

# Fasting & Prayer...

## *When, Why & How To Fast?*

*...saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting... Joel 2:12*

● There are many who have seriously considered adding fasting to their prayer life; but were not quite sure how to go about it.

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

### **#1: State Your Reason.**

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance... etc. Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. He will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Remember, through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so that the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches.

### **#2: Start Reasonably**

A. Physical Preparation - Fasting requires reasonable precautions physically. If you take prescription medications or have a chronic ailment, you should consult your physician before engaging a fast. Physical preparation will make the drastic change in your eating routine easier to cope with so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer. **If fasting is not a consistent routine for you... start slowly:** Fasting a meal and eventually working up to a 48 hour fast. The ideal routine, is to maintain one 24 hour fast every week. Ideally, fasting should begin in the evening.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat lighter meals before starting your fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of water (*half your body weight in ounces each day*) for two days before starting a fast.

B. Spiritual Preparation - The key to fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare spiritually:

- Ask God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23)
- Confess every sin the Holy Spirit calls to your attention and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Seek Forgiveness from all you have knowingly offended and forgive all who have hurt you.
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.
- Yield your mind and body and spirit to the Lordship and leadership of Christ (Romans 12:1,2)
- Meditate on the attributes of God: His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, and holiness.
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Heb. 11:6). **9. Do not underestimate spiritual opposition (Galatians 5:16,17)**

### **#3: Stay Resolved**

Jesus instructed that all of His followers should fast (Mt. 6:16-18; 9:14,15). For Christ, it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would.

### **#4: Starting Your Fast**

Your time of fasting and prayer has come. You are abstaining from all solid foods and have begun to seek the Lord. Here are some helpful suggestions to consider:

- Avoid medication, even natural herbal drugs and homeopathic remedies.
- Limit your physical activities.
- Rest as much as your schedule will allow.
- Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety.
- Remember to **ALWAYS** keep your Bible open. **An open Bible leads to an open and obedient heart. This is the sole purpose of fasting and prayer.**

### **#5: Stopping Your Fast**

When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you end your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being. Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately. Try several smaller meals or snacks to start. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health both physically and spiritually.

Finally, If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and meditate on God's Word; you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). You will find yourself to be mentally, physically, and spiritually renewed (Romans 12:1,2).

**Ultimately, the key to prayer and fasting is a sound confidence in the Word of God. Making the study of God's Word a priority will enable you to pray effectively.**