



TRUE VINE BAPTIST

C H U R C H

2023

ELEVATE

2023 Consecration

Purpose and Vision Guide

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Notice Before Fasting

“Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16, KJV).

As believers we should exercise wisdom in all things. Due to health restrictions, some people may not be able to complete every aspect of the fast. Please consult with your doctor before entering this fast. At a minimum, go as far as your health will allow.

New Year greetings True Vine!

2023 is here!!

The arrival of a *new* year (not just *another* year) brings a great opportunity to renew our faith and love for Jesus Christ. It's all about Him! It's also a wonderful time to renew the joy of salvation in our hearts, as a new creation in Christ. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). King David said during a time of great personal and national crisis, *"Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me"* (Psalm 51:10).

Whether 2022 brought personal success, fulfillment, and joy, or you faced grief, setbacks, and struggle, you can look ahead to 2023 with expectation and hope. Jeremiah 29:11 tells us *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* God's promise has no expiration date. He still has good plans for us even in bad times.

I believe that we are poised to see God's will manifested as we understand, and move into the next level spiritually, physically, emotionally, economically, and ecumenically. Last year we asked the Lord to BREAKOUT. We were tested as never before, God even exposed things that needed to be refortified in Him. Now the Lord is challenging us ELEVATE. This is so that we may sync with the good plans He's already blessed. He has promised what eyes haven't seen, and what ears haven't heard, and what has never before entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him!

As we embark into this endeavor to embrace and realize the personal and corporate vision of God, we need to stay alert, and spiritually prepared for the powerful distractions and deterrents great visionaries like Isaiah, Joseph, Martin Luther King, and so many other men of Faith confronted. When fulfilling things that elevate you and the future of your children, we will face spiritual Uzziahs, haters, and the status quo. In a sense, we will face an enemy that prefers that you stay broken and common.

To fulfill vision it requires preparation, sacrifice, focus, commitment, and will. As Christ suffered to create righteousness for us, we will volunteer to suffer to

have a greater relationship with Him and to establish and fulfill a multi-generational vision to putting God at the head of our lives by putting him back on the throne of our hearts. To prepare for our year to ELEVATE, we will fast over the next 14 weeks as our spiritual response to God's call.

ELEVATE Vision

In 2023, the Lord is challenging True Vine to ELEVATE. To elevate means *to raise or lift something up to a higher position or to a more prominent or more impactful level*. Under the Old Testament law, the priests would hold up (elevate) a sacrifice to devote it wholly to God. For us to move spiritually and programmatically in the realm of God for this season, we must raise our level of devotion. True Vine must elevate in every area of our commitment and attention to the things of God. This is a year for renewed focus and concentration. Therefore, this guide is laid out to us by the Holy Spirit as divine confirmation, and as a directive for how to ELEVATE through the spiritual blueprint of prayer, fasting, and consecration.

Many major moves of God involved elevation in the spiritual sense of the word. Moses went up (elevate) into the mountain to receive the 10 Commandments. That was a major move. Abraham had to elevate to leave his family and go into a far country to become the father of faith. That was a major move. David had to elevate to face the giant Goliath and defeat him with lesser weapons. That was a major move. Ruth had to elevate to follow Naomi into a foreign country with unfriendly laws and rules. That was a major move.

Daniel had to elevate to keep his windows up in public prayer against the corrupt rules and politics of a hostile pagan government. That was a major move. Joshua had to elevate to march around the walls of Jericho for seven consecutive days in the face of his enemies. That was a major move. Nehemiah had to elevate to confront the broken-down walls of Jerusalem and rebuild them in 52 days. That was a major move.

Gideon had to elevate to fight off the Midianites who were stealing their promised blessings. That was a major move. In Revelation the voice of God called John up into the throne room of heaven (elevate) to receive the end time visions. That was a major move. Paul wrote that we are to *“forget those things behind and*

press toward the mark for the prize of the higher calling of God” . Jesus told many He healed to “rise, take up your bed, and walk” .

