

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FASTING?

(Ezra 8:21-23, ESV) Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

10 Reasons to Fast

From *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney

1. Strengthen Prayer
2. Seek God's Guidance
3. Express Grief
4. Seek Deliverance or Protection
5. Express Repentance or Return to God
6. Humble Oneself Before God
7. Express Concern for the Work of God
8. Minister to the Needs of Others
9. Overcome Temptation & Dedicate Yourself to God
10. Express Love and Worship to God

7 Ways to Fast

- **Normal Fast** – fasting from all food, not from water
 - Jesus' temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)
- **Partial Fast** – limitation of your diet
 - (Daniel 1:12 – vegetables to eat and water to drink)
 - (Matthew 3:4 - John the Baptist - locusts & wild honey)
- **Absolute Fast** – fasting from all food and all water
 - (Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:12-16, Paul - Acts 9:9, David - 2 Samuel 12:15-23)
- **Supernatural Fast** – requires God's intervention to survive
 - Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)
- **Private Fast** - in a way not to be noticed (Matthew 6:16-18)
- **Congregational Fast** – united focus (Joel 2:15-16, Acts 13:2)
- **Other than food** - "a voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity" - Richard Foster
 - Fasting from sex within marriage for more focus on prayer (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

Helpful Resources for Learning More about Fasting

- [Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life](#) by Donald Whitney
- [A Hunger for God](http://www.desiringgod.org/books/a-hunger-for-god) by John Piper - Freely available at www.desiringgod.org/books/a-hunger-for-god
- "Crossway Interview with John Piper on *A Hunger for God*" - www.desiringgod.org/interviews/crossway-books-interview-with-john-piper-on-a-hunger-for-god
- "Quotes on Fasting" - www.trustworthyword.com/quotes-on-fasting
- "Bible Verses on Fasting" - www.trustworthyword.com/bible-verses-on-fasting