

## **Why Fast?**

Biblical fasting takes a lot of discipline and strength: strength which you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, see Matthew 6. When you give God your first through fasting, prayer and giving at the beginning of the year, you set the course for the entire year.

## **What to Expect:**

When you fast, your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomforts such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from meat and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast.

## **Instructions:**

Prayer - Spend time listening to praise and worship music, sermons, or the bible. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face. Fasting - We are engaging in the Daniel's Fast which includes eating the following items: fruits, nuts, grains, legumes, vegetables, and water only. We will refrain from all other foods during this time.

## **Daniel Fast: Daniel 1:11-16 NKJV**

11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants."

14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies.

16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

## **WHY WE FAST**

Fasting is:

1. Strategically making space for God in your busy life.
2. Stepping into the heart of God and withdrawing from your normal everyday life.

During this time, you should limit entertainment (television, media, music and internet) because it has the ability to contaminate a fast.

3. Pulling yourself away from the normalcy of life and consciously spending more time with God than you do in your normal routine.

4. Your body talking to God for you. It is humbling yourself while expressing your hungry heart to God and it is a time when God will draw nearer to you!

### **PLANNING FOR THE FAST**

**Examine your heart to see if there is anything standing in the way of God responding.**

Do you believe that God can and will perform miraculous healing, that He speaks to us today, that He does answer prayer, blesses obedience ... ? If you have any doubts, meditate on Mark 9:24 and ask God to help you overcome your unbelief. Is there a broken relationship you have not tended to, a grudge you are holding on to, are you living outside of God's will in your daily life? Matthew 5:34 says "leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

**Become familiar with Daniel Fast food guidelines, and "customize"**- determine what foods you will include and exclude in your fasting eating plan. Ask yourself which Daniel Fast food guidelines you can commit to and follow without legitimately compromising your health or your ability to work, serve, or relate to others in a God honoring way.

**Make a grocery list of Daniel Fast foods you will include in your eating plan.** Research recipes from websites and blogs about the Daniel Fast, or do a google search of vegan recipes and eliminate any ingredients to be avoided in the fast. Add ingredients for any recipes to your grocery list. If you work during the day, be sure to plan for meals and snacks you can take to work, and put those items on your grocery list. Wait to shop until 1 or 2 days before your fast begins so fruits & vegetables are fresh.

**Cut down your food intake and start weaning yourself off of sweeteners, dairy products, meats, and other non-fast foods you usually consume a large quantity of in the 3 to 5 days before your fast start date.** Use the foods in your refrigerator and cabinet that will be on lock-down once the fast begins. You may find that you don't have a desire for these foods any longer after the fast ends.

**Decide on and gather your quiet time prayer and study tools.** Plan what time and where you will meet with God daily. Make plans to join the CVAC prayer program nightly @ 7pm. One day before your fast begins, make a pot of vegetarian chili, vegetable soup, mushroom barley pilaf or other dish so something is available for a quick meal to get you started eating the right foods, or to have on hand when you can't think of anything to eat and you're hungry.

**Take inventory – a "BEFORE" picture of your physical and spiritual health.** Spend some time in a journal crafting your "before" picture ... physically – how much do you weigh? how much energy do you have? how do you feel? what physical limitations do you have? what health concerns do you have? what medications do you take regularly? does your physical health support all you want to do in life, what God is asking you to do? what about stress? do you feel convicted to get more sleep, eat healthier foods, get some exercise, or change other habits to honor the body God gave you? ... spiritually – do you

have a daily discipline of prayer and time in the Word? do you involve God in the decisions you make? do you call upon God throughout the day in even the smallest of matters? are you growing in your spiritual journey or stalled out at the same place as you were last year? how do you live out your faith in your family, at work, with friends? do you seek revelation of God's will or move forward with your own agenda? are you connected with other believers? can you see evidence of God working in your life? are you pursuing a deeper relationship with God continually? are you serving God by serving others? do you take seriously and act on the charge to make disciples of all the nations?

**Pray for this period of preparation.** Father, I want to draw closer to You. I want to know You and experience You. In a few days I will start on the Daniel Fast. I ask now that You open my heart. Prepare me. Show me the things You want me to see about myself. Teach me more about You and Your Word. Help me to see Your wisdom, Your grace, and Your purpose for my life. Amen. (From Susan Gregory's "The Daniel Fast for the Body, Soul and Spirit").