

**Hungering for God: The Discipline of Fasting**  
 May 16, 2010

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**What is Fasting?**  
**Basic Definitions**

Fasting is *"Abstaining from food for spiritual purposes."*

*Fasting accompanies Prayer*  
*(Luke 2:37 & Matt 17:21)*

*"Prayer needs fasting for its full growth. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible. Fasting is the other hand, the one with which we let go of the visible."*

Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*

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**What is Fasting?**  
**Fasting in the Bible**

- **Partial Fast** – abstaining from certain food (Daniel 10:3)
- **Absolute Fast** – abstaining from food (Matt. 4:1-2)
- **Extreme Fast** – abstaining from food & water (Esther 4:16 & Acts 9:9)
- **Corporate Fast** – community abstains from food (Ezra 8:21:23 & Leviticus 23:26-32)

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**Why Should I Fast?**  
**Is Fasting Required of a Christian?**

What did Jesus Say about it?  
Matt. 6:16-18 & Matt. 9:14-17

What did the Early Church Do?  
Acts 13:1-2 & Acts 14:23

*"Fasting is not an obligation, but it is a **great opportunity**"*

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**Why Should I Fast?**  
To receive a "reward"  
Matt. 6:16ff

Fasting will Glorify God

Fasting will Teach Us Important Lessons

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*"Bonhoeffer, Cost of Discipleship:  
"Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the pious custom of fasting. Strict exercise of self-control is an essential feature of the Christian's life. Such customs have only one purpose – to make the disciples more ready and cheerful to accomplish those things which God would have done."*

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**Why Should I Fast?**

To receive a "reward"

Matt. 6:16ff

Fasting will Glorify God

Fasting will Teach Us Important Lessons

Fasting will Intensify our Prayer life

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**How Should I Fast?**

- Make a **Plan**
- Get a **Partner**
- Focus on **Progress**
  - Partial Fast (24hrs)
  - Absolute Fast (24hrs)
  - Absolute Fast (36hrs)
  - Long Fast (3-7 days)
  - Extended Fast (7-40 days)

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This Week:  
Consider the Discipline of Fasting

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