



# Fasting

## Why and how do we fast?

Fasting is a willing abstinence from food for a period of time. It is one of the most abused and least used of all the practices of Jesus. Yet for millennia, it was a core practice of apprenticeship. We live in a culture not only of food, but of excess, luxury, and addiction. For so many of us, the desires of our body have come to hold power over us. In the battle with our “flesh,” we have become its slave, not its master.

## 1. TEACHING ON FASTING – *Being renewed:*

Read and reflect on these key passages on fasting:

- Is it Biblical? Matt 6:16-18; Matt 4:1-4; Genesis 3; Matt 9:15
- 40 day Fasts: Moses in Ex 34:28; Elijah in 1 Kings 19:8; Jesus in Matthew 4:1-4

### WHY FAST?

Visit <https://practictheway.org/practices/fasting> to listen to the following teachings and ideas how to practice fasting. You can also find recommended reading on this practice.



**Fasting: To Starve the Flesh and Feed the Spirit (Gal 5:13-25; Matt 16:24).** In our hedonistic culture, most over-abused and under-used of all the practices of Jesus is fasting. So many people are confused over what fasting even is, much less the reasons we fast. In Part 1 of our series on fasting, we explore one of three reasons: to starve the flesh and feed the spirit. Fasting, it turns out, is about freedom.

<https://practictheway.org/fast/part-one>

**Fasting: Fuel our prayer (Jer 29:12-13; 1 Sam 7:2-6; 2 Sam 1:10-12; 2 Ch 20:2-24; Jonah 3:4-10; Joel 2:12-14; Acts 13:2-3).** Do you ever feel stuck in prayer? Like there’s a wall between you and heaven you just can’t break through? You’re not alone. The practice of fasting is an aid and amplifier to prayer. A way of expressing whole-person hunger to God. In this teaching we explore the situations in which an apprentice of Jesus might couple fasting with prayer. <https://practictheway.org/fast/part-two>

**Fasting: To Stand in Solidarity With the Poor (Isaiah 58:3-9).** Fasting isn’t just about us; it’s about standing in solidarity with the poor, who regularly go without food. Fasting trains our hearts in compassion, and opens up money and time to serve those in need. Regular fasting tied to generosity is a small, but surprisingly effective way to see justice come to our city.

<https://practictheway.org/fast/part-three>

**Fasting: Our Relationship to Food, Body, and Image** How do you fast if you’ve had an unhealthy relationship with food? Listen along as eating disorders, body image, and Jesus’ call to health and wholeness are discussed. A woman is interviewed who has overcome an eating disorder in her own life and hear how she interacts with fasting now. <https://practictheway.org/teaching/relationship-to-food>



## 2. PRACTICE FASTING - *Being Intentional*

Visit <https://practicingtheway.org/practices/fasting> and click on each of these circles for more ideas and resources how to practice fasting.



1

### Starve The Flesh

Fasting is an ancient discipline to break the power of the flesh—our desires, sins, and cravings—and to feed on the Holy Spirit.

2

### Fasting as Prayer

In fasting, the great hunger of the heart and mind for answered prayer permeates the body itself.

3

### Solidarity With The Poor

We must train our hearts in compassion that unites us with our brothers and sisters around the world.

## 3. TAKE STEPS TO GROW IN COMMUNITY:

A. To grow in this practice, what is **one idea you want to experiment with this coming week / month?** How will you do that?

B. **Is there someone that you could connect with for mutual encouragement, learning and accountability to deepen in this practice?**<sup>1</sup> It might be your spouse, sibling, close friend, someone in your life group or someone else at this workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a practical way we can fulfill our vision together at TCBC “*Transforming lives through Christ-centred community*”

“*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching*” (Hebrews 10:24-25).