

FASTING

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR FAST DAY, WHICH IS WEDNESDAY OF EACH WEEK.

A. Fasting is a voluntary abstinence from food for one or more meals. Group members are not required to fast but are invited and encouraged to participate. Individuals must pray and seek God's will for themselves. We shouldn't fast just because others are fasting. If members have never fasted before, they may need to fast only one meal in the beginning. Or if there are medical problems, certain foods such as sweets or soft drinks could be given up. Another suggestion is to fast television and spend that time in prayer.

B. Fasting was an established practice in both the Old and New Testaments. Matt 9:14-15, Mark 2:18-20, Luke 5:33-35, Nehemiah 1:4, Judges 20:26, Jonah 3:5.

C. We can have wrong motives for fasting. This usually occurs because of lack of knowledge of the Word. Some wrong motives are:

1. **To Change God's Mind:** Fasting does not change God. He is the same before, during and after we fast and pray. Fasting changes us. It will make us more sensitive to the Spirit of God and will help us keep our flesh under.

2. **To Impress Others:** We should not fast to impress others, so we should check our motives. (Luke 18:12) If we fast secretly God will reward us openly.

3. **To Get God To Change Our Mates or Others without First Being Willing To Change Ourselves:** As we take time to humble ourselves, fast, wait on God, and intercede and travail in prayer, we'll see our loved ones set free. Read carefully Isaiah 58 in several translations. Verses 6 & 7 say, "God's chosen fast is to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke." But in order for this to happen we must humble ourselves first and "remove the yoke from our midst, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness" (murmuring and complaining about our mates and circumstances).

4. **To Lose Weight:** You may indeed lose weight from fasting. However, this is not the purpose for our fast days. Going without food and experiencing hunger is not fasting. Prayer, ministering to the Lord and Bible study, should accompany fasting. We should have a specific purpose to accomplish and fasting gives us the extra time to wait on God and hear from Him.

The Full Armor

The Christian life is warfare, a spiritual conflict. We are told, first of all, to put on the full armor of God so that we "may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." Ephesians 6:11

We put on armor because we are in a **real** battle against a **real** enemy. Spiritual warfare is serious business and the Lord does not want us to be defeated. Trying to fight life's daily battles without putting on the full armor of God will bring about defeat and discouragement in our lives, and we will not last long in the battle.

According to Ephesians 6:14-18 we are to, "gird our loins about with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, shod our feet with the gospel of peace, take up the shield of faith, take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and pray at all times in the Spirit."

FASTING & PRAYER

Fasting and prayer can be one of the most powerful ways to experience God's blessings. It is the key to spiritual power. Just as eating preserves the physical life, fasting preserves the spiritual life.

- I. What is fasting?
 - A. To abstain from food or from certain kinds of food.

- II. Kinds of fasts
 - A. United fasting: Zech 8:19; Esther 4:16; 2 Sam 1:11-12; 1 Sam 7:5-6; Neh 9:1-2; Judges 20:26; 2 Chron 20:3; Jer 36:9.
 - B. Individual fasting:
 1. Moses - Exodus 34:28; Deut 9:9, 18-19
 2. Elijah - 1 Kings 19:8
 3. David - 2 Samuel 3:35; Ps 35:13, 109:22-26, 69:9-10
 4. Ahab - 1 Kings 21:27
 5. Esther - Esther 4:16
 6. Ezra (on account of idolatrous marriages of Jews) Ezra 10:1-6

- III. New Testament Fasting
 - A. Jesus - Matthew 4:1-2; Luke 4:1-2
 - B. Paul - Acts 9:9; 2 Cor 11:27, 6:5
 - C. Believers (fasted before sending out missionaries and appointing leaders) - Acts 13:2-3, 14:23
 - D. Casting out devils - Matt 17:19-21

- IV. Reasons to Fast
 - A. For a specific purpose
 - B. Gives you dominion over your body
 - C. Can receive healing for body as well as soul
 - D. Denies physical and brings you into presence of God

- V. What Fasting does
 - A. Matthew 17:21; Isaiah 58:6
 1. Loose bands of wickedness
 2. Undo heavy burdens
 3. Lets oppressed go free
 4. Breaks every yoke

- VI. Benefits of fasting
 - A. Strengthens your will
 - B. Develops your intellectual faculties and ability to concentrate more
 - C. Gives fortitude and increases vitality
 - D. Establishes a healthy attitude
 - E. Purifies body and mind
 - F. Faith in God increases

Additional scriptures: Dan 9:3, 10:1-3; 1 Sam 31:13; 2 Sam 1:12; 1 Chron 10:12; Luke 2:37; Matt 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 18:12; Acts 10:30; Neh 1:4; Ezra 8:21-23; Jonah 3:5-10

GUIDE FOR WEEKLY DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING

FAMILIES

- Families would be restored and marriages healed.
- Unsaved loved ones would have a revelation of who Jesus is, and would choose to make Him Lord and Savior of their lives.
- There would be love, acceptance, and forgiveness in homes.
- No one would feel lonely or alone.

FINANCES

- Every Covenant Keeper who needs a job would have one.
- Covenant Keepers would receive promotions and raises and would perform their jobs "as unto the Lord".
- Each person would kill the giant of debt in his or her own lives.
- Business deals and sales would go in accordance with God's will.
- There would be a harvest on seeds already planted.
- Every person would become obedient in tithing.

HEALTH

- Every Covenant Keeper would be in divine health.
- Every person would have a revelation of Mark 16:18, that as believers lay hands on the sick they will recover.
- Every emotional hurt would be healed.

INDIVIDUALS TO PRAY FOR

- Members of your group (leaders, please provide a list with spouse's names).
- Any healed marriages from your group.
- Pray that Marilyn Conrad and the Board of Directors will hear clearly the Lord's direction in any decisions they must make.
- Office Staff and volunteers.
- Intercessors.
- Regional and State Directors.
- National Directors