

# FASTING

FASTING - abstaining from food, partially or completely, for a special spiritual purpose.

## I. Biblical Reasons for Fasting

- 1) *Means to draw closer to God* (Mt 4:1-11).
- 2) *Means of intensively petitioning before God; seeking His response* (II Sam 12:16-23; Esther 4:16; Ezra 8:23; Neh 1:4; Judges 20:26; Dan 9:3).
- 3) *Means of repentance* (Neh 9; Joel 2:12; Jonah 3).
- 4) *Means to humble ourselves before God* (Ps 35:13, 69:10).
- 5) *Means of dedication and preparation* (Acts 13:1-3, 14:23).
- 6) *Can be associated with worship* (Luke 2:36-37; Acts 13:1-2).

## II. Issues/Principles

- 1) Fasting without obedience is worthless; God wants us to follow His ways and is not moved by insincere fasting (Jer 14:10-12; Zech 7).
- 2) Fasting is often combined with prayer in scripture (Luke 2:37; Acts 13:3, 14:23).
- 3) Fasting should be done without fanfare (i.e. secretly) (Mt 6:16-18).

## III. What are some practical ways to fast?

- 1) Choose a specific fasting alternative. Ideas:
  - a) Fast from something you like to eat for 5 days
  - b) Observe a complete 24 hour fast (e.g., from 7:00 pm Saturday until 7:00 pm Sunday; drink lots of water!)
  - c) Observe a 36 hour fast (e.g., from 7:00 pm Saturday until 7:00 am Monday; drink lots of water!)
- 2) Accompany your fast with times of Scripture reading, prayer, and worship
- 3) Consider writing down your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual responses and evaluate your experience. Plan for your next fast.