

# BIBLICAL FASTING

## REFRAINING FROM FOOD FOR A SPIRITUAL PURPOSE.

According to the Bible, there are three duties of every Christian: give, pray and fast. **Biblical fasting** takes a lot of discipline and strength—strength which you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, says Matthew 6.

When you give God your first through fasting, prayer and giving at the beginning of the year, you set the course for the entire year.

### Why should I fast?

1. Are you in need of healing or a miracle?
2. Do you need the tender touch of God in your life?
3. Is there a dream inside you that only He can make possible?
4. Are you in need of a fresh encounter?
5. Do you desire a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord?
6. Are you seeking a heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?
7. Do you need to break away from bondages that have been holding you?
8. Is there a friend or loved one that needs Salvation?
9. Do you desire to know God's will for your life?

### BIBLICAL FASTING FOCUS

Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:9-14

Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word: 1 Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, Nehemiah 1:4, Daniel 9:3, 20, Joel 2:12, Luke 2:37, Acts 10:30, Acts 13:2

Corporate Fasting: 1 Samuel 7:5-6, Ezra 8:21-23, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16, Jonah 3:5-10, Acts 27:33-37

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking God to which He responds with a blessing (Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 14:12, 1 Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast!

**How to Begin** Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you *fasting*? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible.

**Preparing Spiritually** Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your

life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

**Deciding What to Fast** The type of fasting you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats, and the only liquid he drank was water. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

**Deciding How Long** You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

**What to Expect** When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

**How to End** Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.