

HOW SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN FAST?

Physical Suggestions:

Pray through what type of fast God is calling you to – no liquids or food of any kind, water only, or water and juice only. (The amount of physical exertion in a job may require more food intake – ask the Spirit for guidance for *your* particular fast.)

Taper off on the size and frequency of meals before starting the fast.

We are encouraging a water and juice fast this week at Alamo City, because it allows both for the discipline of the fast, and it helps to provide some energy necessary for those unavoidably active parts of our daily routines. Juices will be provided nightly in the Fellowship Hall before the services.

Consult your doctor if you have any concerns medically that might be affected by a fast – before you begin.

Juices either bought at a grocery store or prepared fresh by a “juicer” at home will be surprisingly sustaining and refreshing at times throughout the day. Particularly recommended are juices from fresh fruits and vegetables – watermelons, cantaloupes, carrot, and celery (with no salt) can also be helpful occasionally.

Keep in mind: The point is not to maintain a full stomach or to have something tasty in my mouth all day – that attitude voids the definition of the word, “fast.” By the power of the Spirit, and for the purpose of seeking with unusual intensity the Lord’s heart, I deny my natural appetites.

As large amounts of liquids (including lots of water) are consumed on a daily and nightly basis, expect to make numerous trips to the restrooms in your life!

Caffeine, chewing gum (which stimulate the digestive system), should be avoided if at all possible.

Sugar-free Breath Mints in your mouth will be appreciated by all those you talk to (!).

Low blood sugar “crankiness” can usually be remedied by fruit juices, and occasional dizziness or light-headedness (from electrolytes being depleted from your system) can be helped by vegetable broth or a sports drink like Gatorade.

The second or third day of a fast sometimes is accompanied by some physical discomfort as your body is busy cleansing itself of toxins accumulated from our “normal” diet – some nausea and a headache is not uncommon; give it to the Lord, pray for strength, and keep going – it will pass.

Try to limit your physical activity; avoid strenuous exercise. Rest as much as your schedule will allow. Short naps may be helpful – “stretching out” for a few minutes as you feel the need is not a sin!

Coming off the fast should be done slowly and carefully, particularly if you complete a 7 day or longer fast. The digestive system has been resting and must be awakened gradually adding vegetables and a complex carbohydrate like oatmeal or whole-wheat bread (no butter). On the third day after your fast, you may feel ready to return to a “sensible” diet.

Spiritual Suggestions:

There must be a stirring in your heart from the Holy Spirit to fast – that stirring may come out of a burden for a loved one, a job crisis, a health need, the need for direction or for spiritual power – ***something that has your heart's attention.***

Then “Fast your burden.” The purpose for your fast is to fast your burden (or burdens!), continually laying your need before the Lord in prayer. Begging God to do something that He is not willing to do is not the intent, but laying the burden before the Lord until I am assured of His heart in the matter is the intent. Faith rises when God's heart is made known to us by the Holy Spirit!

Keep a journal of the Lord's dealings with you: Scriptures, thoughts, your own prayers written out, anything that you believe to be significant as the week progresses. The pages of your journal will come to mean much to you in the months ahead as the Holy Spirit takes you back again and again to things He showed you during your January fast, preparing you for what was to come.

Dedicate at least as much time to prayer and the study of God's Word as you normally would spend in preparing meals and eating.

Set aside as much time as possible to be alone and still before the Lord, reading and meditating upon large portions of God's Word. Turn off Christian radio and TV. Silence your tape and CD players. There should be times just to Be Quiet, to Wait and Listen. Worship Him from the overflow of your own heart.

Identify, confess, and repent of every sin in your heart and life before and during the fast. Continue daily to ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and to reveal hidden sins.

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings in the area of past points of disobedience that need to be repented of and, wherever possible, for restitution to be made.

Relationships with others are often a key area during a fast – God will often require us to seek reconciliation or restoration in broken relationships. Follow His leadings – He is wanting to take us into freedom and joy! And His Spirit will give us strength for the journey! Fear Not His Promptings!

Join us nightly, as often as you can, in the Worship Center for evenings dedicated solely to worshipping the Lord Jesus and yielding our lives to Him, seeking His face, praying with one another, and waiting before Him for His fresh touch upon our lives!