



PALMSUNDAY

AT MIDLOTHIAN BIBLE

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Fasting as Christian
spiritual discipline is a good
tool to further fuel our
hunger for God and His
ways.

The Heart of Fasting

Matthew 9:9-17

- The call of Matthew. 9:9
- A question of why you eat with these people?
9:10-13
- A question of why are you eating? 9:14-17



Question

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”



Response

¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.



¹⁶ No one puts a piece of **unshrunk cloth** on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. ¹⁷ Neither is **new wine** put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”



¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is **taken away** from them, **and then they will fast.**”



²¹ For to me to live is Christ, **and to die is gain.**

²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Philippians 1:21–23

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Revelation 22:3-4

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God, I hunger more for you and your ways so much that I am voluntarily going without the good gift of food — or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God — to focus more on you and pray for your spiritual purposes.

As an act of faith, Christian fasting is an expression of dissatisfied contentment in the all-sufficiency of Christ. It is an expression of secure and happy longing for the all-satisfying fullness of Christ. Christian fasting does not tremble in the hope of earning anything from Christ. It looks away from itself to the final payment of Calvary for every blessing it will ever receive. Christian fasting is not self-wrought discipline that tries to deserve more from God.

It is a hunger for God awakened by the taste of God freely given in the gospel. ... Fasting is not a no to the goodness of food or the generosity of God in providing it. Rather, it is a way of saying, from time to time, that having more of the Giver surpasses having the gift. ... Food is good. But God is better.

John Piper in *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer*.

Details for Fasting

Types of fasting:

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1. REGULAR FAST is done by abstaining from all food, both solid and liquid, except for water.
2. PARTIAL FAST is a limitation of some food but not all.
3. ABSOLUTE FAST where one does not partake in any food or water. **WE ARE NOT INVITING YOU TO DO THIS.**



We are inviting you to consider:

1. A REGULAR FAST or PARTIAL FAST .
2. One meal day, or two meals a day or perhaps one day you abstain from all meals if experienced.
3. Think through medical conditions & any relational or work requirements.
4. If not led to abstain from food, consider another good gift.



Purposes for fasting given in Scripture:

to strengthen prayer, to seek God's guidance, to express grief, to seek deliverance or protection, to express repentance and the return to God, to humble oneself before God, to express concern for the work of God; to minister to the needs of others, to overcome and dedicate yourself to God, to express love and worship to God.

Donald S Whitney *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 1991, 164-165.

1) To hunger to know more of the Bible because it is God's Word to us; to abide more closely with Our Savior Jesus; to more fully allow the Spirit to manifest His fruit in our lives.

2) To hunger for God's glory to resound in our church, the churches of our community, the churches of the world; and the Gospel to resound on Resurrection Sunday and everyday among the nations, peoples, tribes, and languages.

3) To hunger for King Jesus to return & His Kingdom to come in its fullness as described in Revelation 19-22.

4) To fast because we want to hunger more for God than for anything the world has to offer.

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