

21 Day Prayer & Fasting

One-Off Publication To Encourage Creating Bible Study Virtual Communities & Our Faith
In Our Lord Jesus Christ As We Survive The Impact of SARS COV 2 In Our World

Pic: Mountain Where Our Lord Jesus Prayed & Fasted in Israel for 40 Days



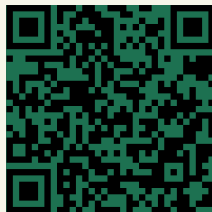
For the past two years since SARS, God has spoken to my heart to always begin the year with my home church's corporate 21 day fast and even though I practice regular fasting as a mature believer, and typically every Wednesday is my prayer and fasting day, I do value church corporate prayer and fasting days. I feel encouraged surrounded by a body of believers in a fasting season where we are harmonizing prayerfully in 100% agreement for each person's needs and experiencing a miraculous manifestation of God in each person's life. God is so real, I know this because I experience Him even in my career so many times; even today am sitting here smiling because of an **undisputed act of God** that happened today at the office!

It takes a high level of spiritual maturity to understand accurate biblical perspectives when it comes to fasting. In Matthew 6:1-18 our Lord, gives instructions to His disciples on 3 related duties [**giving alms, praying, and fasting**]. And in each case He places His main emphasis on the **motive**, and warns us against religious ostentation for the sake of impressing men like praying to impress people in public or fasting then looking all 'fasted dry with no oil on our faces' from head to toe. Reading that passage reveals that He assumes all His disciples **will practice all 3 of these duties** based on the language which He uses concerning each.....

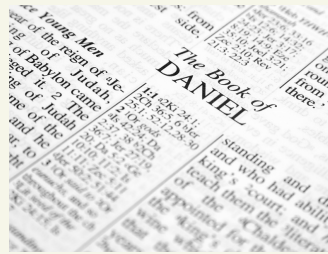
Psalms 96:1 Sing A New Song Unto The Lord

Worship Music Accompaniment QR Code -

search me oh god/ I surrender all - carman



In verse 2 He says, "**When thou doest alms...**" In verse 6 He says, "**When thou (singular) prayest...**" (individually); and in verse 7, "**When ye (plural) pray...**" (collectively). In verse 16 He says, "**When ye (plural) fast...**" (collectively); and in verse 17, "**When thou (singular) fastest...**" (individually). In no case does our Lord say, "if" but always "when." Clearly, our Lord expects that all His disciples will regularly practice all three of these duties. And the **parallel between prayer and fasting is exact!** If Christ expects His disciples to **pray regularly**, then by the same token He expects **them also to fast regularly.**



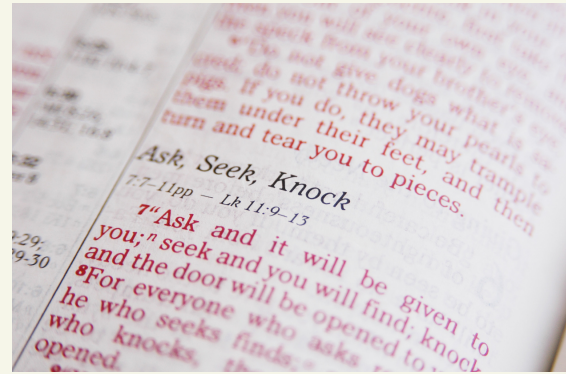
"It takes a high great level of spiritual maturity to understand accurate biblical perspectives when it comes to fasting"

You see, fasting was an accepted part of religious duty among the Jewish people in Christ's day. They had practiced it continuously from the time of Moses onward. Both the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist fasted regularly. The people were surprised that they did not see the disciples of Jesus doing the same, and they asked them the reason. ["And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto Him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not? "And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the Bridegroom with them they cannot fast. "But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them and then shall they fast in those days" Mark 2:18-20].

And, the Bridegroom, as always in the New Testament, is Christ Himself. The children of the bride chamber are the disciples of Christ (about Whom the question had been asked).....

The period while the Bridegroom is with them corresponds to **the days of Christ's ministry on earth**. The period when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them started **when Christ ascended back to heaven, and will continue until He returns for His church!** meanwhile, the church, as a bride, is awaiting the return of the Bridegroom. So this is the period we are now living, and concerning which Jesus says very definitely, "And then shall they (the disciples) fast in those days."

So, fasting is a mark of true Christian discipleship, ordained by Jesus Himself. Fasting is endorsed not merely by the teaching of Jesus, but also by His own personal example! Immediately after being baptized in Jordan by John the Baptist, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to spend **40 days fasting in the wilderness!** And during those 40 days, Jesus came into direct spiritual conflict with satan



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I like how Luke expresses the differences describing Jesus before and after His fast [Luke 4:1, we read: "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan...." At the end, in Luke 4:14 we read: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."] Wow! When Jesus went into the wilderness He was already full of the Holy Spirit. But when He came out again after fasting, He returned in the power of the Spirit. Halleluya, it would appear that the potential of the Holy Spirit's power, which Jesus received at the time of His baptism in Jordan, only came forth into full manifestation after He had completed His fast.

