

The Connection Faith and Health

Biblical Fasts

- **The Normal Fast** abstaining from all food, solids and liquids, but not from water.
- **The Absolute Fasting** Abstaining from both food and liquids and water.
- **The Partial Fast Denial**, a restriction of diet rather than complete abstinence. This is the fast the church will participating in during January

2009

**Holy Redeemer Church
Consecration Fast**

*Your fast start 12midnight on Sundays
until 3pm on Fridays each week*

January 3-8

No Meat (excluding fish)

January 10-15

No Fried Foods

January 17-22

No Sweets

January 24-29

No White Starches

Renewing through Prayer and Fasting

When you think of fasting, what image comes to mind? A self-righteous Pharisee? Ascetic Monk? For many of us, these are cultural stereotypes of a person who abstains from food and prays. Often we are confused about the purpose of fasting. Fortunately, Scripture provides many examples both in the Old and New Testaments of how fasting can make a difference in our lives and ministries.

God considers fasting important, and His Word contains 92 passages mentioning it. Many of our heroes of the faith, including Moses, Elijah, Esther, Nehemiah, David and Paul, fasted at crucial points.

Jesus both taught and modeled fasting. After being anointed by the Holy Spirit, He was led into the wilderness to fast and pray for 40

days (Matthew 4:2). During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave specific instructions on how to fast (Matthew 6:16-18). Jesus knew the followers He addressed would fast. But what is the purpose of fasting in the life of the believer today? Here are some answers.

Showing Humility & Repentance; One reason we fast is to demonstrate humility before the Sovereign Creator of the universe. God responds when we diligently and wholeheartedly seek Him (2 Chronicles 7:14) Sometime this involves confession and repentance of sin. This was the case of the Ninevites (Jonah 3:5, 10). Fasting demonstrates humility by acknowledging our dependence on God. (Psalm 35:13)

Seeking God's Face More Fully Jeremiah 29:13 says

we find God when we seek Him with all our hearts. When we deliberately set aside time for fasting, we are showing we want to seek God.

Spiritual Devotion to God; the act of fasting is spiritual devotion to God done in secret. Fast focus on the spiritual man rather than the natural man, for it brings the body under subjection. Paul talks about keeping his body under subjection in I Cor.9:27. Fasting bring God presence closer and as a spiritual discipline allows more time for prayer and waiting upon the Lord. Consecration is designed to present our total person to God for empowerment, holiness and reverence; to sanctify or set aside ourselves unto God, recognizing that He is our chief joy and El-Shaddai.

Fasting: An Exercise in itself

January is the month for new beginnings, renewing and rededications of ourselves to the Lord. During the month of January, Holy Redeemer Church enters into a consecration fast of denial. We have been instructed to be

in prayer and consecration. In this first issue of Faith and Health, I want to share with you a few basic principles about fasting. While prayer is a regular part of every true believer's daily life, many Christians today have never been taught

about fasting and have little or no understanding concerning this subject. Consequently, they fail to realize that Jesus placed equal emphasis on prayer and fasting. (Matthew 6:16-18)

Beginning The Fast: Physical Preparation

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic illness.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

Prepare your body by eating smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high fat and sugary foods. Refrain from eating solids but drink liquids. Water is the best. Soda poison the digestive tract, it prohibits the purifying process and caffeine and tea stimulates the nervous system.

During the fast avoid over the counter drugs, even

natural herbal drugs and homeopathic medications. Prescription medication should only be withdrawal with the consent of your physician with supervision.

Limit activity to conserve energy. Prepare yourself for temporary mental and emotional discomfort, just as impatience, crankiness and anxiety. Expect some physical discomforts especially on the second day. You may have hunger pains. Depending on the fast, you can experience headaches, lightheadedness or just feeling "blahs". With-drawl from caffeine and sugar can cause headaches. Your body is just adjusting, using food in your digestive tract to consumed store fat.

During your fast set aside specific and significant time to worship and seek God. Plan your time so that you are unhurried and conducive to enjoying the Lord.

Begin your day my anointing your head with blessed oil and personal hygiene. Begin your day with prayer , worship and praise. Read the psalms in the morning. Take a short prayer walk during work hours. In the evening read the epistles, spend time with God and pray.

If you are marry abstain from sex with the permission of your spouse. Avoid television and carnality.

A single fast however is not a spiritual cure all. Just as we need fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit daily, we need new times of fasting before God

Prayer & Fasting; Spiritual Preparation

Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayer. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you. (MK 11:25, LK 11:4;17:3-4)

Make reinstitution as the Holy Spirit leads you. Beginning your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Heb. 11:6).

Do not underestimate spiritual

opposition. Satan will intensifies the natural battle between body and soul (Gal. 5:16-17). Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically. Through fasting we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our soul, awaken our church and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this

a priority in your fasting. God ordained fast can empower your prayers and release God's power in your life.

Breaking the Fast

When your designated time for fasting is finished you will begin to eat again. How you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well being. Begin gradually. Breaking the fast may require as much discipline as begin it. During the fast your stomach contracts and your body's digestive tract and elimination system rest. The longer you fast, the more time the diges-

tive organs need to reactivate before functioning at full speed.

If you fast one to two days, break your fast with a small glass of juice than gradually introduce small amounts of easily digestible foods such as yogurt, soup, fresh fruit and cooked vegetable. If you fast longer that two days continue with the juice for one to two days.

Remember it is your attitude toward God and your walk with Him that is important, not how long you fast.

God desire for you to love, obey, follow and enjoy Him. Deliberately abstaining from food is one way to demonstrate your commitment and sincerely in seeking Him

