

# Prayer & Petitions Fasting Guide

## Reasons for fasting

Jesus fasted (Matt. 4:19), said He expected His followers to fast, and gave guidance on fasting (Matt 6:16–18, Matt 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33). Additionally, in Scripture whole communities have prayed seeking God's forgiveness, wisdom and protection (for examples read 2 Chron 20, Ezra 8, Neh 1, Jonah 3).

## Purpose of fasting

It is a way to humble ourselves before God and declare our need.

Physical hunger puts us in touch with our human needs and longings

- reveals our spiritual needs and hunger for God
- reveals sin so we can confess and repent of it, be healed and restored to right relationship with God
- increases our hunger for God to meet our longings

*\* Fasting is not a way to manipulate God into answering our prayers or a "sure bet" to get a strongly desired outcome (even a spiritual one).*

## What do to during a fast

Try picking a verse at the beginning of the day to think about when you are skipping food.

- Take moments when you are hungry to be aware of God's presence and ask Him for what you need as it comes to mind (in the car, in a meeting at the office, in line at the store).
- Some people prefer to pray toward the end of the fast, when hunger pains are greatest.

During the time you would normally eat a meal, retreat to a quiet place. Try reading some Scripture, singing or listening to hymns or worship songs, asking God what you or others need, and spending time listening. Consider use the prayer devotional that has been provided for the day of fasting.

As you are able, use your body to express your prayer: kneeling, arms raised, etc.

## Songs for worship during a fast

[Be Thou My Vision](#) Fernando Ortega  
[Do It Again](#) Elevation Worship  
[Glory and Grace](#) Erik Nieder  
[Let There Be Light](#) Jesus Culture  
[My Hope Is Built / The Solid Rock](#) Norton Hall Band  
[New Wine](#) Hillsong  
[Simple Gospel](#) United Pursuit

## Practical hints for first-time fasters

Make a plan for eating something healthy before you enter the fast and after you break the fast.

Drink a lot of water!

If this is your first fast, it might be good to start with a liquid fast (abstaining from food but drinking liquids such as water, milk, fruit juice or vegetable juice).

If you feel you need to break your fast earlier than expected, just thank God for the time you had and for the food. He knows our bodies and values any step of obedience we offer.

The point is to seek God, not to do things a certain way or have a certain experience.

## Other helpful resources on fasting

*Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster—see Chapter 4 *Fasting*

[A Hunger for God](#) by John Piper

[A Personal Guide to Fasting](#) by Bill Bright

