



PRAYER & FASTING

A BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL GUIDE

Seek God | Draw Near | Walk in Obedience

WELCOME

Prayer and fasting are not about going through a religious routine. They are about intentionally making room to seek God. Life gets busy, our attention gets divided, and without realizing it, our hearts can become crowded with everything except the One we need most. Prayer and fasting help us slow down, turn down the noise, and turn our attention back toward Jesus.

Prayer is relationship and dependence. We come to the Father through Jesus, speak honestly, listen through Scripture, and rely on the Holy Spirit to help us pray and obey (Hebrews 4:14–16; Romans 8:26–27). We do not have to clean ourselves up before we come. Jesus has already opened the way. We come because of grace, and we come expecting God to meet us, shape us, and draw us closer to Him.

In Scripture, fasting normally means voluntarily going without food for a spiritual purpose. Hunger becomes a reminder that we need God more than we need the ordinary things that sustain and comfort us. Fasting does not make God love us more, and it does not put Him in our debt. It simply helps us make focused space for prayer, Scripture, repentance, worship, and obedience.

You can use this guide at any time. You may sense God leading you to fast for one meal, one day, several days, or a longer season. You may be seeking direction, praying for someone, walking through a difficult season, repenting of sin, or simply wanting to draw nearer to God. Whatever brings you here, do not compare your fast with someone else's. This is not a competition. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is wise and right for you.

THE HEART OF THE PRACTICE

We are not trying to earn God's favor or force His hand. We already have His favor because of Jesus. We fast to humble ourselves, make room for God, and remind our hearts that He is our greatest need.

As you begin, ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. Choose a plan that is wise, specific, and realistic. If your plan needs to change for health, work, family, or another responsible reason, change it without shame. The goal is not to complete an impressive fast. The goal is to know Jesus, surrender more fully to Him, and walk in faithful obedience.

How to use this guide

This guide is here to help, not to give you another list to finish. You do not have to read every section in one sitting. Start with the parts that help you understand and prepare, then come back whenever you need direction or encouragement. As you fast, keep returning to four simple actions:

- **READ** - Open God's Word and slow down. Ask what the passage shows you about God, what it shows you about your heart, and how He is calling you to respond.
- **PRAY** - Talk honestly with God. Worship Him, confess sin, bring Him your needs, pray for others, and take time to listen.
- **FAST** - Follow the plan you have prayerfully chosen. Every time you feel the hunger or notice the missing distraction, let it remind you to turn your attention back to God.
- **RESPOND** - Do not stop with what you learned. Ask, "Lord, what do You want me to do?". Then take one clear step of obedience.

GRACE FOR THE PROCESS

You may get distracted. You may miss a planned time. You may need to change your fast. Do not let one imperfect day convince you to quit. Return to God, receive His grace, and keep moving forward.

Prayer: Relationship and Dependence

Prayer is not a performance, and it is not about finding the perfect words. Prayer is spending time with God. Because of Jesus, we can come to the Father with confidence. Our confidence is not in how spiritual we feel or how well we pray. Our confidence is in Jesus, our great High Priest, who has opened the way for us (Hebrews 4:14–16). Even when we do not know what to pray, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26–27).

Why We Pray

- To be with God. Prayer is not only asking for things; it is enjoying His presence and growing in relationship with Him.
- To worship and give thanks. We remember who God is and respond to His goodness, holiness, mercy, and faithfulness.
- To align our hearts with His will. Prayer changes what we desire and teaches us to say, "Your will be done."

- To bring our needs and the needs of others to Him. God invites us to ask, seek, knock, and intercede in faith.
- To receive strength for obedience. We depend on the Holy Spirit to live what God has shown us.

A Flexible Pattern for Prayer

- **PAUSE** - Become still and remember that God is present. Settle your attention before Him.
- **PRAISE** - Worship God for who He is. Thank Him for specific evidence of His grace.
- **CONFESS** - Invite God to search your heart. Name sin honestly and receive the forgiveness secured by Christ (1 John 1:9).
- **ASK** - Bring your needs to God and intercede for others. Pray specifically, humbly, and expectantly.
- **LISTEN** - Read Scripture attentively. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate truth and bring conviction, comfort, wisdom, or direction consistent with God's Word.
- **YIELD** - Surrender your plans and choose obedience. End by asking, "Lord, what is my next faithful step?"

