

21 DAYS prayer & fasting



October 4th-25th, 2023

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
Psalms 46:10 (NIV)

2023 Prayer Directives & General Guidance:

NEW

This year, the directives of the structure and scriptural guidance are somewhat different. Our 2023 mantra, "The Word Still Works," is perfect for this season of consecration.

Lets take a fresh look at the Word in order to see what the Lord is saying in this season.

Daniel was noted as a person of great prayer who lived a life of devotion to God. There are two distinctive times we will focus on where Daniel fasted.

Daniel chapter 10, where we see the well-known 21 Day Fast and then Daniel chapter 1, where we see Daniel's 10 day fast.

*This year we will focus on the practicality of Daniel chapter 1. We will follow these instructions for 21 days.

Daniel 1:12 – "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee ten days and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. After the 10 days they were to be examined by the eunuch and judged to see if they were brighter and better looking than the others that were fed the king's meat."

*Instructions (for those that can): 1st 10 Days = Vegetables and Water Only - From the 11th day forward a protein, fruits and nuts may be added.

*Work up to praying three times a day– Your prayers do not have to be long prayers but they should be impactful addressing the key issues of the day.

I believe much of the time in prayer will be spent praying in the Holy Spirit.

*Exercise daily, even if it's a short walk, stretching or a full workout (as your body and schedules allow). Be sure to consult your Dr & modify as necessary.

*Be sure to eliminate distractions and interruptions as much as possible. The goal of fasting is to maintain a posture/ attitude to listen to the Lord and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit.

These are just a few of the many ways you can ENGAGE:

- ◆ Read through this packet and declare your fast. The Lord will honor it as you honor HIM. (See pg3 for Commitment Page & Pg 6 Types of Fast & details).
- ◆ Participate in person or online for all services & Communion: Sundays at 2pm, Wednesdays at 7pm, Corporate Prayer at 9am (Oct 7th & Oct 14th) as we focus in on prayer and consecration.
- ◆ Tune In to Pastor's Morning devotional LIVE on Fb and YouTube Monday thru Friday at 9am.
- ◆ Mark your calendars and join us for our Serve Day at Balm of Gilead Ministries, Saturdays, Oct 21st at 9am. 3110 Doc Bennett Rd, Fayetteville, NC.
- ◆ Catch our written Daily Devos written by our Elders, Ministers & members on our Website, Facebook and Prayer Group Pages.
- ◆ Interact and submit your Prayer Request for yourself or your loved ones on our Redeeming Love Family Prayer Group Page on Facebook or at RLFC1.ORG. Continue to check us out daily. Get the Word out on your social media sites and testify to the goodness of God in this season.
- ◆ We will conclude together, Wednesday, Oct 25th with Prayer & Communion at 7pm.
- ◆ Each family is encouraged to gather for daily prayer and reflection as we encourage each other to embrace the mandate to pray! While prayer is always in order, please remember that children should not be made to fast. They should be well aware of what they are doing and make a conscious effort to do so of their own free will. Even then, they should be greatly monitored.
- ◆ We encourage the Body to deliberately set individual time to pray. The whole point of fasting is to become more sensitive to the Lord, what He is saying and what He is doing.
- ◆ To encourage you in this time of personal and corporate consecration, we recommend several great resources: the book *Fasting* by Jentezen Franklin, *Understanding the Purpose & Power of Prayer* by Myles Monroe, *Intercessory Prayer* by Dutch Sheets, and the prayer devotional, *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers, The *YouVersion Bible App* is also a great tool. There are journals and a host of other resources that can enhance your prayer and study time every day.
- ◆ See additional online resources in this packet (Pg 7).

