

Personal Guide for Fasting (English)

Vision Global Church

January 30 – February 1, 2015

Personal Guide for Congregational Fasting at Vision Global Church

January 2015 - 3 days of Partial Fasting

What is Fasting?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His followers to fast, and He said that God rewards fasting. Fasting, according to the Bible, means to voluntarily reduce or eliminate your intake of food for a specific time and purpose.

"When you give up eating, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They make their faces look sad to show people they are giving up eating. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give up eating, comb your hair and wash your face. Then people will not know that you are giving up eating, but your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you."
Matthew 6:16-18 (NCV)

Fasting is a principle that God intended for everyone to be able to enjoy. It's not a punishment; it's a privilege! By making fasting a way of life, you can get closer to God and grow in your spiritual walk like never before. Fasting is one of the most powerful weapons God has given us for our daily lives. Through fasting, you can experience a release from the bondage of sin ... restoration in your relationships ... financial blessings ... spiritual renewal ... supernatural healing and so much more!

Why Fast?

There are many good reasons, and even health benefits, for fasting. However, our partial fast at Vision Global Church on 1/30, 1/31 and 2/1 is for three primary reasons:

1-Personal Alignment to the will of God. During this fast ask God for greater sensibility to his Spirit and that HIS will be done in your life. That just like it is in Heaven may it be done in your home and family.

2-Congregacional Alignment to the will of God. Ask from God that we may clearly hear his will for our church and that only that which he desires be done. That the heavens be opened in our congregation and that his river flow.

3-Revival for our city. Ask God for a pouring of his Spirit in Houston. That the evil thrones in our city be destroyed by the power of the Holy Spirit. That a hunger for God inundate our city and that many desire to know the true God. Proclaim words of life over your neighborhood and ask God to restore our land.

"If my people, who belong to me, humble themselves, pray, seek to please me, and repudiate their sinful practices, then I will respond from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. ." 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NET)

The Importance of Fasting

Often in the Bible, God's people fasted immediately before a major victory, miracle, or answer to prayer. It prepared them for a blessing!

- Moses fasted before he received the Ten Commandments – Exodus 34:28
- The Israelites fasted before a miraculous victory – 2 Chronicles 20:2-3
- Daniel fasted in order to receive guidance from God – Daniel 9:3
- Nehemiah fasted before beginning a major building project – Nehemiah 1:4
- Jesus fasted during His victory over temptation – Luke 4:2
- The first Christians fasted during decision making times – Acts 13:2-3

TWO CAUTIONS

1. Remember that fasting is not "earning" an answer to prayer. God cannot be blackmailed by human effort. God wants to answer our prayers and He answers out of grace. Fasting simply prepares us for God's answer.
2. Fast only if your health allows it at this time. If you are able to do the partial fast, don't stop eating. Only make adjustments (see guide for ideas on doing an adjusted fast). Do what you can in faith and God will honor your intentions.

Type of Fast and its Requirements

- **Who:** Our church, Vision Global, will be participating in a congregational fast. We ask that every adult that attends our church join us in doing this partial fast.
- **When:** The fast is for three days. Starting on Friday, January 30th and finishing on Sunday, February 1st.
- **How:** The fast is a partial fast for half days. Fasting Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the mornings until noon time. After noon time it is permissible to eat food. However we recommend not eating heavy foods so that the fast can be beneficial to your body. Spiritually speaking you should concentrate on switching physical food for Spiritual. Fasting is not simply denying your body of physical food but to dedicate more time to prayer and meditation of the word to enter into a deeper relationship with God. If during a fast you misuse your energy in worrying about a lot of chores and neglect to have special times with God, you will die of hunger not only physically but also spiritually. You will find yourself every time more frustrated and discouraged with the fast instead of blessed and strengthened.

Adjusted Fast

If it is not possible to fast half days then we recommend the following options:

- Option 1 – During the morning consume only juices containing fruits and vegetables.
- Option 2 – During the morning do a Daniel Fast. This is a fast with no meat, sweet foods, or strong drinks (see Daniel 10:2-3). This type of fast can be considered a vegetarian diet because there is no meat intake.

Other Activities to Fast:

Although not mentioned in the Bible we as Christians today can also commit to fasting from other activities:

- Electronics
- Computers
- TV
- Video games
- Limited cell phone use if possible.
- Try to give up some entertainment like sports and movies and focus more on prayer and studying the Word of God during the times we do some of the mentioned activities.

How to Prepare Spiritually?

In preparation for this special time with God, it is necessary to examine our Hearts to detect any sin we have not confessed.

The scriptures establish that God requires that the people repent from their sins before he can hear their prayer.

“Come! Listen, all you who are loyal to God! I will declare what he has done for me. I cried out to him for help and praised him with my tongue. If I had harbored sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. However, God heard; he listened to my prayer. God deserves praise, for he did not reject my prayer or abandon his love for me!” Psalm 66:16-20 (NET)

Confess not only your obvious sins but also those sins that have been omitted. These are some examples of when we have failed to maintain our first love: a carnal mind, egocentrism, spiritual indifference, a lack of disposition to share our faith with others, not passing enough time in the Word or prayer, a bad relationship with your spouse, your kids, your church, or your pastor.

Another form of preparation is to practice “spiritual breathing”. Just like physical breathing, this implies simply to exhale the vicious and inhale the pure. We must take sin out of our lives by means of confession and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you and to take control of your life. This will help you during the fast to resist the temptation to sin and to abandon your commitment.

As you enter this time of heightened spiritual devotion, be aware that Satan will do everything he can to pull you away from your prayer and Bible reading time. When you feel the enemy trying to discourage you, immediately go to God in prayer and ask Him to strengthen your resolve in the face of difficulties and temptations. The enemy makes you a target because he knows that fasting is the most powerful of all Christian disciplines and that God may have something very special to show you as you wait upon Him and seek His face. Satan does not want you to grow in your faith, and will do anything from making you hungry and grumpy to bringing up trouble in your family or at work to stop you. Make prayer your shield against such attacks.

The Correct Focus

Do not become so caught up in praying for yourself and others that you forget about simply reverencing and praising God. True spiritual fasting focuses on God. Center your total being on Him, your attitudes, actions, motives, desires, and words. This can only take place if God and His Holy Spirit are at the center of your attention. Confess your sins as the Holy Spirit brings them to your attention and continue to focus on God and God alone so that your prayers may be powerful and effective.

A renewed closeness with God and a greater sensitivity to spiritual things are usually the results of a fast. Do not be disappointed if you do not have a "mountaintop experience," as some do. Many people who have successfully completed extended fasts tell of feeling a nearness to God that they have never before known, but others who have honestly sought His face report no particular outward results at all. For others, their fast was physically, emotionally, and spiritually grueling, but they knew they had been called by God to fast, and they completed the fast unto Him as an act of worship. God honored that commitment. Your motive in fasting must be to glorify God, not to have an emotional experience, and not to attain personal happiness. When your motives are right, God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him in a very special way.

James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.” He has amazing things in store for us, but in order to see them come to pass we must humble ourselves before the only one true God!