

SAINTS ON THE MOVE

Fasting

Some biblical, medical & practical guidelines

Dr Nicky Hambley

What is FASTING?

Voluntarily going without something (usually **food**, but could be something else eg **TV**) for a period of time.

FASTING in the Bible

Jesus knew that combining PRAYER **WITH** FASTING was a powerful spiritual weapon and it was a way of life for Him. In Luke 4:1-14, Jesus was **FULL** of the Holy Spirit and led into a 40 day fast from food (*he was not thirsty, so probably drank water*) while He engaged in spiritual warfare. He then went out in the **POWER** of the Spirit. Jesus also enjoyed times of feasting and celebration!

Jesus taught the disciples ‘WHEN you fast....’ not ‘IF you fast’ (*Matt 6:16-18*). He assumed His followers would combine prayer AND fasting like He did in order for God’s supernatural power to overcome strongholds. In Mark 9:14- 29 he tells them, “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”.

In Bible and Church History, those who fasted and prayed often received supernatural answers to their prayers, often at crucial times of decision making, repentance, or danger (*Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:15-17, Jonah 3:4-10*). So far, REVIVAL has always been preceded by prayer and fasting.

SAINTS ON THE MOVE

Fasting

Some biblical, medical & practical guidelines

Dr Nicky Hambley

What is FASTING?

Voluntarily going without something (usually **food**, but could be something else eg **TV**) for a period of time.

FASTING in the Bible

Jesus knew that combining PRAYER **WITH** FASTING was a powerful spiritual weapon and it was a way of life for Him. In Luke 4:1-14, Jesus was **FULL** of the Holy Spirit and led into a 40 day fast from food (*he was not thirsty, so probably drank water*) while He engaged in spiritual warfare. He then went out in the **POWER** of the Spirit. Jesus also enjoyed times of feasting and celebration!

Jesus taught the disciples ‘WHEN you fast....’ not ‘IF you fast’ (*Matt 6:16-18*). He assumed His followers would combine prayer AND fasting like He did in order for God’s supernatural power to overcome strongholds. In Mark 9:14- 29 he tells them, “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”.

In Bible and Church History, those who fasted and prayed often received supernatural answers to their prayers, often at crucial times of decision making, repentance, or danger (*Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:15-17, Jonah 3:4-10*). So far, REVIVAL has always been preceded by prayer and fasting.

WHY is it good for us to FAST?

To **obey** God's word (*Matt 9:15, Joel 2:12*); to **humble ourselves** before God and connect with Him and obtain **His grace and power** (*2 Chron 7:14, 1 Peter 5:6, 2 Cor 12:9*); to **overcome temptation** (*Heb 2:18*); to be **cleansed from sin and to lament and intercede for others** (*Dan 9:1-19*); for **guidance** (*Acts 13:2-3*); for **blessing others ministry** (*Acts 14:23*); for **protection** (*Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:15-17, 2 Chron 20:1-30*); to learn **self-control** and become less selfish and proud (*Gal 5:22*); to **help us to proclaim 'this gospel' in all the world, with signs and wonders of healing, repentance, and revival!** (*Matt 24:14, Mark 16:14-19, John 17:20-24, John 14:12-14, Eph 6:10-18*); to **live expectantly!** (*Luke 2:36-38*).

HOW do we FAST?

Individually (in private, and keep smiling!) AND corporately. Start slowly, maybe miss one or two meals and just drink lots of water instead. Spend the time with God in prayer, reading the Bible and listening to him.

Isn't it dangerous to go without food?

A healthy body contains plenty of stored food so short fasts are perfectly safe for most people. Exceptions may be those who are very young, old, ill, pregnant, or those with certain medical conditions such as diabetes. It is advisable to drink plenty of water. Going without fluids for more than 3 days can be dangerous.

Is there another option?

If you cannot go without food completely, a **partial fast** could be just eating vegetables, or going without screen time or something else you enjoy and then spending the time praying.

Have a go and see what God will do!

WHY is it good for us to FAST?

To **obey** God's word (*Matt 9:15, Joel 2:12*); to **humble ourselves** before God and connect with Him and obtain **His grace and power** (*2 Chron 7:14, 1 Peter 5:6, 2 Cor 12:9*); to **overcome temptation** (*Heb 2:18*); to be **cleansed from sin and to lament and intercede for others** (*Dan 9:1-19*); for **guidance** (*Acts 13:2-3*); for **blessing others ministry** (*Acts 14:23*); for **protection** (*Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:15-17, 2 Chron 20:1-30*); to learn **self-control** and become less selfish and proud (*Gal 5:22*); to **help us to proclaim 'this gospel' in all the world, with signs and wonders of healing, repentance, and revival!** (*Matt 24:14, Mark 16:14-19, John 17:20-24, John 14:12-14, Eph 6:10-18*); to **live expectantly!** (*Luke 2:36-38*).

HOW do we FAST?

Individually (in private, and keep smiling!) AND corporately. Start slowly, maybe miss one or two meals and just drink lots of water instead. Spend the time with God in prayer, reading the Bible and listening to him.

Isn't it dangerous to go without food?

A healthy body contains plenty of stored food so short fasts are perfectly safe for most people. Exceptions may be those who are very young, old, ill, pregnant, or those with certain medical conditions such as diabetes. It is advisable to drink plenty of water. Going without fluids for more than 3 days can be dangerous.

Is there another option?

If you cannot go without food completely, a **partial fast** could be just eating vegetables, or going without screen time or something else you enjoy and then spending the time praying.

Have a go and see what God will do!