



**Fasting is voluntarily abstaining from food for spiritual reasons.**

*"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

*Matthew 6:16*

*But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,  
Matthew 6:17*

*so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

*Matthew 6:18*

In Jewish tradition, fasting symbolized mourning, submission, and humility, with Yom Kippur as the only biblically mandated fast and additional fasts commemorating the Temple's destruction.

In the Second Temple period, fasting was linked to asceticism and seeking visions, as seen in Tobit 12:8 and 1 Maccabees 3:47.

Pharisees fasted twice weekly on market days, seeking public admiration through outward displays of devotion (Lk 18:12; Mt 6:16).

**1. Jesus did not command fasting but anticipated that His followers would fast, saying, "When you fast," not "if you fast."**

### **The Types of Fasting**

- Absolute Fast: A complete fast without food or water.
- Normal Fast: Abstaining from all food but drinking water.
- Partial Fast: Avoiding specific foods like meat and sweets, focusing on simple foods.

### **The Length of a Fast**

- **1 Day:** A 24-hour fast for repentance (Lev 23:27; 1 Sam 7:6).
- **3 Days:** Esther and Paul fasted three days (Es 4:16; Acts 9:9).
- **7 Days:** Jabesh-Gilead mourned Saul's death (1 Sam 31:13).
- **21 Days:** Daniel abstained from rich foods (Dan 10:2–3).
- **40 Days:** Moses, Elijah, and Jesus fasted (Ex 34:28; 1 Ki 19:8; Mt 4:1–2).

Jesus did not specify the length or type of fasting but emphasized sincerity over appearance.

Consider sacrifice, wisdom, and conviction when deciding your fast.

**2. Fasting is relational, not ritualistic, as it is directed to the Father.**



Jesus saw fasting as transformational, not transactional, emphasizing intimacy with the Father over the act itself.

Fasting doesn't bring God's presence; it makes us more aware of His presence.

Our identity is the foundation of our intimacy, but our intentionality shapes the experience of that intimacy (Jn 1:12-13; James 4:8)

### **3. Fasting, though practiced in private, brings rewards that are made public.**

The Triad of Piety consists of almsgiving (Mt 6:4), prayer (Mt 6:6), and fasting (Mt 6:18).

Prayer, fasting, and giving help in the battle against pride, greed, and lust (1 Jn 2:16).

Prayer, fasting, and giving help to build godly disciplines that lead to godliness (1 Tim 4:7-8; 1 Cor 9:27).

The rewards of fasting:

- Strengthens prayer (Mt 17:21; Ac 14:23).
- Demonstrates humility (1Ki 21:29; Ps 35:13; Ezr 8:21).
- Expresses grief (1Sa 31:13; 2Sa 1:12; Jl 2:12-13).
- Seeks divine intervention (Ezr 8:23; Est 4:16; 2Ch 20:3).
- Prepares for God's calling (Lk 4:14; Ac 13:2-3).
- Detoxifies the soul and body.

Fasting shifts the body to ketosis, burning fat for energy and aiding detoxification.

Fasting boosts autophagy, recycling damaged cells for energy and promoting health.

Fasting is not a source of power but a means of surrendering to God's power.