

Sunday, 07-23-2023

Fasting and Praying
Bible Background: Ezra 8:21-23
Printed Text: Ezra 8:21-23 KJV/NLT
Devotional Reading: 2 Chronicles 7:12-18

Aim for Change:

- **KNOW** that believers can fast and pray for God's help in dire situations.
 1. How do I **KNOW** that believers can fast and pray for God's help in dire situations?
 - **DESIRE** to fast and pray.
 2. Do I have a **DESIRE** to fast and pray?
 - **PLAN** to fast and pray in times of need.
 3. How do I **PLAN** to fast and pray in times of need?
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Types of Fasts:

1. **Jesus** – total abstinence from food and water (Jesus fasted 40 days) – **Luke 4:1-13**
 2. **Time Limit** – 3 – 7 days fast without food and water – **1 Samuel 31:11-13; Esther 4:13-17; Acts 9:7-9**
 3. **Partial** – restriction in diet, not total abstinence – **Daniel 10:2-7**
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Definition: To abstain from food/drink for a period of time; To inflict self-suffering

Purpose(s): OT – mourning; repentance; deep spiritual need; intercessory; NT – components of worshipping the Lord and seeking His favor

1. Gain a deeper experience with God; to know Him better – **Exodus 24:13-18; 32:15-17; 34:27-28; Deuteronomy 9:7-11, 18; 1 Kings 19:5-8**
 2. Time of confession – **Nehemiah 9:1-3; Tues: Psalm 69:9-18**
 3. Deeper prayer experience/drawing nearer to God – **2 Samuel 12:15-23; Ezra 8:23; Joel 2:12; Mark 9:23-29**
 4. Seeking God's will for leadership in the church – **Acts 13:2; 14:21-23**
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Devotional Reading: Monday: Humbly Calling on God – 2 Chronicles 7:12-18

- Has God's voice been audible to me? What name should I be called? Do I trust that the Lord will answer in His perfect timing? What are the four (4) conditions for forgiveness? Do I have the right attitude when going to God in prayer?
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Focal Verses – Praying for God's Protection – Ezra 8:21-23

1. Why Ezra Proclaimed a Fast (vv. 21-22) – 1 Chronicles 5:20

- What type of fasts are acceptable by God (*Discuss the Meaning*)? Why is it important to pray during a fast (*Discuss the Meaning*)? Can fasting be abused? (**Isaiah 58:1-8**) How do I make spiritual preparations prior to any physical preparations to start the day? (**Matthew 6:5-15**) How do I boast about God and how He provides? Do I have people in my life that oppose what God is doing through me? (**Psalm 35:11-19**) Do I look at obstacles differently while on my walk with Jesus Christ? Do I know God's word enough to know/understand the significance of fasting and praying? (**Thu: Matthew 6:16-18**) Am I patient enough to wait for His response?

2. What Happened after the Fast (v. 23)

- Do I help to strengthen others' faith by my testimonies? (**Wed: Isaiah 66:1-4**) How often do I fast and pray? Is it for myself, for others, or both? In my fasting and praying, is my heart and mind in complete submission to the Lord? After fasting and praying, am I confident that God listened to me?