This is a guide, not a formula. You do not need to give every part the same amount of time. Some days you may have a lot to thank God for. Other days you may need to sit with Him in grief, confess sin, or keep praying for something that has not changed yet. Let Scripture guide you. God is not looking for polished prayers; He is looking for an honest and surrendered heart.

Reading and Responding to God's Word ---

If we remove food or distractions but never turn our attention toward God, we may be dieting or taking a break, but we are not really fasting. Prayer and Scripture are what give the fast its direction. God's Word keeps us grounded in truth and helps us recognize His voice. We do not read the Bible to make it say what we want. We read to know God, see Jesus more clearly, have our minds renewed, and learn how to obey.

Choose a Sustainable Time and Place

There is no one perfect time. Morning may work best for you. A lunch break may give you a needed reset. Evening may be the first time your house is quiet. Choose a time you can actually protect. Start where you are. Ten focused minutes with God is better than an unrealistic plan that leaves you discouraged after two days.

Read with Four Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God—His character, ways, promises, or purposes?

2. How does this passage connect to the gospel and to Jesus—His life, death, resurrection, reign, and kingdom?
3. What does this passage reveal about my heart, beliefs, desires, or actions?
4. What response is God calling for—faith, repentance, obedience, love, endurance, prayer, or worship?

A Simple Way to Respond

Before you read, pray a simple prayer: “Holy Spirit, help me understand Your Word and obey what You show me.” Then read slowly and in context. Notice what is repeated, what is commanded, what is promised, and what the passage is actually saying. Write down one truth God is showing you and one way you can respond. Keep it simple and take it into your day.

KEEP SCRIPTURE CENTRAL

We believe the Holy Spirit still speaks, leads, convicts, comforts, and gives gifts to His people. Every impression, prophetic word, or sense of direction must be tested by Scripture and should never contradict the character or teaching of Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 5:19–22; 1 John 4:1)

**SEEK TO BE CHANGED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.
EXPECT GOD TO CORRECT, COMFORT, CONVICT, AND
ENCOURAGE YOU.**

What Is Biblical Fasting?

In the Bible, fasting normally means choosing to go without food for a spiritual purpose. God’s people fasted when they were grieving, repenting, seeking direction, praying for others, worshiping, and preparing for ministry. Jesus fasted. He taught His disciples how to fast without trying to impress people, and He spoke as though fasting would remain a normal part of following Him (Matthew 4:1–4; 6:16–18; 9:14–15; Acts 13:1–3).

Fasting is not a way to buy God’s favor, prove how spiritual we are, punish ourselves, or manipulate God into giving us what we want. It is a physical way of saying, “God, I need You more than I need my normal comforts.” We set something aside so that we can seek Him with greater focus.

What Fasting Can Do in Us

- Humble us and make us more aware of our dependence on God (Ezra 8:21–23).
- Reveal appetites, habits, attitudes, and false comforts that have been shaping us.
- Give focused attention to repentance, intercession, guidance, worship, or ministry (Joel 2:12–13; Acts 13:1–3).
- Train us to say no to a legitimate desire so that we can become more ready to obey God in every area.
- Deepen hunger for God as physical hunger repeatedly turns our attention toward Him.

Fasting does not guarantee the answer we want or the timeline we prefer. God is not more obligated to us because we fasted longer or tried harder. We seek Him because He is worthy. We bring Him our requests, trust His wisdom, and surrender the outcome to Him.

Food Fasts and Other Forms of Abstinence

Full Food Fast

A full food fast means going without food for a specific period of time while normally continuing to drink water. Scripture includes examples of people fasting while urgently seeking God or preparing for what was ahead (Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9). This kind of fast places greater stress on the body, so use wisdom. If you are new to fasting, beginning with one meal or part of a day is often a wise place to start.

Partial Food Fast

A partial fast means simplifying what you eat or setting aside certain foods rather than going without all food. Daniel 10:2–3 describes a time when Daniel did not eat choice food, meat, or wine. A partial fast may be a good choice for a longer season or for someone who should not attempt a full food fast. Do not let the menu become the main focus. The point is to make room to seek God.

Fasting One Meal or a Set Period

Skipping one meal, fasting from breakfast to dinner, or fasting from one evening to the next can be a clear and manageable beginning. Instead of simply pushing through the meal, use that time to pray, read Scripture, worship, or pray for someone else.

