

2022 One Desire Fast Guide

Theme: Onward

Dates: 2/14-2/25

What fasting is and why we do it:

“The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but endless nibbling at the table of the world. It is not the X-rated video, but the prime-time dribble of triviality we drink in every night. For all the ill that Satan can do, when God describes what keeps us from the banquet table of his love, it is a piece of land, a yoke of oxen, and a wife (Luke 14:18–20). The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but his gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable, and almost incurable.”

John Piper

Fasting centers on God and aims to glorify God. Fasting is a way for us to tangibly express our desires for God. It is also a way for us to express our holy discontentment with what this fallen world has to offer and with our hearts that become easily satisfied with the status quo.

Some of the spiritual purpose for fasting from the bible (adapted from Donald S. Whitney):

Strengthening prayer (Ezra 8:23; Joel 2:13; Acts 13:3)

Seeking God’s guidance (Judg. 20:26; Acts 14:23)

Expressing grief (2 Sam. 31:13; 2 Sam 1:11-12)

Seeking deliverance or protection (2 Chron. 20:3-4; Ezra 8:21-23)

Expressing repentance and returning to God (1 Sam. 7:6; Jonah 3:5-8)

Humbling oneself before God (1 Kings 21:27-29; Ps. 35:13)

Expressing concern for the work of God (Neh. 1:3-4; Dan. 9:3)

Ministering to the needs of others (Isa. 58:3-7)

Overcoming temptation and dedicating yourself to God (Matt. 4:1-11)

Expressing love and worship to God (Luke 2:37)

Typically, fasting is expressed through voluntarily abstaining from food for a limited time for a specific spiritual purpose. But we can also fast from other good things besides food.

Fasting not only helps us center our lives on God, but also reveals the things that control us. Pride, anger, bitterness, jealousy, fear – if they are in us, they will surface during fasting. We can rejoice as our weaknesses are revealed, because we know that Christ can uproot these idols from our lives.

In New Testament times, fasting was seen as a way of drawing upon more of God’s power. In Matthew 4:1, Jesus was “led by the Spirit into the desert”, where he fasted for forty days. During this time, the Holy Spirit prepared and equipped Jesus for his public ministry that would soon follow. As we desire to prepare ourselves for the mission and vision God has given our churches, we want to commit the next two weeks in fasting to God. During this time, we want

to de-emphasize our daily “needs” by denying our fleshly hunger and desires. We want to set aside our earthly pleasures to glorify the Lord - with our hearts and minds fixed on His grace and love.

Participating in the One Desire Fast through feasting and fasting:

During the One Desire Fast, we want to feast on God’s love and goodness for us. More specifically, we will feast by:

Week 1 (2/14-2/20)

- Fasting from all social media
- Fasting from meat during our meal times (Daniel 1:11-13)

Week 2 (2/21-2/25)

- Fasting from all social media
- Fasting by either 1) having one meal a day (no meat) or 2) liquids only

Practical aspects of fasting

Before you start the fast:

- Prepare for the fast by eating certain foods , especially ones with high fiber content, to help with constipation – fresh fruit, raw vegetables, oatmeal, etc.
- Start eating smaller meals a few days prior to starting the fast.
- Avoid high-fat and sugary food before the fast.
- If you have underlying health issues (diabetes, stomach ulcers/other GI concerns, etc), consult a health professional before starting the fast.
- If you have struggled or are currently struggling with eating disorders, then consider fasting from things other than food that will remind you of your need for God.

During the fast (physical):

- Make sure you are getting fluids in your body. Drink plenty of water, juice, smoothies, etc.
- Try to stay away from strong stimulants such as caffeinated and sugary drinks. Also, try to avoid soy protein drinks, which have been known to cause health problems during a fast.
- If you will be participating in the liquids only during the second week, fruit juices (such as apple, grape and pineapple) will help to stabilize your blood sugar levels and keep your energy levels up.
- Anticipate some physical discomfort for the first few days of fasting (especially when we transition to liquids only) – hunger pains, headaches (due to withdrawals from caffeine), tiredness, etc. Persevere through this period. Sticking to a set mealtime will help your body adjust and lessen the physical discomfort.

During the fast (spiritual):

- Devote the time you would normally be eating to meditation and prayer. It defeats the purpose of the fast if you do not pray. It helps to keep a journal on what the Lord has been showing and speaking to you.
- Have a clear target as you pray. Try creating a list of prayer topics that you will wrestle with in prayer to God.
- Prepare for opposition as you set your heart and your mind on pursuing God. Remember that Satan tempted Jesus during his fast, and we must expect the same.
- If you fall or give into your hunger, don't give in to condemnation. Remember that God always extends grace when we return to him with humility and repentance.
- Remember that breakthroughs will come – but sometimes, they come after the fast. Don't listen to lies that nothing is happening during your fast.

Breaking the fast:

- Break your fast with a light meal. Do not “pig out” because you can harm your digestive tract. Your body may not be used to the sudden increase in intake and breakdown.

Frequently Asked Questions

IS FASTING A HUNGER STRIKE?

● Not at all, although they have several common elements. Both are a form of sacrifice; both are done to achieve a purpose, and both can be attention getters! However, a hunger strike gets man's attention. Fasting draws God's attention. Christ loved us and gave up His life for us. Fasting is a method of presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice. Above all, it's an act of worship (Romans 12:1-2).

WILL FASTING RUIN MY HEALTH?

● If you are in normal health, a fast should have no ill effect. However, if you have special medical challenges or you feel hesitant about fasting, you should always consult a doctor before fasting.

WILL PEOPLE THINK I'M A FANATIC?

● Perhaps. But fasting is to show God by your actions and attitude that you're serious about bringing glory to His Son, Jesus. Anyway, in this society people who do crazy things for sports or celebrities, walk a mile to sit in a cold stadium and have beer spilled down their backs are called fans. A person who prays for an hour is a fanatic! We hope you'll be a fanatic for Christ.

WHY DOES HMCC STRESS FASTING?

● We believe it honors our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it's the type of spiritual discipline Christian men and women need. We also believe that we must be united, using every God-given means available, to carry forth God's plan for all the different ministries at HMCC. Without a sense of dependence on God, we can do nothing (John 15:5). Let us expect great things to happen here in our church and beyond. We want to transform lost people into Christ's disciples who will then transform the world! It begins with us.