Over 2000 years ago, Jesus himself had to elevate to a rugged cross on Calvary to die for our sins and bring us back to God. But now it’s our time to ELEVATE!

- Elevate our families
- Elevate our community
- Elevate our children
- Elevate our faith
- Elevate our dreams and visions
- Elevate our relationships
- Elevate our ministries
- Elevate our businesses
- Elevate our health
- Elevate our worship
- Elevate our faith in God

Anointing and Consecration Service

To elevate, we will begin the year with an Anointing and Consecration Service. In Joshua 3 verses 1-5, as the Israelites embarked upon moving into a new season, Joshua was told to *“sanctify the people”* (v.5). To sanctify means to set apart for a divine use and work. This *setting apart* is consecration. True Vine, God is calling us to ELEVATE to use us and work through us to expand His kingdom. What a wonderful privilege and honor! But *“to whom much is given much is required”* (Luke 12:48).

After this service on January 1, over the next 14 weeks, we will set aside each Monday to fast and pray from midnight the previous day to 3pm. 14 in the bible is a number of commitment and dedication.

⁶ And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. Exodus 12:6 (KJV)

In Exodus 12:6, the Lord instructed Moses to have each family select a lamb and keep it for 14 days before sacrificing it and putting the blood over their doorposts. This 14-day time period spiritually speaking would ensure the Israelites were fully committed, engaged, and invested with what God was about to do.

14 continuous Mondays will prove our sincerity and commitment. The bible says, *“faith without works is dead”* (James 2:17). Anyone can do something a few times but not be truly dedicated and performing it with all their heart. God is a jealous God and wants *“all our heart”*. 14 is also a number of determination and decisiveness. It means we will be fully engaged, visually alert, and compassionately committed to this higher call to ELEVATE. It says Lord, my storage is empty, and I am available to you!

Fasting resonates and galvanizes us on a deeper level. What we do consistently helps us to do continuously. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that helps us practice holy habits. When we practice holy habits, you can't help but stay spiritually intune with what God is doing.

The bible places a high priority in both the Old and New Testaments on *seeking God* in new seasons. 1 Chronicles 16:11 says *“Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.”* Jesus said from His own lips, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33). True Vine is a ministry that understands the value, purpose, and power of monitoring the heartbeat of God in every season. ELEVATE is our purpose and vision for seeking God this year.

In February of 2022, we began the *“Heart for the Harvest”* prayer call. A church-wide evangelism campaign of calling in each Saturday at 8:00 am and praying for the lost for 30 minutes. As a result, we saw the hand of God move mightily and visibly in our church and community with over 105 new members (not counting children) joining our ministry to put their faith in Jesus or further their walk with Jesus. We saw our Food Pantry soar to greater heights even post pandemic, serving over 4,500 families with essential and supplemental food items. Our media ministry updated our digital technology platforms to present a better online, virtual experience. Our grant funding ministry was able to secure funding to install new lighting in the main sanctuary, build a fence around the cemetery, and install automatic gates complete with keypads, at the entrances to

What are we doing? Prayer with fasting for 14 days over 14 weeks every Monday. Fasting is a temporary act of self-denial. By going without food for a brief period of time we become more aware of our need of God. We in a sense “awaken spiritually”.

*“As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” **Nehemiah 1:4***

Why are we doing it? As an act of faith and self-denial to draw closer to God. During times of fasting we focus our attention on God, and on his promise to sustain our faith. Thus fasting is a demonstration of our humility and dependence on God. By focusing more critically on God we get to know Him as if it was the first time! We get to know Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Shammah, Jehovah Rapha all over again in a fresh and exciting way!

*“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” **James 4:8 (KJV)***

Why Should You Fast?

Fasting helps us enjoy Jesus! There is never a moment in our spiritual walk that we aren't experiencing Jesus in some way or another. But there are gaps in those experiences where we are not enjoying the Jesus we are experiencing. David says something meaningful in the Psalm 51:12, “Restore unto me the joy of my salvation”. Friends, it's possible to have Jesus and not be enjoying every moment with Jesus!

