

Real Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18

¹⁶“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.¹

What is fasting?

To fast means to go without food

- Normal fast – go without food, but not water (Matthew 4:1-2)
- Absolute fast – go without food and water (Esther 4:16)
- Partial fast – go without certain foods (Daniel 10:2-3)

Why do people fast?

Fasting allows you to use the time you would spend in another activity to focus on your relationship with God

Fasting is always associated with prayer

When do people fast?

- Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-34; 23:26-32)
- Seek God’s aid (Ezra 8:21-23)
- Confession of sin (Nehemiah 9:1-3)
- National crisis (Esther 4:16)
- Intercede for others (2 Samuel 12:16; Daniel 9:3-20)
- Mourning (Daniel 10:2-3)
- Preparing for something new (Matthew 4:1-2; Acts 9:9)
- Choosing leaders (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23)

How do people fast?

- Avoid hypocrisy (Matthew 6:16)
- Do it in secret (Matthew 6:17-18)

How can people fast today?

Food	Technology
Possessions	TV

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001