

Flip chart

Some would have fasted, some would not have

## **Fasting Kings Centre 26 Feb 2006**

Spiritual disciplines are broken down into abstinence and engagement. Fasting is primarily a discipline of abstinence with the purpose of **engagement**. Fasting is coupled with prayer if not, it's a physical detox not spiritual exercise. Fasting and prayer too much to cover in one service

### **Man is tripartite - Difference between spirit, soul & body.**

1 Thes 5:23. *"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through, May your whole spirit soul & body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"*.

Clarity in the scriptures about Body being different from spirit and soul, but sometimes the difference between spirit and soul is not so clearly defined.

**Spirit** seat or realm of faith, hope, reverence, prayer, worship and contact with God. Jn 4:24 (*God is a Spirit ....*) The spirit of man is the sphere of God-consciousness, the inner or private office of man where the work of regeneration takes place 1 Corinthians 2:9-11 & 14 Worship and contact God

**Soul** seat or realm of imagination, the conscious and subconscious minds, conscience, memory, reason, affections – right or wrong, the will and personality. The soul of man, that is, his affections and desires, are never directed God ward until after the spirit has become regenerated. Man can never love God nor the things of God until he is born from above.

**Body** touches the material world through sight smell hearing taste & touch The body is a complex physical creation by which a person relates to this world and to other people in the world. Important to understand that at salvation your spirit is made alive and connected to God but your soul and body are not redeemed. hence Rom 12:2 says renew our minds.

You can feel both your body and your soul and are receiving information from them all the time, e.g., if I pinch you.

1 Cor 9:24-27; 6: 12 - 20 Rom 12:1; Is 58

Invitation to not yet Christians to have

### **What's all this got to do with fasting?**

During the "Renewal" or "Toronto" experience, there was an expectation that what was a spiritual experience and had physical manifestations will be transformational & character building, i.e., have fruit in the soul realm. Whilst most spiritual experiences are from spirit to soul and/or body, biblical fasting starts with the body and affects the soul and spirit.

Fasting - from the Greek word *nesteia* -- a compound of *ne* (a negative prefix) and *esthio* which means "to eat." So the basic root meaning of the word simply means "not to eat." word... which means not eating

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Biblical Fasting:

- Ezra 8: 21; Ps 35:13 humbling ourselves before God – great antidote for pride
- is exchanging the needs of the physical body for the spiritual
- is deliberately abstaining from food for a spiritual reason: communication and relationship with the Father.

What fasting is not:

- an attempt to twist God's arm or to win His approval - God doesn't respond to pressure
- Legalistic fasting. Pharisee
- Fasting cannot save your soul or win you brownie points with God.
- Just going without food Is 58
- to achieve emotional experience though God may give that

**Why fast?**

**Obedience - Fasting is Assumed by the New Testament:** When Jesus spoke about fasting, he didn't say if you fast, but "*when you fast*" (Matthew 6:16).

Most important element of fasting is the motive – why am I fasting.

**Fasting is an expression of wholeheartedness.** "*Yet even now,*" says the Lord, "*return to me with all your heart, with fasting. . .*" (Joel 2:12) Fasting puts things in proper focus. It is a physical way of saying, "Food and the things of this life are not as important to me now as ....." (fill in the blank)."

**Mourning sin, i.e. in repentance and confession:** Examples of this are found in Ezra 10:6 and Acts 9:3-9.

**A situation of impending danger; for protection:** There are occasions when death or danger threaten us "*I proclaimed a fast...that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a straight way for ourselves, our children, and all our goods*" (Ezra 8:21,23,31).

**Sickness:** There are two examples in Scripture of fasting on behalf of those who are sick: 2 Samuel 12:15-23; Psalm 35:13.

**The ordination of missionaries or church leaders:** Acts 13,3

**Special revelation:** Exceptional insights from God were sometimes given to the prophets and others during periods of fasting. Daniel sought God with fasting to ask God to fulfill His promise to restore Jerusalem (see Daniel 9:9,18 and compare with Jeremiah 29:10-13). He received through the angel Gabriel a wonderful unfolding of God's plan for Israel. If we have sought God in vain for the fulfillment of some promise, it could be that He is waiting for us to humble ourselves by fasting and seek Him as Daniel did.

**Responsive fasting:**

- Personal and others' needs & problems
- Personal revival

**Regular fasting**

- Focusing on reverencing, praising & worshiping God
- To seek direction (2 Chronicles 20:1-30)
- City or national revival
- The world, church, etc.

**Process of fasting - what to expect:**

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- Hunger pangs are normal when you first start to fast or in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 days of a long fast and soon disappear.
- Weak body

### **Physical preparation especially for longer fasts**

- No caffeine & sugar
- Smaller portions of food
- Resist the last big feast

### **Benefits of fasting**

- Reward (Mt 6:16)
- Renewed closeness with the Lord
- Greater sensitivity to spiritual things
- Fresh new spiritual insights
- The discipline of conquering the desire to eat transfers over to other areas of our lives.
- Physical benefits especially in the over nutrition of the Western world

God wants to do many amazing things, **but He looks for those willing to urgently make the corrections needed to come into line with him.** God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. This is where the power is at, because fasting puts us in harmony with an All Powerful God who demands humility from those who wish to be close to Him. Fasting humbles the “self”. When it is done for that purpose, it pleases the Spirit of God

The spiritual benefit might not be immediately evident

More time to pray as less spent in preparing & eating food, (those eating microwave diet may not find this!)

Some other Bible references on fasting: Exodus 34: 28; Nehemiah 1:4; Deuteronomy 9:9, 18; Esther 4:16; 2 Samuel 12:16, 17; Job 33:19,20; Ps 69: 10; 102: 4; Isaiah 58:6; Daniel 9:3, 20 – 23; 10:3; Jonah 3:5, 10; Joel 2:15; Matthew 4:2; 6:16; 9:15; Acts 13:3; 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 11:27, 28.