

100 days till Easter

How to Begin Your Fast and Prayer time

STEP 1: Setting the Objective

Why are we fasting? We are fasting for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for the gift of generosity to pour over Wesley, for special grace to handle a difficult situation. So we ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for our prayer fast. This will enable us to pray more specifically and strategically. For the 100 days of 2019 leading up to Easter, we are praying for wisdom and fasting every Friday. Prayer begins Sunday January 13 and the first Friday fast will be on Friday January 18. We will pray through Easter Sunday April 21 and the final fast will be Good Friday, April 19.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our church, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.

STEP 2: Make Your Commitment

Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15) For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long will we fast – We have decided to set aside Fridays.
- When will we pray—we will pray when we are driving, when we are shopping, when we rise in the morning and when we lie down at night.

- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often). You may have medical reasons like diabetes and need to eat and drink. If this is so, still set aside time for prayer and meditation, even sitting at the beach and being grateful for your life is a form of prayer.
- What physical or social activities you will restrict? It is necessary to make a sacrifice of this time to open space for the Holy Spirit to work.
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word. Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you recognize where you fall short of His grace.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- If a person comes to mind you may have offended, seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2).
- Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes

intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17). The phone will ring if you have it on...

STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruits and vegetables

While You Fast

STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be. Each Friday:

Morning

- Begin your day in praise and worship. Say thank you.
- Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to Philippians 2:13.
- Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, for Wesley Church, your community, your country, and beyond.
- Pray for His vision for your life and for Wesley and empowerment to

do His will.

- If a particular verse hits you, write it on a card or paper or in the notes at the end of the booklet.

Noon

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for our community's and nation's leaders, for the world's unreached millions, for family or special needs and for Wesley to follow God into the future.

Evening

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

When possible, begin and end each Friday on your knees with your spouse for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

A dietary routine is vital as well. Dr. Julio C. Ruibal - a nutritionist, pastor, and specialist in fasting and prayer - suggests a daily schedule and list of juices you may find useful and satisfying. Modify this schedule and the drinks you take to suit your circumstances and tastes.

5 a.m. - 8 a.m.

- Fruit juices, preferably freshly squeezed or blended and diluted in 50 percent distilled water if the fruit is acid. Apple, pear, grapefruit, papaya, watermelon, or other fruit juices are generally preferred. If you cannot do your own juicing, buy juices without sugar or additives.

10:30 a.m. - noon

- Fresh vegetable juice made from lettuce, celery, and carrots in three equal parts.

2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

- Herb tea with a drop of honey. Avoid black tea or any tea with caffeine.

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6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- Broth made from boiling potatoes, celery, and carrots with no salt. After boiling about half an hour, pour the water into a container and drink it.

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Tips on Juice Fasting

- Drinking fruit juice will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy. The taste and lift will motivate and strengthen you to continue.
- The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth.
- Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach's sake.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints, even if your breath is bad. They stimulate digestive action in your stomach.

Breaking Your Fast

STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually

Much of what is recommended is for breaking an extended fast of three or more days, so we should not really be too concerned, but here are some ideas: begin eating gradually Saturday morning. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative consequences. Since we are having a series of one day fasts, it is not likely to bother you so much when you begin eating again. Try several

smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Here are some suggestions to help you end your fast properly:

- Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon.
- While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:*First day:* Add a raw salad.*Second day:* Add baked or boiled potato, no butter or seasoning.*Third day:* Add a steamed vegetable.*Thereafter:* Begin to reintroduce your normal diet.
- Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruit such as watermelon and cantaloupe. Advance to a few tablespoons of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and baked potato.
- You may want to use these 100 days to simply start eating healthier as a lifestyle.

A Final Word

STEP 7: Expect Results

If we sincerely humble ourselves before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if we consistently meditate on His Word, we will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give us fresh new spiritual insights. Our confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. We will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. We will see answers to our prayers as long as we pray for wisdom and not simply for God to change our circumstances. God can and will move in our circumstances, we just need to give Him room to do what is best rather than what we want.

A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting

before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians.

It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor you for your faithfulness.

I encourage you to join me in fasting and prayer again and again until we truly experience revival in our homes, our churches, our beloved nation, and throughout the world.

May God grant us wisdom in the days ahead.

May He lead us through troubled waters.

May He grant us the honor of being a faithful voice for Him in this community where we are placed.

May He allow us to see His hand in the midst of our lives and the life of Wesley Church.

And may we all submit to His will. Thy will be done O Lord!

Notes: write down the scriptures God leads you to as you pray and meditate.

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