

# A Week To Explore Fasting

---

*“A fast is the self-denial of normal necessities in order to intentionally attend to God in prayer. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer. This physical awareness of emptiness is the reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy.”*

- Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

**Choosing to fast** (especially if it's a new practice) is a very personal experience. In that spirit, rather than us prescribing a different fasting experiment for you each day, instead we have assembled a number of short encouragement practices to companion you each day as you embark on whatever fasting adventure you choose with God this week.

Monday:	Bible Reflection	5 minutes
Tuesday:	Prayer For Breaking A Fast	1 minute
Wednesday:	Worship Song	6 minutes
Thursday:	Bible Reflection	5 minutes
Friday:	Breath Prayer	10 minutes
Saturday:	Worship Song	6.5 minutes
Sunday:	Bible Reflection	6-8 minutes

**Write Down What You're Choosing To Fast From This Week Here:**

## What To Fast

You might choose to fast from all food, a certain type of food (or beverage), one meal, etc. Or you might choose a non-food fast – spending, entertainment, social media, working out, etc.

## When To Fast

You can choose to fast for any specific length of time – one day, a week, a certain time period each day, sun-up to sun-down, etc.

## How To Fast

Remember the chief aim of fasting is not denial of self, but increased trust and dependence on God. More important than what you let go of, is the One you grab hold of. Pursue Jesus in it!

**\*If you are choosing a food fast of any sort, be sure to maintain adequate water intake to sustain your health and alertness during your fast. If you have any medical conditions that could be affected by fasting, consult your doctor before embarking on this practice.**

## Monday

**Bible: Matthew 6:16-21**

**5 minutes**

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

### **NIV Translation**

**Thought to Consider:** Jesus doesn't say “if” you fast, but “when” you fast; fasting is just as much a normal expectation for a follower of Christ as daily prayer and worship are.

**Questions:** 1) Why do you think Jesus cautions us to keep our fasting private? 2) How does this passage above challenge you?

## Tuesday

**Prayer: Breaking A Fast**

**1 minute**

**Consider using this prayer each day at breakfast (or whenever you first eat); or as a conclusion to your intentional fasting time(s) this week. Prayerfully allow God to use your physical hunger to stoke the fire of your spiritual hunger for his presence and Kingdom. (\*Consider not eating after 8pm to engage hunger even more intentionally!)**

*Thank you for the feeling of hunger I have experienced in my body; would you continue to use that feeling to remind me of the deep hunger in my spirit for You. Thank you for pouring new refreshment, peace and passion into my heart as I have fasted. Please help me to keep hold of this new treasure in my heart, as I return to my normal patterns of eating and drinking. Please remind me each day to take real breaks from the normality of life and the comfort of food, so that I might feast on your love and truth again. Thank you for the food and drink that I will enjoy now. This day I celebrate your eternal goodness to me. Amen.*

## Wednesday

**Worship: No Longer Slaves**

**6 minutes**

As you listen to this song and let it guide you into worship, invite God to set you free from unhealthy coping mechanisms, emotions, and substitutions for Him.

**No Longer Slaves by Bethel** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8TkUMJtK5k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8TkUMJtK5k)

## Thursday

**Bible: Isaiah 58:6-9**

**5 minutes**

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?  
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.  
Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

**NIV Translation**

**Thought to Consider:** Fasting is not an end in itself, a “goal” to obtain or accomplish; but a practice through which we open ourselves up to transformation by God’s Spirit, and to a deeper forming of God’s heart inside of us.

**Question:** What are the parts of God’s heart and character that you long to see made stronger in your own life and heart?

## Friday

### Breath Prayer: Be Still And Know

10 minutes

As you engage with this breath prayer below (based on Psalm 46:10 “Be still and know that I am God”) let it centre you, and help you invite and allow God to be your all.

#### Video –

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfNITYx0bXI&list=PLMIOAFUmG-JlnMnN6H\\_g8nb8jZeopFDPa&index=7&t=527s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfNITYx0bXI&list=PLMIOAFUmG-JlnMnN6H_g8nb8jZeopFDPa&index=7&t=527s)

(\* this is all one link – click it, or copy & paste the whole thing)

#### Downloadable Audio –

[southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/prayer/](http://southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/prayer/)

(Choose “Be Still And Know” from the menu)

## Saturday

### Worship: Nothing Else

6.5 minutes

As you listen to this song, lean into it with your heart and mind, allowing the words to be a declaration of your desire to trust Jesus to provide all you need; today and every day.

**Nothing Else by Cody Carnes** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RG5kF-a42Cc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RG5kF-a42Cc)

## Sunday

### Bible: Matthew 4:1-11

6-8 minutes

The Spirit then led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. After this fast, He was, as you can imagine, hungry. But He was also curiously stronger, when the tempter came to Jesus.

**Devil:** If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.

**Jesus (quoting Deuteronomy):** It is written, “Man does not live by bread alone. Rather he lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the Eternal One.”

Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city, Jerusalem, and he had Jesus stand at the very highest pointing the holy temple.

**Devil:** If You are the Son of God, jump! And then we will see if You fulfill the Scripture that says: “He will command His heavenly messengers concerning You, and the messengers will buoy You in their hands so that You will not crash, or fall, or even graze Your foot on a stone.

**Jesus:** That is not the only thing Scripture says. It also says “Do not put the Eternal One, your God, to the test.”

And still the devil subjected Jesus to a third test. He took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain, and he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in all their splendor and glory, their power and pomp.

**Devil:** If You bow down and worship me, I will give You all these kingdoms.

**Jesus:** Get away from Me, Satan. I will not serve you. I will instead follow Scripture, which tells us to “Worship the Eternal One, your God, and serve only Him.”

Then the devil left Jesus. And heavenly messengers came and ministered to Him.

**Thought to consider:** The point, of course, is not that Jesus couldn't have turned these stones to bread. A little later in the story He shows He can make food appear when He needs to. But Jesus doesn't work miracles out of the blue, for no reason, for show or proof or spectacle. He works them in intimate, close places; He works them to meet people's needs and to show them the way to the Kingdom.

**(The VOICE Translation)**

**Questions:** 1) If Jesus (being the very Son of God) needed to fast, how much more do we? 2) Where have you experienced Jesus working in intimate, close ways to meet your needs this week?