*Blessings Redeeming Love Family, Friends, Guest, and all who are joining us
in the sacred time of fasting and prayer:*

Every October for the past decade, God has called this faithful church body, to a set time of corporate prayer and fasting. This call is a solemn assembly as recorded on many occasions throughout the Bible. Fasting was designed by God for the believer to afflict the soul (the mind, will, and emotions) to bring the flesh into submission by refusing the natural intake of pleasurable foods and beverages. Fasting was designed to break the normal flow of everyday life, in order to focus on the Lord and align our heart to hear more definitively from Him. The power of His presence provides all we need to handle any situation. It propels us into His will and His way.

Greater than any of the previous years, this year, we press more into (what I call) the "King Jehoshaphat Effect" found in 2 Chronicles 20:3. The Bible says, "Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. Verse four says, "and Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord." This is such a powerful portion of scripture because, when the people were surrounded on all sides by the enemy, they did not give up. They turned their plates over and called on the God of heaven to help them.

*In this season of prayer and fasting, we too must realize that the enemy attempts to surround the Body of Christ (the church) and inherently, the families, and individuals with deep deception, depravity, depression, and darkness. He moves divisively in the world through "social issues" that are really "moral issues" according to the Word of God. Let's assemble as one, knowing that "The Word Still Works" (Psalm 46:10-12).
Our God has no rivals... He has no equals!*

We rise up with our whole hearts lifted before the Lord, seeking Him for help and guidance in this all-out assault against the Body of Christ and His creation. As we are strengthened individually, the Lord blesses us collectively. As we operate from our place of victory, God is pleased because His Kingdom is advanced.

This is our time once again to push back the forces of darkness, causing the light, love, and life of God to spring forth. In Isaiah 58:6, the Lord declares through the prophet, "...is not this the fast that I have chosen: to lose the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, that you break every yoke? Verses eight and nine speak of the Lord's sovereign help and to the reward of obedience. Verse eight declares, "then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy health spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." Verse nine announces, "Then shall thou call and the Lord will answer. Thou shalt cry and He shall say, "Here I am!"

Therefore, as we answer the call of God to fast and pray, and as we engage with our whole heart, the Lord promises to hear our prayers and heal our land (to include our homes, and our hearts) by showing up and showing out... doing only what He can and will to do. Amen!

*In His Redeeming Love,
Pastor Tony & Louisa McKinney*



21 October 4th-25th, 2023 DAYS prayer & fasting

COM MIT MENT

Writing down your intentions is a powerful way to begin.
Prayerfully consider your commitment for these 21 days.

No one has to see this but you and God.

Sensing God's leading, I commit myself to pray, fast,
and abstain from _____ for
the next 21 days. During this time,
I will concentrate on prayer and knowing God and His Word.

Additional Information: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

21

October 4th-25th, 2023

DAYS

prayer & fasting

End of Fast REFLECTION

Prayer is a practice, a discipline and a means of communication between God and His people. Take a few minutes of silence and listen for God's voice and to reflect on the Fast.

Answer these questions prayerfully

What will your practice of prayer look like going forward? _____

What did you learn about God that you did not know or What became clearer to you about God? _____

What did you learn about yourself or see in yourself in this fast? _____

Were you able to help others during your fast? If so, how? If not, why _____

Where did you see God move in your life as a result of these 21 Days? _____

Notes: _____

Fasting Foundation

There is an urgency in the Spirit to engage. This is such a pivotal time, and we have the privilege to stand in the Gap for our Nation and the world. It is our endeavor to not just pray for ourselves, our situations, our finances, emotions, our healing but we must look on a global scale and see the agenda of heaven. Because we love the Lord, our constant focus is to please Him in all seasons.

It has become abundantly clear that He is calling the church to arise. We cannot sit on the sidelines. The urgency to cry out to God is greater than ever because the lines of good and evil are clearer. People need to see and make the decision for Christ. In fact, they are looking for direction in challenging times. America is caught in a spiritual war that can only be fought and won through prayer.” We must not be short sighted or derelict in our duty.