As far-fetched as that may sound for you, it just may be an accurate description of the state of Christianity post-covid 19. We are finding it more challenging than ever to fit all of God into our busy schedules and jam-packed itineraries. Even the most organized and disciplined struggle in this generation with social media overload while balancing ministry, family, and community. But God in his eternal love, wisdom, and foreknowledge knew we would have these challenges in every generation. For this reason, God has set forward in His Holy Word the principle of prayer and fasting.

³ Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. ⁴ Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high. ⁵ Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? ⁶ *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? **Isaiah 58:3–6 (KJV)**

We fast to unlock divine resources or to strengthen our relationship with God. Isaiah 58 mentions a number of resources available. To mention a few: protection, revelation, provision, revival, God’s presence, deliverance, and much more.

In the Old Testament, the word “fasting” in the Hebrew meant, “to cover your mouth”. In the New Testament, it means, “not to eat”. Therefore, biblical fasting cannot be anything other than not eating. Fasting from television, radio, or other things cannot be considered biblical fasting. It could only be seen as abstinence. We cannot discount the significance and the spiritual benefits you get from abstaining, but we cannot mistakenly call it fasting.

Fasting is one of the Spirit’s tools for strengthening and transforming grace in our lives. This spiritual practice is a gift from God meant to grow us and draw us into a deepening relationship with Him. If you do not already know this power and the importance of fasting, here are some insights drawn from God’s Word and personal experience to get you started:

- Fasting was an expected practice in both the Old and New Testament eras. For example, Moses fasted for at least two recorded 40-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast. He said, “When you fast,” not, “If you fast” (**Matthew 6:16**).

- Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of your “first love” for the Lord (**Revelation 2:4**) and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.
- Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God (Ezra 8:21). King David said, “I ... humbled myself with fasting” (**Psalms 35:13**, New International Version).
- Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance and a transformed life (**Psalms 34:18**).
- Through fasting, the Holy Spirit will imprint God’s Word deeper on your heart, and His truth will become more meaningful to you (**Exodus 31:18**).
- Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience (**Jude 1:20**).
- Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival and make you a channel of life change to others (**Luke 4:14**).

If you fast, you will find yourself being humbled, but closer to God. You will discover more time to pray and seek God’s face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sin, you will experience God’s grace to grow and mature you. You will ELEVATE!

Notes

Biblical Fasts

1. The Esther Fast- three day fast (no food or no water) for God’s favor (Esther 4:6). In times of trouble or great crisis, we should not fall apart. We should rise up against the enemy.

2. The Daniel Fast – a 21-Day Fast – Consisting of only vegetables, fruit, and water. – Daniel 10:2-3, Daniel 10:10-11, 14

3. The Self-Examination Fast - the one-day fast – Leviticus 23:27. This is the type of fast indicated in Jeremiah 36:6. Before the Day of Atonement, God’s people went through a one-day fast for self examination and consecration.

4. The Fast before the battle – Judges 20. In this passage, we see God’s people consulting God for a battle. God permitted them on two occasions to go into battle and they lost 40,000 soldiers in each pursuit. On the third approach, they fasted and gave burnt offerings. God then gave them the victory. We should never go into battle without fasting first.

5. Fasting to lift the judgment of God. 1 Kings 21:27-29

6. Fasting for healing – Isaiah 58 6-9. In this passage, you will find the quote, “Your healing will spring forth speedily.

7. The Domination Fast – The forty-day fast – Matthew 4. Jesus fasted 40 days before starting His ministry.

Notes

20 Blessings to Fasting

1. Fasting breaks every yoke of the enemy including sin. Isaiah 58:6; Isaiah 10:27

Isaiah 58:6 - "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

2. Fasting strengthens your inner self with might, keeping you spiritually fit.

Ephesians 3:16 – "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

3. Fasting builds and stimulates your faith, making your progress unstoppable and undeniable before your enemies.

Jude 1:20 – "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."

4. Fasting helps in our alignment with the perfect divine will of God. It stops your lack of knowledge; being the ultimate assistance in prayer and helping all things work together for good.

Romans 8:26-28 - "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

5. Fasting magnifies God and enlarges your perception of God's power in your life.

Matthew 17:1–2 - "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."

6. Fasting is the channel through which God brings spiritual refreshing and rest.

Isaiah 28:11-12 – "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear."

7. Fasting helps you develop intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:2, 18 (Message) – "If you praise him in the private language of Tongues, God understands you but no one else does, for you are sharing intimacies just between you and him... I'm grateful to God for the gift of praying in Fasting that he gives us for praising him, which leads to wonderful intimacies we enjoy with him. I enter into this as much or more than any of you."

8. Fasting will give you access to revelation knowledge.

1 Corinthians 2:9-12 – "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

9. Fasting gives a door of utterance and boldness in preaching and teaching.

Acts 2:16-19 – "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke."

10. Fasting sows to the Spirit.

Galatians 6:8 – "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

11. Fasting causes the release of angels since communications provoke movement and action.

Daniel 10:12 - "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."

12. Fasting is the beginning of being led by the Spirit, living supernaturally in a natural world.

Romans 8:14-16 - "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

13. Fasting opens the heavens and charges the atmosphere, preparing it for a release of the shekinah glory.

Act 4:31 - "31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness."

14. Fasting empowers faith-filled words and anointing-filled words to dominate the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:2 – "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

15. Fasting rekindles the fire of God in your life.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 – "Quench not the Spirit."

Matthew 3:11-12 – "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

16. Fasting taps into the wellspring of life within each of us.

John 4:14 – "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

17. Fasting is the ignition to walking in the power of God, being endued with dunamis (dynamite) power from on high.

Acts 1:8 – "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

18. Fasting releases rivers of living water flowing out of you.

John 7:38 – "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

19. Fasting helps us to remain obedient to the heavenly vision.

Acts 26:19 KJV - "19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:"

20. Fasting gives us victories beyond our earthly resources.

2 Chronicles 20:3, 17 KJV - "3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ... 17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you."

Helpful Bible Verses

When Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness, he resisted temptation by quoting the word of God. When we fast, we demonstrate our need for the spiritual sustenance that God provides.

Matthew 4:4 (KJV)

⁴ But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

John 6:35 (KJV)

³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Luke 5:33–35 (KJV)

³³ And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? ³⁴ And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Galatians 5:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

How we are to fast

Matthew 6:16–18 (KJV)

¹⁶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ¹⁷ But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; ¹⁸ That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

When we are to fast

Matthew 9:14–15 (KJV)

¹⁴ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? ¹⁵ And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

2 Chronicles 7:12–14 (KJV)

¹² And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. ¹³ If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; ¹⁴ If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Fasting and Intercessory Prayer

2 Chronicles 20:1–4 (KJV)

¹ It came to pass after this also, *that* the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. ² Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in Hazazontamar, which *is* Engedi. ³ And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

Daniel 9:2–5 (KJV)

² In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. ³ And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

⁴ And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; ⁵ We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

Ezra 8:23 (KJV)

²³ So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

Mark 9:25–29 (KJV)

²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.* ²⁶ And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. ²⁸ And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? ²⁹ And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Fasting to Accompany Repentance

When you fast, you show that you have nothing to offer but your own weakness. You humble yourself before God and make known to Him your need for

forgiveness and redemption. Fasting thus becomes a way to express sorrow for sin, a means of humbling ourselves as we acknowledge our utter inadequacy before God, who alone is worthy of our adoration and worship.

