

The Joy of Intelligent Fasting Facts Sheet

[How to fast; The length of time to fast; Your reason for fasting]

A person should fast on a regular basis and the fast should not be less than twenty-four hours. Fasting for part of the day, even for many days, is of little benefit. A modified fast is where you eat very small amounts of fruits, vegetables, and grains so the appetite is never satisfied. For those who are new to fasting, I suggest a twenty-four fast each week for several weeks to get use to controlling your hunger.

Then progress to a three-day fast each month, then move on to a seven-day fast every three months, before long you will be able to handle at least one long fast (Twenty-one, thirty, or forty days) annually. I also suggest that three fourths of any fast longer than one be a modified fast and the remaining fourth be liquids only, never fast without water, you will benefit physically, and mentally, and spiritually from following these fast guidelines.

As a rule, the more severe the problem, the longer one should endeavor to fast. In more challenging situations one may need to stay before God longer in order to hear from Him, the regularity of fasts depends upon the person's priority and urgency of need.

The length of a fast should be determined before beginning the fast, do not start a fast hoping to go as long as you can, it is only wise to determine the length of the fast before you start. Fasting for long periods of time can hurt you if you don't have a clear understanding of exactly what to do while on a fast, earlier we discussed the major reasons for fasting, the reason for fasting should be as specific as wanting to hear from God before making a decision about marriage or as general as just wanting to renew intimate fellowship you once shared with God, it should be determined prior to starting because it will direct your prayer and scripture selection.

People who fast on regular basis reduce the challenges of life. Since fasting enhances our relationship with God, people who fast on a regular basis have less trouble with "besetting sins and the weights" problem. The weights I am referring to are the cares of life that so easily beset us. I believe that we would not have as many problems if we constantly kept our temples clean. Failure to cleanse the temple regularly clutters the temple which opens the door to physical and emotional attacks that keep us bound.

Health Concerns

Food deprivation can be dangerous, especially if a person is taking medications. People on any kind of medication, suffering from any chronic diseases like diabetes or lupus should consult your doctor before fasting for any length of time, when people with chronic illness fast to keep the temple clean, their health, conditions improve.

People who suffer from chronic illness can follow a fasting program without depriving themselves of nutrition; multiple supplements can be taken during a fast to aid proper nutrition. A practical reference to vitamins, minerals, herbs, and food supplements can be purchased at any health food store, your doctor should be consulted before fasting or taking supplements.

Personal Decision

Fasting has to be voluntary and personal; a person who does not want to go on a fast should not be forced to do so. If a person feels inconvenienced by fasting at a particular time, he, she should not fast. Fasting without conviction could leave a person in a worse condition because

they did not fast the proper way. I would make such a person vulnerable and possibly rob him of the benefits of fasting. There are some pastors that force members to fast by threatening them, using fear is a form of witchcraft and is used to control members of the church, fasts that are forced on others will cause them problems.

Entertainment

Fasting increases our sensitivity to the spirit world, not only the spirit of God, but demonic spirits as well, we should be careful of exposure to the secular media such as television, movies, books, magazines and radio. The media is filled with ungodly opportunities for our minds and what we think about can eventually find itself affecting our spirit.

This is why it is important to avoid watching ungodly programs, there is nothing wrong with watching Christian TV, especially preaching and praise and music programs, these programs feed the spirit, giving strength during the fast. Watching anything else contaminates the soul and weakens the will to fast. the same goes for newspapers and books. Fasting leaves the body weak, and the soul and spirit vulnerable, be careful what you expose yourself to during a fast.

Marriage

“Defraud ye not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that satn tempt ye not for your incontinency.” [I Corinthians 7:5]

Husbands and wives should abstain from any sexually pleasurable activity, many people think that fasting means only sexual abstinence, but will kiss, hug and pamper one another, there is nothing wrong with a hug, but you should not get any physical enjoyment out of each other during the time of your fasting. Fasting is setting oneself apart for God, not for his or her spouse. A person exposes himself to a lot of different spirits when he expresses himself sexually, there may be nothing wrong with sharing the same bed, hugging and coming in contact with each other, but it should not be done for pleasure during a fast.

Work:

Since fasting renders people more sensitive emotionally, arguments and confrontations may easily erupt. These should be avoided, this is why it is recommended staying away from work, if possible, while fasting. Sometimes stress related to work can bring about confrontations and arguments, arguing should be totally avoided during the fast, most people cannot stay away from work while fasting, but they can avoid confrontations.

The Word:

There should be a constant exposure to the word of God, constant means throughout the entire fast. This means every minute of every day when possible, for some people, this might be impossible, but strive to make exposure to the word of God as constant as humanly possible, this may be through reading the Bible, listening to sermon and music tapes, or Bible on tape.

Concluding a Fast

The final days or day should be spent in seclusion with worship, praise, meditation, and being quiet before the Lord, though there may be stumbling blocks that make it impossible to be secluded, do not allow anything to stop you from fasting. A person can gain a lot by being alone with God during this time, avoid the telephone or talking to anybody and be available to God.

Water should be the first thing consumed after a fast, and gradual introduction to solid foods, similar to the way food was depleted during a fast, for 7-10 days, especially after an extended fast, meat should be avoided, it will probably make you sick because the body has been deprived of it for some time.

Since the body has not had to digest meats and processed foods during the fast, reintroduction of complex foods should be gradual. Solid food should be introduced the same way it was depleted. A person can consider starting with fish and chicken, and then working up to the heavier meats, it may take up to two-weeks before the body gets used to meats. Observing these tips will save a person many problems, it will make the fast more effective and easier to accomplish the ultimate goal for fasting and that is to communicate with God, anyone who does not know how to hear from God needs to fast.

Things not to be Consumed During any Fast

Coffee or Tea: except herbal teas with honey, do not consume any stimulants during any fast.

Candy, Chips, Cakes, Pies or any kind of Junk food: these have empty calories and are filled with non-foods that encourage toxic build up in the system.

Gum: chewing gum stimulates the flow of digestive juices, which may cause a stomach discomfort, when the stomach is empty, the flow of gastric juices should not be encouraged.

White Granulated Sugar: this causes fermentation of food in the stomach and may encourage toxic build up, it should not be consumed during a fast.

NO Meat, Fish, or any kind of Sea Food: during a fast.

Things to Avoid during a Fast

Secular Television or Radio, Secular Newspaper or Magazines.

No Sports events, theater, concerts, and secular videos at all; Some Christians videos are good if they are not entertainment videos. A lot of Christian's videos have more entertainment in them than the word of God.

Abstinence from secular entertainment during a fast helps the soul to fast too. This brings about emotional rest and restoration of the soul, if the time slots usually taken to watch secular television programs and reading the paper were devoted strictly to listening and talking to God, much could be gained from a fast.