In this season, the Holy Spirit is speaking thru a multitude of voices. Dreams and visions, prophetic promises and warnings are being issued in this strategic season. What an amazing time to get to be used by God to advance the Kingdom through the simplicity of prayer and consecration together with the Body of Christ! This is not just for God’s hand to move but for our hearts to move in sync with His!

Many Christians who know little about fasting assume that it always means going without food for an extended period of time. While that may be the most familiar image, it is only a part of the many different approaches. One of our primary scriptural frameworks is found in Isaiah Chapter 58.

“Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light will break out like the dawn, And your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.”

There are at least ten different models of fasting in the Word of God.

Ten Distinct Biblical Models of Fasting (by James Goll)

1. **The Disciple’s Fast:** to “loosen the bonds of wickedness” and free ourselves and others from addictions to sin. **(Matthew 17:14-21).**
2. **The Ezra Fast:** to “undo the bands of the yoke,” to solve problems, and to invite the Holy Spirit’s aid in lifting loads and overcoming barriers that keep us and our loved ones from walking joyfully with the Lord. **(Ezra 8:21-23).**
3. **The Samuel Fast:** to “let the oppressed go free,” to win souls and bring revival, to identify with people everywhere enslaved literally or by sin, and to pray to be used of God to bring people out of the kingdom of darkness and into God’s marvelous light. **(1Samuel 7:1-6).**
4. **The Elijah Fast:** to “break every yoke,” conquer the mental and emotional problems that would control our lives, and return control to the Lord. **(1Kings 19:1-8).**
5. **The Widow’s Fast:** to “divide [our] bread with the hungry,” care for the poor, and meet the humanitarian needs of others. **(1 Kings 17:8-16).**
6. **The Saint Paul Fast:** to allow God’s “light [to] break out like the dawn,” bringing clearer perspective and insight as we make crucial decisions. **(Acts 9:1-19).**
7. **The Daniel Fast:** so “[our] recovery will speedily spring forth,” and we will gain a healthier life, or for healing. **(Daniel 1:3-16).**
8. **John the Baptist Fast:** so that “[our] righteousness will go before [us],” and that our testimonies and influence for Jesus will be enhanced before others. **(Luke 1:13-17).**
9. **The Esther Fast:** that “the glory of the Lord will be [our] rear guard” and protect us from the evil one. **(Esther 4:13–5:2).**
10. **The Bridegroom Fast:** to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord! Yes, for the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ—our Bridegroom. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come”...“Surely, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! **(Rev. 22:17a, 20)**

We Fast Because We Love Him!

The sound of the trumpet summons the people together to fast and pray and weep before the Lord. Restoration comes as God renews His people by sending the early and the latter rain. *The “latter rain” is the great outpouring of God’s Spirit on His people “before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes,” with a worldwide display of His glory. It is preceded by prayer and fasting by the people of God.*

Yes, these dedicated Christians might fast from many different perspectives, but we go to war together with a heart of love passionate for His presence and longing for His return. I believe that we will still fast for all of the other reasons—power, crisis intervention, mercy, justice, deliverance, etc.—but we will fast primarily because our heart is in love with God. Pouring our life on our Beloved isn’t even a question of great sacrifice for the lovers of God! We gladly waste everything on Jesus. We will fast and pray because we love Him and want to be near Him. **We will sacrifice because, more than anything else in this life, we want Him! Amen!**



Preparation for Fasting /Quick Tips Outline

PRAY FIRST! Ask the Lord to show you how to fast and when you are to fast. Individuals who plan to participate in this 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting are advised to seek the consultation and advice of their physician, prior to initiation.

Eating Principles - SUGGESTIONS

We suggest that you drink at least one gallon of water daily. While fasting, the body has more waste to get rid of. This is why it is important to consume more water each day. When the body is thirsty, water should be taken immediately. For better tasting water, squeeze fresh lemon juice into your water. Drinking cranberry juice will help to flush the kidneys. Sodas and sugary drinks should be avoided. Abstain from fatty foods, caffeine, and sugar. Resist eating fried foods, fast foods, and lessen salt intake.

