

# Fasting Lesson

## Definition

Fasting occurs when a Christian voluntarily abstains from eating for a period of time for a spiritual purpose.

## Biblical Basis

*“**And when you fast**, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But **when you fast**, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:16–18 ESV)*

*Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and **then they will fast**. (Matthew 9:14–15 ESV)*

*“While they were worshiping the Lord and **fasting**, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” **Then after fasting and praying** they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:2–3 ESV)*

## Purposes for Fasting<sup>1</sup>

1. Strength in Prayer (Ezra 8:23, Nehemiah 1:4; Acts 13:3)
2. Guidance (Judges 20:26,28)
3. Expression of Grief (2 Samuel 1:11-12)
4. Seek Deliverance, Protection, or Healing (2 Chronicles 20:3)
5. Repentance (Joel 2:12; Jonah 3:5-8)
6. Growth in Humility (Psalm 35:13)
7. Overcome Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)
8. Express Desire For Christ’s Advent (Luke 2:37; Matthew 9:14-15)

## Practical Advice for short term fasting (24 hours)

1. Have a set time.
2. Have a spiritual purpose.
3. Let your spouse know what is going on.
4. Ask your doctor about the health risks fasting might pose for you.

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<sup>1</sup> This list is very close to the list found in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Whitney. 164-176.

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5. Have a support team.
6. Prepare physically for your fast.
  1. Drink lots of water
  2. Cut out caffeine early
  3. Reduce calories the day before to shrink your stomach.
    1. Light meals with whole foods
7. Wake up with water
8. Pray at meal times
9. Fight the mental battle. Once you give your mind over to your next meal your focus will be hard to regain.
10. Maintain regular activities except exercise.
11. Take a nap if needed.
12. Remember God designed your body to handle prolonged periods without food. You will not starve to death in a 24 hour period.
13. Break the fast slowly.
  1. A light soup or fruit for the first meal
  2. Normal eating after your first meal
  3. Don't binge eat.
14. Reflect on what went well and what you could improve for your next fast.

## **Rivermont Fasting Schedule: (12:00 - 1:00 prayer in the Chapel)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus</b>
<b>November 5th</b>	The Lost
<b>December 3rd</b>	The Lord's Advent
<b>January 7th</b>	The Unborn
<b>February 4th</b>	Marriages
<b>March 3rd</b>	The Church
<b>March 30th - April 5th</b>	Christ-likeness
<b>May 5th</b>	The Youth
<b>June 2nd</b>	The Poor, Hurting, and Sick
<b>July 7th</b>	The Nation
<b>August 4th</b>	Family
<b>September 1st</b>	Repentance
<b>October 6th</b>	Revival/ Reformation