

A Time of Fasting and Prayer: Sept 24-Nov 2

Declare a fast, call a sacred assembly! (Joel 1:14)

Jesus Christ spoke about fasting saying “when you fast” (Mt. 6:16), not “if you fast.” He assumed that his followers would fast.

Our pastors invite you to join them in a 40-day period of fasting and prayer (Sept 24-Covenant Renewal Sunday, Nov 2) to seek a deeper level of consecration to the Lord’s work. The hope is that everyone will observe an individual practice of fasting and prayer. During the 40 days, incorporate a rhythm of fasting that suits you. It doesn’t have to be a complete fast from all food for 40 days (though that is common in parts of the Christian community today). Choose certain days, certain meals, to abstain from food to spend time in prayer during these 40 days.

While everyone needs to tailor a fast to their own medical condition, there is a variety of fasting practices in the Bible that can suit anyone’s situation. Obviously, the practice of fasting can be incorporated in our lives in a variety of ways:

- Judges 20:26 references a 1-day fast.
- Esther 4:16 speaks of a 3-day fast.
- After his Damascus Road experience, Paul observed a 3-day fast (Acts 9:9).
- In 1 Samuel 31:13, we read about a 7-day fast.
- In Daniel 1:12, we read how he fasted for 10 days. During the fast, Daniel ate only vegetables and water.
- In Acts 27:33-34, Paul and the men aboard the ship fasted for 14 days.
- In Daniel 10:3, we discover what has come to be called a “Daniel Fast.” This was a fast from rich food and included a simple diet of fruit, vegetables, nuts, and water.
- There is also the Wesley Fast. Early in Wesley’s ministry, he advocated fasting on both Wednesdays and Fridays. He would not consecrate anyone to the Methodist ministry who was unwilling to fast on these 2 days each week. This practice was based on early Christian history (*The Didache*). But as time passed, Wesley fasted mostly from sundown on Thursday until 3 pm on Fridays which was the Anglican norm.

Obviously both the Bible and Christian tradition endorse a variety of ways to fast. Everyone can pursue this spiritual discipline in a way that suits their health and condition in life. Take your next step in observing the spiritual discipline of fasting. It is always wise to consult your doctor before tailoring a personal practice of fasting.

Pay attention to our social media during the 40-day fast. Both Pastor Jeff and Pastor Clark will be posting, teaching, and encouraging to guide you during this time.