For More Information on the Daniel Fast go to:

<https://www.21dayprayer.com/daniel-fast>

or <http://www.daniel-fast.com/> or

<https://jentezenfranklin.org/fasting/>

OTHER GUIDELINES

***If you are not studying your Bible and praying DAILY during these 21 Days, then you are just dieting!**

Increase Prayer Time: Begin each day in prayer and devotion. This may include prayer, studying Bible passages, meditating on the Word, and/or being still before the Lord.

Increase Your Ability to Hear the Lord

Be selective in how you spend your time. Limit, avoid, or even exclude secular TV, radio, and magazines. Limit or avoid excessive social telephone calls and excessive use of social technology. Spend some time outside. Walking under the open sky is an excellent way to connect with and hear God.

Families with Children: Generate family unity. Parents sit down with your children and have them lead devotion. **If your child desires** to participate by fasting, help your children choose to avoid fast foods, video games, or other types of foods or activities that they find gratifying. This should be of their own free will.

The 3 Main Types of Fasting in Scripture:

The Partial Fast

This fast is typically known as "The Daniel Fast" – (Daniel 10:3). This type of fast is not a total abstinence from food, but rather a restriction in the types of food eaten. For example, in this fast, one might refrain from eating meats and delicacies, but eat fruits and vegetables. The partial fast can also be accomplished by refraining from eating any food during specific hours. For example, one might eat nothing from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., but eat one meal 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Normal (Absolute) Fast

This is a total liquid fast, which includes complete abstinence from food for a designated period. (Matt. 2)

The Total Fast / Supernatural Absolute

Total abstinence from both food and liquids for a period of time.

Breaking the Partial or Normal Fast

So many individuals complete the fast successfully and then do damage to their physical temples by breaking the fast incorrectly. In breaking the fast, please do not eagerly seek to eat every type of food that was sacrificed during the fast immediately at the end of the fast. Because your body has been through a transition, it is important to slowly break the body in.

To break the Partial or Daniel Fast

Slowly increase the intake of foods. Continue to drink plenty of liquids; water is highly recommended. It is suggested that after you feel your body has adjusted, begin to eat small quantities of a healthy diet.

To break the Normal Fast, it is suggested that the individual begin with soft foods that are not heavy, such as Jell-O, applesauce, etc. Do this for a day or two. Continue to drink plenty of liquids; water is highly recommended.

The Daniel Fast

The Daniel Fast is based upon the prophet Daniel's experiences as recorded in the Bible.

Scripture gives us some insight (such as in **Dan. 10:3**) into what he ate and didn't eat; however, we don't know his complete menu. What we do know is this: In Daniel 1, Daniel chose not to eat the royal food that he was being served and ate only vegetables and drank water. Another time in (**Daniel 10:2-3**) he deprived himself of choice food, meat, and wine as he sought the Lord in prayer. Most commentaries believe "choice food" would have been bread and sweets.

This is why, I believe, you will find some variation in the specific guidelines for the modern-day Daniel Fast, as far as what foods are included, and which ones are restricted.

The food guidelines are the ones most commonly observed in a Daniel Fast.

The intention of today's Daniel Fast is not to duplicate exactly what Daniel did but the spirit in which he did it. Daniel's passion for the Lord caused him to hunger and thirst more for spiritual food than for physical food, which should be the desire of anyone choosing to participate in this type of fast.

Try not to get too hung up on what you should and shouldn't eat.

The most important part of the Daniel Fast is that you deny yourself physically so that you may seek the Lord in prayer and grow closer to Him.

Your fast may look a little different than someone else's, and that's fine. Some people may need to be stricter than others in their food choices so that their fast is a sacrifice for them. **These food guidelines are meant to be just that – a guide. They are given to help you create boundaries for your fast.**

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The Daniel Fast Food List

- ◆ **All fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- ◆ **All vegetables** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- ◆ **All whole grains** – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- ◆ **All nuts & seeds** – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.
- ◆ **All legumes** – canned or dried; black beans, black eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.
- ◆ **All quality oils** – avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut.
- ◆ **Beverages**– distilled water, filtered water, and spring water.