Fasting was the final phase of preparation through which He had to pass before entering into His public ministry! And also, the same spiritual laws that applied in Christ's own ministry apply also in the ministry of His disciples. In John 14:12 Jesus says, "...He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also..." By these words Jesus opens the way for His disciples to follow in the pattern of His own ministry. Then in John 13:16 Jesus also says, "...the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent, greater than He that sent him." This applies to the preparation for ministry or a work of God in careers or business. If fasting was a necessary part of Christ's own preparation, it must play a part also in the disciples preparation! I practice fasting and as I have matured in my walk with the Lord, I intentionally place fasting as a prerequisite before I do anything that is a defining moment for my purpose on earth. Before you start a project at the office fast and pray, before you accept a marriage proposal ladies pray and fast, before you expand your business pray and fast, before you start a family as a couple pray and fast, before you write a book, pray and fast, ahh I also pray and fast before I speak in any platform or market place event, lets continue to always fast and pray, before we do anything significant in our lives. Lets try to be like Jesus in everything no matter how hard, I know its not easy but take baby steps and you'll make it! Its not optional for a believer so it must be a lifestyle..... can't recall who specifically but I heard one time there's one God's general that was used mightily who said, "the believer who knows to fast and does not fast will find themselves backslidden one day and not understand how it happened" Fasting also helps us remain connected to God and its a chance for us to practice self humbling before the Lord. It's our chance to be conformed into the image of the pattern Son, He fasted, esther must fast....

"Fasting was the final phase of preparation through which He had to pass before entering into His public ministry"



Also, Paul was a true disciple of Jesus because fasting played a vital part in his ministry. Immediately after his first encounter with Christ on the Damascus road, Paul spent the next 3 days without food or drink (Acts 9:9). Thereafter fasting was a regular part of his spiritual discipline because in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Paul lists various ways in which he had proved himself a true minister of God....In verse 5, two of the ways which he lists are: "in watchings, in fastings." Watching means going without sleep [like a watch night prayer events or even praying at home in the night sacrificing sleep to intercede for others]; **fasting means going without food**. Both these disciplines were practiced by Paul to make his ministry fully effective!

Again, in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, Paul returns to this theme and says "Are they ministers of Christ?...I am more..." He then gives a long list of ways he had proved himself a true minister of Christ. In verse 27 he says: "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often...." Here again Paul joins watching closely with fasting. **The plural form in fastings often**, indicates that Paul devoted himself to frequent periods of fasting. Hunger and thirst refers to occasions when neither food nor drink was available during his many church planting mission trips. Fastings refers to occasions when food was available, but Paul deliberately abstained for spiritual reasons!

What about the new testament church?

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. "As these ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" Acts 13:1-3



Here we see **praying and fasting together** described as ministering to the Lord! And in our world today, it's rare to hear people share about this aspect of ministry. Yet in the divine order, **ministry to the Lord comes before ministry to men or working hard in the career space!** Out of the ministry to the Lord, the Holy Spirit brings forth the direction and the power needed for effective ministry to God's children who serve Him either in ministry or careers in the marketplace!

As they **prayed and fasted together**, the Holy Spirit revealed that He had a special task for two of them.....Barnabas and Saul (later called Paul). I love it! I love praying and fasting in a group with devout believers that are experiencing transformation and I love it when God speaks among us! The Spirit of GOD said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." However, **they were not yet ready to undertake the task!** They still required the impartation of the special grace and power that was needed for the task that lay ahead.

For this purpose, all 5 men **fasted and prayed together the second time!** That's the scripture that inspired the prayer and fasting days that we prayed for my career growth as a release engineer!....after the second period of fasting, the other leaders laid their hands on Barnabas and Paul, and sent them forth to fulfill their task. Halleluyah! it was through **collective prayer and fasting that Barnabas and Paul received, first, the revelation of a special task, and second, the grace and power needed to fulfill that task.**

At the time they all prayed and fasted together, Barnabas and Paul....like the other three men were recognized as prophets and teachers. **But after being sent forth to their task, they were described as apostles!** [Acts 14:4,14]....this is so powerful, after collective prayer and fasting, by 5 men of God at the church of Antioch, **the apostolic ministry of Barnabas and Paul was born!** I love it! I want all the milestones in my destiny and the path that God has for my life to be born out of prayer and fasting always! I am confident that where I am today in 2022 was born out of PRAYER AND FASTING, so am aligned with God, in His perfect will and path exactly how He planned my path!

"Barnabas and Paul....like the other three men were recognized as prophets and teachers. But after being sent forth to their task, they were described as apostles!"

And look at how Paul and Barnabas transmitted this practice of collective prayer and fasting to the congregations of new disciples which were established in other cities as a result of their ministry [And...they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith...And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" Acts 14:21-23]. Yes its the men of God! there's something powerful when men can come together like that in prayer and fasting....also women, but men are powerful, they are God's head in their family unit and when they are anointed like that....oh my goodness, let the men of God arise in our generation, let men come together for prayer and fasting and seeking God for our generation in this year and always! More disciples and apostles in our generation!!

So, taken together, chapters 13 and 14 of the Book of Acts reveals that collective prayer and fasting played a vital role in the growth and development of the New Testament church. It was through prayer and fasting together that the early Christians received direction and POWER from the Holy Spirit for decisions or tasks of special importance. We need that today during a historic pandemic, we need regular prayer and fasting, nobody will figure this out on their own, we need heavenly intervention in the affairs of man and that can only happen by prayer and fasting!



"I survived SARS COV 2 Through The power of regular corporate Prayer & Fasting"

So I pray with everyone reading this letter, I harmonize and agree with you that as we pray and fast at the beginning of the year 2022, we will remain encouraged to be a people who regularly pray and fast. Heavenly Father, reveal the power of prayer and fasting to somebody that has not experienced it yet Lord, Let this Word of the Lord illuminate and flood the eyes of our understanding with light that there is a heavenly expectation for us to fast. For those who have new ministry doors, careers and divinely directed opportunities to undertake I touch and agree with them that they are receiving heavenly empowerment to take territories for Jesus that they are already empowered to grow and expand for the glory of God in Jesus name AMEN!

Pray
&
Fast
Always

With Much Gratitude, I am,

-Esther Gatuma!

