

## Fasting Guidelines

Fasting isn't	Fasting is
a necessity. God loves you very much. He won't be angry with you if you don't fast.	a choice. Jesus expects that his followers will fast, not just the keen ones Matthew 6. 16-18. Luke 5.34-35.
a way of twisting God's arm to answer your prayers.	a submission of your will and your body to the Lord. He changes your heart as you spend time with Him. You end up praying for His will to be done.
a priority hotline to heaven.	dialling down the noise of the immediate, the here and now and shifts your attention onto the eternal. This is not about flesh and blood but rather a battle in the heavenly realms. Eph 6.12
a diet.	a discipline for a fixed period. By saying 'no' to food which you encounter and desire on a daily basis, you can train to say 'no' sin.
a chance to spend more time in bed/ online/ watching TV/ working through lunch.	time to spend with God, focusing your attention on Him in prayer and worship.
a badge to wear so your friends, colleagues or family can either be impressed by your resolve or hide the cake out of pity.	a personal commitment between you and the Lord. Don't advertise it but don't lie about it either - it can lead to some great conversations! Fasting together and encouraging one another in the process can be very powerful.
imagining how good your next meal will taste.	a reminder of God and our dependence on Him. Every time you get a pang of hunger is a time to pause, to listen, to worship, to pray.
	a prayer amplifier. Your body shows your spirit what it is like to be hungry. For me, it feels like turning the volume up.
	an insight into what it is like to be hungry and a reminder to be thankful for every single meal.

### Be sensible

If you are pregnant or breast feeding, don't fast.

If you are unwell or have a medical condition such as diabetes or a digestive disorder. We would normally suggest you sought the advice of your doctor before fasting but because of the pressure on the NHS we would suggest that you DO NOT fast.

If you have an eating disorder or are recovering from one, just shelve this idea: your priority needs to be developing a healthy relationship with food. God loves you very much.

If you have had an eating disorder a long while in the past, EXAMINE your motives to fast really carefully. If there is a hint of your old way of thinking, don't even go there. If your motives are clear then be very accountable during your fast with someone who has permission to ask you tough questions.

Don't drink alcohol during or immediately after a fast but do drink plenty of water (*good advice if you are fasting or not*).

Avoid feasting immediately before and after fasting. When you start eating again, especially after a longer fast, start with a small meal or snack.

### Be intentional

Before our week of prayer and fasting, plan WHEN you will fast and WHAT prayer meetings you want to attend.

Are you going without food for the 7 days solid? Are you going without lunch for the week so you can pray in the middle of the day? Will you intentionally miss 1 meal for the first time? If you know that you can easily fast for 1 day, are you going to try that 2nd or 3rd day?

Whatever your fast looks like, be expectant. Spending more time with your Father is always a good thing!