

NOT ONE FAST TO RULE THEM ALL

Once you have your purpose, plan out your fast. People have been fasting for thousands of years in all different ways.

Once you know your purposes for fasting (the ultimate purpose and immediate purposes), consider your health. Consult your doctor, and if it's time for a checkup, get in there. Fasting can aggravate medical conditions, and you don't want to find that out the hard way. A few reasons you may not be able to fast safely include a myriad of health concerns from anemia to anorexia to heart disease to pregnancy to nursing—there are many legitimate reasons to not fast.

If fasting from food is not a reality for you, pray about what God wants you to do. He knows your limitations and won't be disappointed. If you are unable to fast, you might consider partaking in another form of spiritual discipline, abstaining from technology, entertainment, music, a hobby—the list is endless. But the important part is your motive! Use the time you would normally spend eating/ skiing or snowboarding/ facebooking/ instagram'ing/ drinking coffee/ whatever, and spend it with Jesus.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF FASTING COULD TEACH US SOMETHING

Dr. Bill Bright has a very thorough article on fasting that presents and expands on many of the ideas in this article. There isn't one particular formula for fasting. It's a personal decision. How you fast, how long you fast, and what you fast from are all individual choices, none of which are as important as your reason for fasting. God doesn't command everyone to go 40 days without food. Ask him what he would have you do and start slowly. Avoid jumping into an extended fast without building up to it first.

In the Bible, we find several types of fasts. The partial fast is illustrated by Daniel, who abstained from the best foods and chose to eat vegetables and drink water instead. You could opt for similar plan.

An absolute fast means not eating or drinking anything at all. Paul fasted absolutely for three days. Moses did the same for 40 days, but following suit would be so extreme that you should not copy Moses unless you are absolutely sure God has called you to do so. Don't worry! If God wants you to do something this

extreme, he knows how to make it so clear to you that there is no room for uncertainty.

The most common fast involves not eating any sort of food, but drinking plenty of water and juice. Ideally, juice your own fruits and vegetables or drink 100% juice. Beware of caffeine and sugar, as they will have stronger effects without any solid food in your system.

Ultimately, pray, pick the one that seems best, and think about your motives. God won't be impressed if your fast is more difficult. He's already fully pleased with you because of Jesus, so fast in whichever way you choose and praise God that you don't have to earn his favor through misery!

PLAN AHEAD

It's tempting to have your own personal Mardi Gras, eating every one of your favorite foods just before starting your fast. While culturally popular, this makes fasting more difficult. It's better to wean yourself off of food slowly. So plan ahead, as this will mean changing your diet during the days leading up to your fast.

Look at your schedule and plan realistically. Fasting during holidays is not only difficult because of all the special foods you will be around; it can also be a huge bummer to those around you. They want to enjoy a feast with you and celebrate—not easy over the sound of your growling stomach or your sad

expression. Avoid this. There is a time to fast and a holiday probably isn't it.

Also consider the point of fasting: spending time with Jesus. If you're running a million errands in the lead-up to Christmas, a birthday, or another special event, you won't have the time to sit and commune with God in isolation. Remember, the point of fasting isn't just to be hungry; it's to take the time you would normally spend eating and use it to focus on God.

BREAKFAST VS. BREAKING YOUR FAST

When your fast ends, it's very important to reintroduce food slowly. Avoid the six-course dinner or the all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast. Your body will have responded and adjusted to life without food fairly quickly. Suddenly shoveling in normal food will not end well. Start simply, with plain vegetables or broth. Take your time and eat small quantities. Just like you led into the fast slowly, come out of it slowly.

EYE ON THE PRIZE

Fasting isn't a burden or a requirement for belonging to God. It's a gift that helps you to know and run alongside your heavenly father. Going without food is a reminder that cuts straight to one

of our most basic needs. If you've never fasted before, be courageous, give it a go, and expect great things. Fasting is an act of faith, and faith pleases God.

FASTING DURING THE EVERY PAGE CAMPAIGN

During the **Every Page Campaign**, we are asking people to be praying everyday for 36 days. Over the 36 days we are asking every person who calls Venue Church Home to ask God about what they are to fast & how long they are supposed to fast for. The Campaign begins Sunday December 28th & ends Monday February 2nd.