Joel 2:12–14 (KJV)

¹² Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: ¹³ And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. ¹⁴ Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

Jonah 3:5–9 (KJV)

⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. ⁶ For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. ⁹ Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

Other Examples of Fasting in Scripture

Moses

Exodus 34:27–28 (KJV)

²⁷ And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. ²⁸ And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor

drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Deuteronomy 9:18–19 (KJV)

¹⁸ And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. ¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

The Army of Israel

Judges 20:26 (KJV)

²⁶ Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

1 Samuel 31:11–13 (KJV)

¹¹ And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; ¹² All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. ¹³ And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

2 Samuel 12:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

Psalms 69:9–10 (KJV)

⁹ For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. ¹⁰ When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

Hannah

1 Samuel 1:6–7 (KJV)

⁶And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. ⁷And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

1 Samuel 1:17–20 (KJV)

¹⁷Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. ¹⁸And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.

¹⁹And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

Elijah

1 Kings 19:7–8 (KJV)

⁷And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee. ⁸And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

New Testament Fasting

Anna, a prophetess

Luke 2:36–37 (KJV)

³⁶ And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷ And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

Jesus Christ

Luke 4:1–2 (KJV)

¹ And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days, he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Apostle Paul

Acts 9:8–9 (KJV)

⁸ And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Cornelius

Acts 10:30 (KJV)

³⁰ And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Church at Antioch

Acts 13:1–2 (KJV)

¹ Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 14:23 (KJV)

²³ And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

1 Corinthians 7:5 (KJV)

⁵ Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

2 Corinthians 6:5 (KJV)

⁵ In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

Acts 27:33 (KJV)

³³ And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

Motivation for Fasting

If you are seeking a closer walk with God, consider fasting. Throughout Scripture, fasting refers to abstaining from food, or food and drink, for spiritual purposes. Fasting is more than a diet adjustment; it involves spiritual intensity and intercession. Fasting should always be accompanied with prayer, meditation, and Bible study.

We should never be motivated by the mistaken idea that our fasting will move God to do what we want. Even if we wanted to, we could never manipulate God. *The purpose of our fasting is to move us closer to God and to seek His will in our lives.*

Only fasting that is done with the right motive, that of glorifying God, can be pleasing in His sight.

- Isaiah chapter 58 "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? ... Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure ... ye fast for strife and debate ... ye shall not fast as ye do this day ... Is it such a fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands ... to undo the heavy burdens ... to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ..."
- Zechariah 7:5-6 "... When ye fasted and mourned ... those 70 years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me?"
- Matthew 6:16-18 "The hypocrites ... disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast."
- Luke 18:9-14 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I am not as other men are ... I fast twice in the week ..."

The same Bible that teaches abstaining from foods (as God leads) also warns us against testing the Lord (Matthew 4:7).

- Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:9), and we are to care for them as such (v. 20).

- It may indeed be profitable for a season for us to exercise severe discipline, to "keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I Corinthians 9 :27), to be "temperate in all things" (I Corinthians 9 :25), but we must also realize that "that which is flesh is flesh," and we cannot produce spiritual results – however sincere our intentions – from that which is purely flesh.
- To deny the flesh of its natural desires may cause us to be more "in tune" to hear the voice of the Lord (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25, etc.), but it also places us in a realm more easily prone to the attack of the enemy. It was when Jesus had been fasting for 40 days that He was faced with the greatest Satanic attack (Matthew 4:1-3; Luke 4:1-2).

One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is becoming more aware of our own inadequacies and God's adequacy; becoming more aware of our own failings and His self-sufficiency. The purpose of all disciplines, including fasting, is to change us so that we may become more Christ-like. Fasting helps us to listen to what God wants us to be and do.

The list of biblical personages who fasted reads like a *Who's Who* of Scripture. For example: Moses the lawgiver, David the king, Elijah the prophet, Esther the queen, Daniel the advisor to kings, Anna the prophetess, Paul the apostle, and Jesus Christ the incarnate Son.

1st key passage: Matthew 6:16-18

Does Jesus command fasting, or does He only comment on how to fast properly? What should we do and how should we look when fasting? Why?

One key to fasting is motivation. What are the differences in motivation between truly seeking God and fasting to gain power or admiration?

2nd key passage: Matthew 9:14-15

Did Jesus expect His disciples to fast after He was gone?

It is said that fasting brings us closer to God. Could this be one of the reasons Jesus said His disciples would fast after He would no longer be with them? What are other reasons?

