

Community FAST

14 DAYS OF PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR EASTER



MONDAY, MARCH 23 - SUNDAY, APRIL 5

Fasting is a spiritual discipline in which we willingly restrict food intake to seek God with greater focus. It can also create temporary changes in our energy, hunger, and mood. Having a strong game plan will help you fast, safely, and effectively.

How Fasting Affects Your Body

- When you fast, insulin levels drop, and your body shifts from mainly burning incoming food to using stored energy (glycogen and body fat).
- Most of the “deep” benefits people hear about (cell cleanup/autophagy, disease risk reduction) come from longer or more intensive fasts than we are doing as a church, but shorter fasts can still support overall health.
- Short, repeated fasts (like skipping a meal or using a daily eating window) can improve blood sugar control and metabolic health over time.
- This church fast is not primarily a weight loss plan; it is a spiritual practice that may have some physical benefits on the side.

Three Levels of Participation (Choose One)

LEVEL 1 - GIVE UP ONE FOOD OR DRINK

- Pick one daily item to lay down for the whole two weeks (examples: soda, sweets/desserts, alcohol, sugary coffee drinks).
- Eat your normal meals, but stay consistent in giving up that one item as an act of worship and self-control.

LEVEL 2 - FAST FROM ONE MEAL EACH DAY (16/8 STYLE)

- Choose one meal (most people find skipping breakfast easiest) and keep it the same each day.
- Example: First food at 12 pm, last food by 8 pm about a 16-hour fast and 8-hour eating window.
- Focus on two solid meals in your window with good protein, whole food carbs, and fats.

LEVEL 3 - ONE MEAL A DAY (20-22 HOUR FAST)

- Aim for 20-22 hours without calories, with a 2-4 hour eating window (for example, eating only between 4-7 pm).
- This is not about perfection; some days will be harder than others. Use hunger as a cue to pray and refocus on the Lord.
- Make your one meal intentional, unhurried, and built around high-quality protein.

Building Up Before March 23

If you are new to fasting, ease in so it's not a shock to your system.

- Days 1–3: Stop nighttime snacking; keep a 12-hour eating window (e.g., 7 am–7 pm).
- Days 4–6: Move to a 14-hour fast (first food at 9 am, last food by 7 pm).
- Days 7–10: Progress toward a 16-hour fast (first food at 10–11 am, last food by 6–7 pm).
- If choosing Level 3, try 1–2 “practice” days of 18–20 hours fasting before March 23.

Protein, Calories, and Preserving Lean Mass

Fasting does not mean ignoring nutrition when you eat; what you eat in your window matters.

- Make protein the priority at every meal (aim for a palm-sized or larger portion of quality protein such as meat, eggs, Greek yogurt, or similar).
- General rule of thumb: eat enough overall to maintain lean mass and your usual activity, not to “starve” yourself.
- For many adults, a rough fasting-period guideline is about 8–12 calories per pound of body weight per day (for example, a 180 lb person might average 1,400–2,100 calories, adjusted for size, sex, and activity).
- Avoid “making up for it” with a huge, highly processed or very sugary meal; break your fast with a smaller, balanced plate and eat slowly to reduce stomach upset and big blood sugar swings.

If you are very lean, have a high training load, or feel like you are losing strength or muscle, consider choosing Level 1 or Level 2, or slightly increasing calories and protein during your window.

Hydration and Electrolytes

Fasting from calories does not mean fasting from water.

- Aim for enough fluid to keep your urine light “pale yellow”; for many adults, this is roughly 2–3 liters per day, more if it's hot or you are very active.
- Non-caloric drinks are encouraged: water, mineral water, black coffee, unsweetened tea, and herbal tea.
- Simple electrolyte options:
 - Water, a pinch of salt, and a squeeze of lemon or lime.
 - A low or zero-calorie electrolyte powder without added sugar, if tolerated.

COMMON SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION

(if these appear or worsen, pause or modify your fast and focus on fluids):

- Very dark urine or going long stretches without urinating
- Intense thirst, dry mouth, or dry lips
- Headache, dizziness, or lightheadedness when standing
- Racing heart, unusual fatigue, or difficulty concentrating

How to Enter and Break a Fast

BEFORE STARTING THE FAST OR LONGER FASTING DAYS:

- Avoid a huge, heavy, very high sugar “last meal.”
- Favor whole foods: lean protein, vegetables, fruit, and healthy fats so your blood sugar is more stable going in.

WHEN BREAKING YOUR FAST:

- Start with a modest, balanced meal: protein, some healthy fats, and a small to moderate portion of carbs.
- Eat slowly and see how your stomach feels before going back for more.
- Continue to hydrate and include some salt/electrolytes, especially in hot weather or on training days.

SAFETY AND DISCLAIMER

- Fasting is not recommended without medical supervision for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, under 18, underweight, have a history of eating disorders, or have medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, or take daily prescription medications that depend on timing with food.
- If you feel unwell (chest pain, severe dizziness, confusion, fainting, or anything that worries you), stop the fast, eat and drink, and seek medical help if needed.
- This guide is for generally healthy adults and does not replace medical advice. Talk to your healthcare provider before changing your eating pattern or starting a fast.