



**RIVERSIDE
CHURCH**

We're Fasting.

What is Fasting?

Fasting is the practice of giving up something we normally consume or engage in so we can create space and time to focus more fully on God.

Why Fast?

“Fasting is universal temperance, prayer is universal communication with God; the former defends from the outside, whereas the latter directs a fiery weapon against the enemies. The demons can sense a faster and man of prayer from a distance, and they run far away from him so as to avoid a painful blow.”

— *Theophan the Recluse*

Jesus Himself assumed His followers would fast:

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

— *Matthew 6:17–18 (NIV)*

A Quick Introduction

In Scripture, fasting is a way of setting aside normal activities—most often food—to redirect time, energy, and attention toward God.

In the ancient world, preparing a meal could take hours (butchering, fire-building, cooking, serving). By skipping a meal, people freed up time to pray and seek the Lord. Today, fasting still calls us to exchange what sustains the body for what sustains the soul: God’s presence and His Word.

Fasting is not just abstaining from food—it is *feasting on God*. As Jesus declared:

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”



Corporate Fasting

Fasting is often personal, but the Bible also speaks of corporate fasts.

- **In the Old Testament:** Israel fasted in times of national repentance and crisis, crying out for God's mercy and breakthrough.
- **In the New Testament:** Jesus said, "This kind only comes out by prayer and fasting," showing its power in spiritual warfare. In Acts 13, the church fasted before sending Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey.

Fasting often precedes breakthroughs. When we are physically weak, we can become spiritually strong—more alert, more dependent, more open to God's power. Jesus Himself fasted 40 days in the wilderness before launching His ministry.

Maybe the breakthrough you're longing for—in your life, family, church, or city—will only come through prayer and fasting.

How to Fast

These suggestions focus on fasting from food, but fasting can also include other distractions. Ask the Holy Spirit what He might lead you to set aside:

- Social media
- Alcohol
- Talking (silence as a discipline)
- Entertainment or sports
- Screens/devices

Practical Tips

- **Start small:** Try skipping one meal a day for a week, or consider a "Daniel fast" (vegetables, no rich foods). Build up gradually.
- **Plan ahead:** Free your schedule so fasting time becomes prayer time, not just "more work." Make sure you're medically able—consult a doctor if needed.
- **Watch your heart:** Pay attention to what God is revealing in your motives, desires, or attitudes.
- **Push through discomfort:** Early hunger pangs are normal—let them remind you to pray. Your body may also detox; thank God for renewal inside and out.
- **Worship as you fast:** Stay in a posture of adoration—outwardly working, inwardly singing.
- **Use wisdom:** Be mindful of weakness—don't overexert. Break your fast gently with a light meal.



The Aim of Riverside's Church Wide Fast

We believe Prayer is Plan A. Prayer is talking with God...hearing from Him and sharing ourselves in response. The most direct communication with God comes by the Holy Spirit and His Word. This year as we fast monthly, you are encouraged to use your fasting time to contemplatively read the Bible. Take the time that you would use doing other things to read and pray on God's word. We believe that God will speak to you through this time.

Please reach out to peter our pastor of spiritual of spiritual of formation for additional direction peter@riversidechurch.org

Recommended Resources

- *Celebration of Discipline* — Richard Foster
- *Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting* — Derek Prince
- *God's Chosen Fast* — Arthur Wallis
- [7 Steps to Fasting](#) — Bill Bright (Cru)