3rd key passage: Isaiah 58:3-10

In this passage, Isaiah tells us that the Jews were fasting, but God was not answering their requests. Why not? What kind of fast does God want?

When people turn from mistreating others, to helping them with their needs, does that in itself count as fasting? Are we to obey when we fast, obey before we fast, or obey instead of fasting?

Is fasting a way to get God to answer our prayers? Will fasting solve our problems? Will it lead to more effective evangelism? Does it solve humanitarian problems? What does God promise to do if His people fast in the right way? Will we gain power over sin?

Some may wish to share how God has answered their prayers when they were fasting for His intervention.

Fasting reminds us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” ([Matthew 4:4](#)). Food does not sustain us; God sustains us.

– Richard J. Foster

When we fast and pour our heart out to God, it’s been said that He gives us His “eyes” to see the situation or the problem as it really exists. How is this beneficial to us?

During the fast, why is it helpful to read various portions of Scripture that may apply to our situation and then meditate on them?

Challenge for growth

The next time you feel the need to fast for any spiritual reason, please consider these benefits that fasting produces: 1) spiritual examination and introspection; 2) spiritual confession; 3) spiritual intercession. In what way does fasting help us pray for others?

How long should I fast?

- Bible personalities fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they desired (see the examples of Hannah, I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; and Paul, Acts 9:9,17-19) – or until the Lord made it evident that what they requested simply would not be obtained (as in the case of David, II Samuel 12:15-23).
- The length of a fast may vary.
 - One night. Daniel 6:18
 - One day. I Samuel 7:6 II Samuel 1:12; 3:35 Judges 20:26
 - Three days and three nights. Esther 4:16 Acts 9:9, 17-19
 - Seven days. I Samuel 31:13 II Samuel 12:16-23
 - Fourteen days. Acts 27:33-34
 - Twenty-one days. Daniel 10:3-13
 - Forty days.
 - Moses (at two different times). Exodus 24:18; 34:28
Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10
 - Elijah. I Kings 19:8
 - Jesus. Matthew 4:2 (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2)

Notes

Prepare for the Fast

These are a few things you need to do to prepare yourself and your household for fasting:

- 1. Establish a place and a time where you can pray.** Prayer is critical while fasting; it is the time where you will experience breakthrough and have what the Lord is saying to you.
- 2. Plan to be tempted with food or drink.** Be attentive of the places you go on the day of your fast. This will be the day someone brings lunch to the office. But make up in your mind beforehand to stick with it!
- 3. Establish a time for reading and meditating on the Word.** Read the Word and think through what you have read.
- 4. Your goal is closeness with God.** Do not let the legalistic aspect of the fast crowd out the relational aspect.
- 5. You must refrain from critical speaking,** spreading negative words about or to anyone. If you have friends that tempt you into this lifestyle, then you must plan to take a break from them.
- 6. Limit watching and listening to the TV and Radio;** Focusing on religious and educational shows, rather than things that could possibly cloud your judgment.
- 7. Establish a form of accountability** during your fast, either a prayer partner or another person in the fast.
- 8. Check your mind at all times.** Remember if it means nothing to you, then it will mean nothing to God. If you do not combine your fasting with prayer and the Word, it will mean nothing more than dieting.

Major hindrances to prayer - Dr. Myles Monroe (Power and Purpose of Prayer)

1. Sin - (James 1:21-22) tells us how prevalent it is that we must acknowledge our sins and our fallen nature. This state of mankind causes many problems and misunderstandings regarding our faith, obedience, and prayer. When sin, especially willful sin is in your life, God will not hear you. (John 3:22, 1 John 2:1)

2. Fear - (1 John 4:18) Fear is a significant hindrance for us because it keeps us from believing. To operate in the Spirit, there has to be an absence of fear. 1 John 4:8 tells us that there is no perfection in fear. Fear will keep you in sin and keep our understanding of the nature and the work of God from our hearts (Romans 5:8-9; Matt 18:21-22; Isaiah 43:25; and 2 Tim 1:7)

3. Guilt - Guilt is related to fear of not being forgiven. When we live in a constant sense of not being forgiven, we deny the power of God in our lives. (Romans 8:1-2) Explains that there is no condemnation for those in Christ. We can have confidence in this because of Hebrew 8:12, God says He will forgive and forget our sins.