Non-Food Abstinence

The Bible normally uses the word fasting for going without food. Still, stepping away from social media, entertainment, gaming, shopping, news, or another distraction can be a meaningful way to seek God—especially when a food fast would not be wise. The

key is replacement. Do not just remove something; use the space you create for prayer, Scripture, worship, silence, generosity, or service.

CHOOSE SOMETHING MEANINGFUL

Choose something that will actually create room for God. You do not need to announce your fast or draw attention to yourself, but it is fine to tell a spouse, parent, trusted friend, or spiritual leader when you need prayer, accountability, or support (Matthew 6:16–18).

Choosing and Preparing for a Fast

1. Clarify the Purpose

Begin by asking, “Why am I fasting?” Maybe you need direction. Maybe you are praying for someone, walking through grief, repenting of sin, preparing for ministry, or simply hungry to know God more. A clear purpose will help focus your prayers. Just remember that a prayer focus is not a demand. We seek God and trust Him with the outcome.

2. Decide the Plan

- Length: one meal, part of a day, one day, selected days, or a longer season.
- Type: full food fast, partial food fast, or non-food abstinence.
- Boundaries: what you will abstain from and when the fast begins and ends.
- Replacement: when and how you will use the free time for Scripture, prayer, worship, silence, generosity, or service.

3. Prepare Spiritually

- Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart (Psalm 139:23–24).
- Confess known sin and receive God’s forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Forgive others and pursue reconciliation where possible (Mark 11:25; Romans 12:18).
- Surrender your expectations. Ask God to form you, not merely to change your circumstances.

4. Prepare Practically

- Plan meals, work demands, family responsibilities, and appropriate ways to decline food without drawing unnecessary attention.
- Before a food fast, consider gradually reducing caffeine, sugar, and heavy foods rather than making an abrupt change.

- Keep water available unless a qualified medical professional has directed otherwise. Do not attempt a dry fast as part of this guide.
- Tell an appropriate person if you may need support, supervision, or help adjusting the plan.

Health, Safety, and Freedom from Pressure

PLEASE USE WISDOM

A food fast is not right for everyone. Choosing a partial fast or stepping away from a non-food distraction does not make your devotion less meaningful. God is looking at your heart. He is not asking you to put your health at unnecessary risk.

Please talk with a qualified medical professional before changing your diet or meal schedule if you are pregnant or nursing; take prescription medication; have diabetes, blood-sugar concerns, or another medical condition; have a history of an eating disorder or disordered eating; are under eighteen; perform strenuous labor or intense athletic training; or have any reason to think a food fast may be unsafe for you.

- Do not stop or change prescribed medication in order to fast.
- Children and teenagers should not undertake a food fast without the involvement of a parent or guardian and appropriate medical guidance.
- If food restriction may trigger unhealthy patterns, choose a non-food practice and involve a trusted pastor, counselor, or healthcare professional.
- If you experience severe weakness, fainting, confusion, chest pain, persistent vomiting, signs of dehydration, or another concerning symptom, stop the fast and seek medical care.

This guide offers spiritual guidance, not medical advice. Please hear this clearly: wisdom is not a lack of faith. Adjusting or ending a food fast because of your health can be an act of faithful stewardship, not failure.

During the Fast

When Hunger or Discomfort Comes

When hunger or discomfort comes, let it become a reminder to turn toward God. Pause and pray. You might simply say, “Jesus, You are my life and strength,” or pray a verse from the passage you are reading. Hunger by itself does not make a fast spiritual. What matters is what you do with that hunger.

Expect Your Heart to Be Revealed

Fasting has a way of revealing what is already in us. Impatience, anger, anxiety, pride, fear, self-reliance, or an unhealthy attachment to comfort may rise to the surface. Do not be surprised, and do not be discouraged. God is not showing you these things to shame you. Bring them into the light, confess what He reveals, receive His grace, and ask the Holy Spirit to make you more like Jesus.

James 4:8 — “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”

Remain Humble and Ordinary

Jesus warned us not to use fasting to gain attention (Matthew 6:16–18). As much as you are able, continue your normal responsibilities. You do not have to announce your fast or make everyone work around it. At the same time, this does not mean no one can know. Churches can fast together, and trusted people may need to know so they can support you, pray with you, or help you remain safe.

Pair Fasting with Love and Obedience

Isaiah 58 warns us about fasting that is disconnected from mercy, humility, justice, and care for people. If our fast makes us harsh, proud, self-focused, or indifferent to others, we have missed God’s heart. Ask God how the time, attention, or money freed by your fast can become generosity, encouragement, reconciliation, or service.

