

or regularly on a particular day of the week.

√ **All food for a period of time**

Leaving off all food for a specific period of time. Be certain that your health is good enough for this type of fast. (Any food fast should be considered carefully.)

√ **All food and drink for a period of time**

While this kind of fast, usually for a day or so, can be very useful, it is also the most dangerous, because the human body cannot function without water for very long.

√ **Limited food and drink**

Again, this fast is done for a period of time. Ezekiel went on an extended fast of this type. If we understand the measures correctly, however, Ezekiel was miraculously sustained through his fast.

√ **Limiting entertainment or reading**

Limiting movies, television viewing, or the type of books that one reads can help focus your mind on spiritual things.

The key to the best type of fast is to discover what helps you focus on God. That is the best fast for you.

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**What do I do  
about Fasting?**

# What do I do about

# FASTING?

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"  
— Isaiah 58:6-7



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***Tell the leaders and people to come together at the temple.  
Order them to go without eating and to pray sincerely. – Joel 1:14***

**What is fasting?**

In the Bible fasting refers to restricting one's diet, including refraining from eating and drinking entirely. As Isaiah says in the text quoted on the front of this pamphlet, fasting can include other activities that are done for God.

In modern times, fasting has been extended to include giving up other activities that are part of one's routine, generally things that one enjoys.

Some types of fasts include not eating for one or more meals, not eating and drinking for a short period of time (always consider your health), leaving off certain types of entertainment (an evening with the TV turned off, and limiting your diet such as not eating sweets, or drinking soft drinks. These are only a few examples.

**What is the purpose? Is it just to get God's attention so He will answer my prayer?**

You already have God's attention—God doesn't have any trouble keeping up with what people are

doing. But fasting does have to do with helping us get closer to God, mostly by focusing our attention on God.

The fast that God chooses, as discussed in Isaiah 58, has to do with treating other people appropriately and carrying out God's mission. If we are not right with God, fasting is not going to persuade Him to do things He would not otherwise do.

What fasting can do is help us focus on God and bring ourselves more into tune with what God wants us to do.

In a fast, when you think of the thing you have given up, it should be a remainder to focus your attention on God and to listen for God's will. Sometimes God's will might be for you to quit fasting, and take some form of action.

**What is the relationship between fasting, prayer, and actions?**

In prayer we tell God how we are feeling and thinking and what we want. Prayer, in the sense of speaking to God, should include time for listening to God's will. Fasting is especially useful in focusing us on

God's will and on how we can come closer to God's plan for us. The primary impact of fasting is on our listening to what the Holy Spirit wants to communicate to us.

**I have health problems that the doctor says I must eat and take my medication routinely. I want to fast but I am not sure I should.**

Do not fast if there is a question of health. If you want to find something to help you focus on God find something that you can leave off that does not threaten your health. Cooperate with your physician. If you have questions about the wisdom of fasting, consult your physician and also your pastor or someone who helps keep you accountable.

**Give some examples of types of fasts.**

√ ***One or two meals***

This is the most common type of fast. Some people will fast a single meal in a day, or fast from the morning until some time in the afternoon or evening. This can be done either a single time,