

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

2023

SAINT JOHN AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

REV. DR. RONALD D. STERLING, PASTOR

PRAYER & FASTING

Fasting is mentioned throughout the Bible along with giving and praying as an important part of the Christian life. Here at Saint John AME Church we like to give God the first month of the year as a time to seek Him in fasting and prayer as a church family. This is called a corporate fast. We encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer and let your decisions about your fasting come from Him. Ask the Lord to show you areas to target during your time of fasting and prayer.



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 Praise God Psalm 17:17 | 2 Pray for your Pastors Isaiah 40:31 | 3 Pray for those Persecuted 2 Timothy 3:11-12 | 4 Pray for Missionaries Matthew 24:14 | 5 Pray for Finding your Purpose 2 Timothy 1:9 | 6 Pray for those hurting Psalm 73:26 | 7 Pray for your job Isaiah 26:3 |
| 8 Pray for our Nation's Leaders 1 Timothy 2:1-2 | 9 Pray for what you need Matthew 6:11 | 10 Pray for Schools Matthew 19:14 | 11 Pray for First Responders Deuteronomy 31:6 | 12 Pray for Church Staff Matthew 20:26 | 13 Pray for Families Proverbs 22:6 | 14 Pray for your health Jeremiah 30:17 |
| 15 Pray for the Community Mark 12:31 | 16 Pray for the Church Acts 2:42-47 | 17 Pray for your walk with Jesus Psalm 139:23 | 18 Pray for that "One" person Luke 15 | 19 Pray for Financial Freedom Matthew 6:25-26 | 20 Pray for Spiritual Freedom 2 Corinthians 3:17 | 21 Celebrate 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 |

The New Testament nowhere commands followers of Jesus Christ to fast. In fact, even in the Old Testament, the Jews were only commanded to fast on one day out of the year, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27, 29, 32). Any religious leader who commands a fast or restricts certain foods is doing so without biblical warrant. However, Jesus sometimes fasted (Matthew 4:2), and He assumed that His followers would also fast on occasion (Matthew 6:16–18; Mark 2:20). So, if fasting is something that Christians do, what is the proper way to fast? What does the Bible say about how to fast?

The Bible mentions different types of fasting. There is limiting yourself to a certain type of food (Daniel 1:8–14). There is fasting from food entirely (Daniel 10:2–3). There is fasting from food and water (Luke 4:2; Acts 9:9). There is also “fasting” from a certain activity, such as a husband and wife abstaining from sex for a predetermined period (Exodus 19:15; 1 Corinthians 7:5). With the different types of fasting in mind, how to fast depends greatly on what type of fasting you are doing.

Always ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) in regards to how and for how long He wants you to fast. Setting a time frame seems to be the biblical approach (Esther 4:16). Also, fasting should have a clear purpose. People in the Bible fasted and prayed because they wanted something specific to happen. They either wanted God to change them, to change their circumstances, or to reveal something to them. Ultimately, fasting is far more about focus than food. Fasting is taking your focus off of the things of this world in order to focus more on the things of God. Fasting can thus be a means of growing closer to God.

A note of caution concerning fasting: those with medical conditions, especially conditions involving dietary restrictions (diabetes, for example), should consult a doctor before fasting. Remember, there is no biblical command that followers of Jesus Christ must fast. Therefore, it is not wrong to take a medical condition into account when determining how to fast.

Also, it is good to examine your motives for fasting. Fasting is not about manipulating God. Fasting will not cause God to do something that is outside of His will. Fasting is about changing yourself to be in agreement with God’s plan and to be prepared to carry out your role in His plan. When you are deciding how to fast, it is crucially important to remember what fasting is all about—changing yourself, not changing God.

Source: <https://www.gotquestions.org/how-to-fast.html>