

FOLLOWING JESUS'
PATHWAY
FASTING PREPARATION

TYPES OF FASTS

- **Normal Fast** – The normal fast abstains from food, solid and liquid, but not water, and was usually for a very specific event or reason, much like the fast we see Jesus do for 40 days in the desert before his temptation. **Matthew 4:1-2, Luke 4:1-2**
 - Ex. fasting from midnight to 6:00 p.m. and breaking after 6:00 p.m. daily.
- **Partial Fast** – The partial fast would restrict the diet but not to the point of complete abstinence. We see something similar in **Daniel 10:3**, where Daniel ate no meat, and drank no wine for three weeks.
 - Ex. #1 – You would eat no meat, no sweets, and no bread during the day while only drink water and juice. Then at meal time you can eat a full meal or maybe add in fruits and vegetables to keep the fast simple. Your fasting times could be from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or 6:00a.m – 6:00 p.m. from sun up to sundown. You can either select a meal, eat vegetables, or juice after 6 p.m.
 - Ex. #2 – You can fast from midnight to 6:00 p.m. breaking the fast after 6:00 p.m. daily. You can eat 1 full meal a day and snacks after 6:00 p.m. till 11:59 p.m.
 - Ex. #3 – Drink only water, fruit, and vegetable juices during the day (no solid food).
- **Absolute Fast** – The absolute fast would abstain from all food and water to discern God’s leading. We see this type of fast in **Esther 4:16** where Esther neither ate nor drank for three days during a national crisis. We also see Paul abstain from eating and drinking after his conversion in Acts 9:9.
 - Ex. 3-Day Dry Fast, no food or water. Only do this if you are experienced. Check with your doctor to ensure it is safe for you to attempt if this is your first time.
- **Private or Corporate Fast** – A private and corporate fast was a time to come together for times of fasts, like the day of Atonement, or in times of national emergency as seen in **2 Chronicles 20:1-4**; or to seek God’s guidance in prayer as in **Ezra 8:21-23**.

GOING INTO A FAST

- **Consult a doctor** – First and foremost you need to protect your health. If this is your first fast, consult your doctor and take a physical exam to ensure you are in good health going into the fast.
- **Avoid the “last supper” meal** - The best aim is to maintain consistency pre- and post-fast when it comes to quantity of food consumed. Even and consistent in our eating is key for maintaining balanced blood sugar, weight management and is also key for maintaining regular bowel movements and energy going into the fast. Plan a one-portion meal and aim to stick to it the night before you begin.
- **Get plenty of sleep** - Sleep is key for regulating hunger hormones, blood sugar, and for helping us to make good choices and stay on track with our eating. Good sleep is key during both the days leading up to the fast as well as throughout the fast (depending on duration).

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- **Manage Your Time** – If you work a physically demanding job you may need to make other arrangements. Plan ahead what you will do during normal meal times (i.e. pray, meditate, worship). What will you do when you get hungry? How can you keep your fasting private while at work, school, or in public?
- **Meditate/Pray** – Meditation, even in small doses can really help to ease anxiety that can be associated with fasting and a change in our normal schedule. If you've never done it before, try starting with 2-5 minutes of quiet, deep breathing, and scripture meditation. Spend time examining your heart to include a time of confession. Ensure your heart is in the right place going into the time of fasting.

DURING A FAST

- **Scripture** – Have scripture readily available to recite, focus on, meditate on, and reflect upon during your fast. Focusing in on Christ instead of your hunger.
- **Pray** – Set aside specific times to pray during your fast. Again, you want to ensure you focus in on Christ and know your own wants or needs.
- **Worship** – Fasting is a great time to focus on God and worship. Take the time to ensure you are glorifying God through worship during your fast.

COMING OUT OF A FAST

- **Make a plan:** The “break-fast” should be planned out, and don't wait until you're ready to eat to plan it. Sticking to a plan can make or break how well you stay on track with your eating post-fast.
- **Drink plenty of water:** Water shouldn't be underestimated when it comes to the power of helping us stay on track. Water is helpful when it comes to helping us stay satiated and it's also important for keeping blood sugar stable (another key part of weight and energy maintenance). Aim for about 8, 8 oz glasses daily (64 oz or 2L).
- **Ease out:** Although it's tempting to dive right back into eating, it's key to have a plan to ease back into consuming solid food. This can mean a small meal (remember, one that you planned beforehand) or one that may be juice, or plant-based, depending on the type and duration of the fast. Regardless, be mindful to take it slowly and avoid diving right back into a large meal. Taking it slowly can help promote weight management, energy, more restful sleep (eating a large meal and then going to bed isn't a good idea), and better consistency overall.
- **Know the difference between physical hunger versus emotional hunger:** On the way out of a fast, emotional hunger can get the best of us, leading us to eat out of the want for food instead of out of the need for food. This can be a tough one to identify, so close your eyes, take a deep breath, have some water and think about whether you're actually hungry or just feeling cravings.

(<https://www.rebootwithjoe.com/the-best-way-to-start-and-break-a-fast/>)