When the Fast Becomes Difficult

A difficult day does not automatically mean you are doing something wrong, and an intense fast does not automatically mean you are doing something right. Some of what you feel may simply be your body adjusting to a changed routine. Some may reveal distraction, discouragement, or spiritual resistance. Whatever the reason, bring it to God and respond with faith and wisdom.

- Return to your purpose. Re-read the Scripture or prayer focus that led you to fast.
- Shorten or modify the plan if health, medication, work, or family responsibilities require it.
- Refuse condemnation. A fast is a means of grace and attention, not a test of whether God accepts you.
- Ask for prayer from a trusted believer if you feel discouraged or spiritually opposed.
- Keep obeying what God has already made clear. Do not chase dramatic experiences.

Jeremiah 29:13 — “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

REMEMBER THE DIFFERENCE

The Holy Spirit's conviction is clear and leads us toward repentance, faith, and hope. Condemnation is crushing and tells us to hide from God. If you belong to Jesus, there is no condemnation for you (Romans 8:1). Do not run from God. Draw near again.

Ending a Food Fast

End your fast with gratitude, not pride. Thank God for sustaining you and for whatever He has shown you—even if the fast felt quieter than you expected. Do not call the fast unsuccessful just because you did not receive a dramatic answer. Greater dependence, honest repentance, renewed hunger for God, and simple obedience are real fruit.

- After a longer fast, reintroduce food gradually and begin with smaller, simple meals.
- Continue drinking water and pay attention to how your body responds.
- Avoid celebrating the end of a fast with an unusually heavy meal.
- If you have medical concerns, follow the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional.

Carry the Fruit Forward

Before you move on, ask, “What does God want me to carry forward?” Maybe you need a healthier boundary with media. Maybe you need to repair a relationship, become more generous, establish a regular time of prayer, serve someone, or obey something God has already made clear. The fast may end, but a surrendered life of worship continues.

Suggested Scriptures for Further Study

Read each passage in context. Ask what it reveals about God, prayer, fasting, dependence, repentance, worship, and obedience.

- **Drawing Near to God** - Psalm 42:1–5; Psalm 63:1–8; Jeremiah 29:12–13; Hebrews 4:14–16; James 4:7–10
- **Prayer** - Matthew 6:5–13; Luke 11:1–13; Philippians 4:4–7; Romans 8:26–27; 1 John 5:14–15
- **Fasting** - Ezra 8:21–23; Joel 2:12–13; Isaiah 58:1–12; Matthew 4:1–4; Matthew 6:16–18; Matthew 9:14–15; Acts 13:1–3; Acts 14:21–23
- **Repentance and Surrender** - Psalm 51; Psalm 139:23–24; Romans 12:1–2; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 1:5–9
- **Listening and Obedience** - John 10:27; John 14:15–27; John 15:1–11; James 1:22–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22
- **Perseverance and Spiritual Battle** - Habakkuk 3:17–19; Ephesians 6:10–18; Romans 8:31–39; James 1:2–8; 1 Peter 5:6–10

Create Your Plan

Use these prompts to form a simple plan. Write in pencil if you want the freedom to adjust it wisely.

My purpose for fasting is:

The Scripture or prayer focus I will return to is:

I plan to fast from:

My fast will begin and end:

I will use the freed time to:

The person who can support or pray with me is:

A practical or medical consideration I need to address is:

One act of obedience, generosity, or service I will pursue is:

Closing Encouragement

Prayer and fasting are not the finish line. They help turn our hearts back toward the One who is our life. Maybe your time of fasting felt powerful. Maybe it felt quiet, difficult, or different from what you expected. Do not measure what God did only by your emotions or by whether your circumstances changed immediately. Look for the quieter work of grace: greater honesty with God, a renewed hunger for Scripture, clearer repentance, deeper compassion, courageous obedience, and greater dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Keep drawing near. Keep asking. Keep listening. Keep obeying what God has already shown you. The same Jesus who met you during the fast will be with you at ordinary meals, in busy schedules, through difficult conversations, and in everyday decisions. Do not rush back into every old distraction. Let the space you created become a life that stays open and surrendered to Him.

THE *Springs* CHURCH

4161 N Rancho Drive STE 110, Las Vegas, NV 89130

office@thespringslv.com

thespringslv.com

702-912-4479