God for changing habits.

Fruits: ○ Freeing up more time for prayer.
○ Letting small deprivations remind you of Jesus’ great sacrifice.
○ Repenting on self-indulgent, addictive, or compulsive behaviors.

Important guidelines for Fasting: Do not fast when you are sick, traveling, or have health concerns. Do not fast if you are in a hurry or wanting immediate results regarding a decision. Do not break fast with a huge meal or over indulging yourself to quickly. Go slow.

Methods for Fasting:

To deepen your understanding of how Jesus denied himself and embraced suffering and death for you, practice fasting intentionally. When the fasting is difficult, share your thoughts and feelings with Jesus. What does Jesus say to you?

1. Fast one meal a week. Spend your mealtime in prayer. Talk to Jesus about what his self-denial means to you.
2. For a period of one week, fast from media, sports, shopping, reading, or use of the computer. Dedicate the time you now have to God. What feels arise in you. What thoughts interrupt your prayer?
3. Make two lists: one of needs, the other of wants. Ask God to show you where to fast from some of your wants. Offer God the time you spend hankering after your wants.
4. Abstain from purchasing morning coffee or daily sodas or evening TV. Offer the money or time to God.