Other – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg's Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.

Foods to Avoid on the Daniel Fast

- ⇒ **All meat & animal products** – bacon, beef, buffalo, eggs, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.
- ⇒ **All dairy products** – butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt.
- ⇒ **All sweeteners** – agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups, stevia, and sugar.
- ⇒ **All leavened bread & yeast** – baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey).
- ⇒ **All refined & processed food products** – artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, and white rice.
- ⇒ **All deep-fried foods** – corn chips, French fries, and potato chips.
- ⇒ **All solid fats** – lard, margarine, and shortening.

Beverages – alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea

~ *The Ultimate Daniel Fast* by Kristen Feola

<https://ultimatedanielfast.com/ultimate-daniel-fast-food-guidelines/>

MORE DETAILS & THINGS TO CONSIDER

As you begin your fast, you may hear from concerned loved ones and friends who urge you to protect your health. And they are right – you should protect your health. But I assure you, if done properly, fasting will not only prove to be a spiritual blessing but a physical blessing as well. By all means, consult your doctor before you begin your fast. But be aware that many doctors have not been trained in this area and so their understanding may be limited. Even so, it would be wise to ask your doctor for a physical exam to make sure you are in good health. You may have a physical problem that would make fasting unwise or dangerous. Also, if you are taking any type of medication, make sure to talk to your doctor before changing your regimen. Prudence and caution are in order.

When you are assured that you are in good health, you are ready to begin your fast. In spite of the safety and benefits of fasting, there are certain persons who should NEVER fast without professional supervision. For example:

- Persons who are physically underweight or emaciated.
- Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia, or other behavioral disorders.
- Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- Persons who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases or who have heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other vital organs.
- Individuals who take insulin for diabetes or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing.

How Long and What Type of Fast Is Right for You

If you have never fasted before, I am so glad that you are seeking to learn more about it. Though seemingly counter-cultural today, this discipline has been a major emphasis in the lives of many of the great spiritual leaders throughout history. Charles Harrison Mason, founder of the Churches of God in Christ fasted on Tuesdays & Fridays as well as John Wesley, the founder of the United Methodist denomination, who fasted every Wednesday and Friday and required all of their clergy to do the same. Effective ministers of God from the apostle Paul to Martin Luther to Billy Graham made it a continual part of their walks with God. And there are numerous Christian leaders today who relish and teach of a deepening hunger for God through fasting. Though convinced of its great value, none of these men had a formula for fasting that they considered to be the only “right” way. Fasting is about the condition of the heart, not the number of days. So, if you are new to fasting or haven't fasted in a while, start slowly. Fast for one meal a day, every other day. Build up your spiritual muscles so that you will be prepared as the Lord would lead you.

Types of Fasts Listed in the Bible:

A partial fast is described in the book of Daniel. Although the water fast seemed to be the custom of the prophet, there was a three-week period in which he only abstained from “delicacies,” meat and wine (Daniel 10:3).

The primary types mentioned in the Bible are the “absolute” (or Normal) and “supernatural absolute” (or Total) fasts. These are total fasts-no food (solid or liquid) and no water. Paul went on an absolute fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:9). Moses and Elijah engaged in what must be considered a supernatural absolute fast of forty days (Deuteronomy 9:9; 1 Kings 19:8). I strongly advise you to drink plenty of liquids as you fast. Obviously, if God leads you to undertake an absolute fast, you should obey. If so, be certain, to the best of your ability, that you have prior experience with fasting the way God is leading you.