4. Feeling of inferiority - We can hinder our prayers when we feel we are not worthy to receive an answer from God. We will only have a low opinion of ourselves when we do not understand how God sees us. (Ephesians 1:4-11) Explains how God sees us. Understanding that we are chosen by God changes our interaction with God. Hebrew 4:16 tells us to come boldly before the throne of grace.

5. Doubt - (James 1:5-8) We tend to do this after going before God. It is believing that He can while not trusting that He will fulfill His word.

6. Wrong Motives - Since we know that God knows the heart we should understand that our motives are understood by God before we come before Him. James 4:3 Explains that when your supplications are based in lust, we will not get a response from God.

What makes Fasting Useless?

Isaiah 58 also describes the characteristics of a bad fast.

- Fasting for image – it is not for looking religious. Zach 7:5
- Fasting as a merit badge – To get merit with God. Isaiah 58:3
- Fasting to feed a religious spirit – Isaiah 58:3-4
- Fasting to form an illusion of godliness – Isaiah 58:5
- Grind off all religions – Because other religions fast.

When you fast, you will raise up a foundation for many generations. In Ezra 8:21, we find this illustrated. In addition, we see in the passage the powerful reasons for a fast.

- First, we fast to seek direction from God. *God will reveal the right direction to go in when we are in transition. We should never make decisions without a fast first.*
- Secondly, we fast for our children. *In Ezra, the word says that we can raise a foundation for generations through our fasting.*
- Thirdly, we fast for substance. See Ezra 21. *We fast to petition God about our substance, our resources, and our finances. By this, we are affirming that God is the source of our supply. We bring alive the words of the Psalmist declared, “The earth is the Lord’s and fullness there of”.*

18 Confessions for Building Your Faith

1. I am a new creature predestined for greatness. (II Corinthians 5:17)
2. I am a child of God fully accepted by the Father. (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:6)
3. God loves me regardless of how I perform and His love toward me never runs out. (Jeremiah 31:3)
4. My conscience is purged from dead works; I am forgiven and will not be tormented by my past errors. (Isaiah 1:18; Hebrews 9:14; Romans 8:1)
5. I am a giver and God is causing all grace and every favor to come to me in abundance. (II Corinthians 9:8)
6. I have authority over the devil; demons are subject to me through the Name of Jesus. (Luke 10:17)
7. Abundance is God's will for me and I will not settle for less. (John 10:10)
8. I am healed; sickness does not have dominion over my body. (I Peter 2:24)
9. God is on my side; I will not fear. (Psalm 118:6) Pastor Stanley James Battlefield of the Mind Bible Study 12/5/2018
10. The Holy Spirit is my Helper; I am never alone; I have the peace of God. (John 14:18; Philippians 4:7)
11. I am blessed with all spiritual blessings; things are happening for my good even as I speak. (Ephesians 1:3)

12. What I see now is only temporary and subject to change. (II Corinthians 4:18)

13. I have the wisdom of God; I hear the Father's voice and the voice of a stranger I will not follow. (John 10:3-5)

14. I am set in the Body of Christ and I know that I am valuable and significant to the work of God and His plan in the earth. (I Corinthians 12:20-25; Ephesians 4:11,12)

15. I choose not to be offended and I am delivered out of all afflictions and persecutions. (Matthew 5:10-12)

16. I have favor with God and man. (Proverbs 3:4; Luke 2:52)

17. I know what is in man so that I don't receive the praise of man therefore I'm not offended. (2 Corinthians 5:16; Acts 24:16)

18. Because I have the undivided attention of the true Shepherd, nothing is missing, nothing is broken, and nothing is lacking in my life. (John 10:10)



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