



WHY FAST?

As we begin this New Year, we want to make room for God to work in our lives. So many of us are asking God for breakthroughs. Breakthroughs in...

Our relationships, our finances, our health, our faith.

Most of us have lived long enough to realize we need something more powerful than New Year's resolutions to bring about the kind of transformation we long for. We need God and the power of his Holy Spirit! So as we begin this New Year, we want to make room for God to do what only he can do.

Jesus taught his apprentices to engage in practices that can help us make room. That's why we are inviting everyone to join us from January 1 through January 21 for 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting.

Fasting is one of the oldest and most prevalent spiritual practices in the Bible. Great leaders in the Bible fasted routinely, including Moses, David, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples. In Matthew 6:16, Jesus addresses fasting when he tells the disciples, "When you fast..." Notice Jesus says "when" not "if." Jesus assumes that we will fast. Though fasting is assumed, it is not required. We don't have to fast. We get to fast. Like all intentional spiritual practices, fasting should not be legalistic – we are not earning approval from God through fasting.

TYPES OF FASTS

There are several different ways you can practice fasting. Here are some examples:

- **Complete Fast** | In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.
- **Selective Fast** | This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the ["Daniel Fast,"](#) during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet



and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

- **Partial Fast** | This fast is sometimes called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunset to sundown.
- **Soul Fast** | This fast is a great option if your circumstances prevent you from fasting from food, you have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast.

During this 21 day fast, you can choose to fast for one day, one day a week, one meal multiple days a week, multiple days per week, etc. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Fasting goes hand-in-hand with prayer. Plan to set aside the time you would normally spend on meal preparation and eating (or whatever you choose to fast from) for focused time with God. As a companion to this experience, we encourage every person to sign up for daily texts containing prayer guidance for the 21 days.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

During a fast you may feel weaker than usual, irritable, and find difficulty concentrating. You may also get a headache. This is normal. You may need to restrict certain physical or social activities during your fast. Let your physical challenges draw you to a deeper dependence on God.

Do not be discouraged if you struggle the first few times you fast. It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. God will honor your desire to experience his presence through this practice.



After the fast, share any insights or promptings you sensed from God during your fast with someone in your Ridge Group or a friend or a staff member. Let's encourage and challenge each other by sharing what we hear from God as we enter into these 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting!