

Christian Fasting

Don Whitney's Definition: a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.

Richard Foster's Definition: the voluntary denial of normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.

Kinds of Fasts:

Fast: abstain from food not water.

Partial Fast: limitation on diet.

Absolute Fast: abstain from all food/water.

Supernatural Fast: abstaining from food and water for an impossible length of time.

Private Fast: abstaining from food/drink for personal spiritual reasons.

*Congregational Fast: a voluntary group fast.

National Fast: a national fast to address some specific national concern.

Regular Fast: God appointed fast regularly kept, the Day of Atonement.

Occasional Fast: a fast occasioned by some specific need.

Does God Expect New Covenant Believers to Fast?

Matthew 6:16-18 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 9:14-15 Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

God's Purpose for Fasting

Fasting is not for the purpose of earning God's favor; our favor is won through the obedience of Christ. It is a God-given means to express spiritual fervor.

1. To Strengthen Prayer (Ezra 8:3)
2. To seek God's Guidance (Acts 14:23)
3. To Express Grief (1 Samuel 31:13)
4. To Seek Deliverance or Protection (Ezra 8:21-23)
5. To Express Repentance and Return to God (Joel 2:12)
6. To Humble Oneself Before God (1 Kings 21:27-29)
7. To Express Concern for the Work of God (Dan. 9:3)
8. To Minister to the Needs of Others (Isa. 58:6-7)
9. To Overcome Temptation and Dedicate Yourself to God (Matt. 4:1-11)
10. To Express Love and Worship to God (Luke 2:37)

By His Grace and For His Glory,

Gary Scott

"The Cross becomes the "Center" of Cross Theatre where the Son of God becomes both the Victim and the Victor. "

"...face and voice converge in communication: The face speaks...we may say that the voice of God has a face: Jesus Christ. God's speech faces us: God's voice confronts us..." Vanhoozer. Remythologizing Theology