Water-only fasts that last for more than several days need to be undertaken with complete rest and under medical supervision because of the extreme danger of over-toxication, breakdown of vital body tissues and loss of electrolytes. I personally practice and recommend water and juice fasting, especially if you are going to fast for an extended period of time. This type of fast will provide you with more energy than absolute or water-only fasts and still lead you into the humbling experience of denying your desire for solid food that you can chew.

When it comes to making your final decision about what type of fast is right for you, the best advice I can give you is to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. He will guide your heart and mind as to what is best for you. Remember, the most important consideration in fasting is your motive. Why are you fasting – to seek something personally, to agree with others privately or collectively, or to seek His face in worship, praise, and thanksgiving?

Spiritual Preparation:

In preparation for this special time with God, I urge you to examine your heart through prayer, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that may be a hindrance i.e., spiritual indifference, unwillingness to share your faith in Christ with others, not spending sufficient time in God's Word and in prayer, a poor relationship with your spouse, your children, your friends, or others. Also ask the Lord for your personal prayer list or things He desires of you in this time. As an act of faith, trust God to empower you during the fast. Constant reliance on the Holy Spirit will enable you to resist temptation, not only to sin, but to abandon your fast.

Physical Preparation

Although fasting is primarily a spiritual discipline, it begins in the physical realm. You should not fast without specific physical preparation. If you plan on fasting for several days, you will find it helpful to begin by eating smaller meals before you abstain altogether. Resist the urge to have that "last big feast" before the fast. Cutting down on your meals a few days before you begin the fast will signal your mind, stomach, and appetite that less food is acceptable. Some health professionals suggest eating only raw foods for two days before starting a fast. I also recommend weaning yourself off caffeine and sugar products to ease your initial hunger or discomfort at the early stages of your fast.

How to Manage Your Schedule While Fasting

How long you fast, the kind of fast you undertake and how you adjust your schedule depends mostly on the flexibility of your daily life. Whether you go to work in an office, are a student or a stay at home mom, there is a way to manage your fast. In fact, on the basis of my personal experience, I am confident there are thousands of men and women, of all ages and life stages, who have already completed both short and extended fasts, many up to 40-days.

There are some whose work or lifestyle involve strenuous physical activity and still have enjoyed an extended fast. However, if this is your situation, you may want to consider a limited or partial fast. Remember, too, fasting during major holidays or anniversaries is not always a good idea. Families may be inconvenienced, and temptations to eat can be overwhelming. Consider these things as you are preparing for your fast.

There are a couple of reasons to consider adjusting your schedule, especially during an extended fast:

The first is physical. Throughout your fast, you may feel somewhat weaker than normal. During the first few days, you may feel tired and irritable. Lightening your workload and cutting down on strenuous exercise would be a very good idea to maintain your health and your morale.

The second reason is spiritual. Fasting is not just denying yourself food. It is exchanging the needs of the physical body for those of the spiritual. Long times of prayer and reading God's Word will be essential if you are to enter into a more intimate communion with God and maintain your fast to its completion. While fasting, if your life is continually filled with activity and busyness to the neglect of spending extended time with God, you will starve both physically and spiritually. You may find yourself discouraged and frustrated with your fast instead of being benefited and blessed. I don't want that to happen to you.

The more time you spend with God in fellowship and worship, and the more you read and meditate upon His Word, the greater your effectiveness will be in prayer. This kind of focused attention will make for a more meaningful fast. So, I encourage you to arrange your schedule accordingly!



How to Maintain Nutritional Balance and Health from Beginning to End

I know the prospect of going without food for an extended period of time may be of concern to some. But there are ways to ensure that your body is getting the nutrients it needs so you can remain safe and healthy during your fast.

- ◆ For an extended fast, I recommend water and fruit and vegetable juices. The natural sugars in juices provide energy, and the taste and strength are motivational to continue your fast. Try to drink fresh juices, if possible. Off-the-shelf juice products are acceptable, as long as they are 100% juice with no sugar or other additives.
- ◆ If you are beginning a juice fast, there are certain juices you may wish to avoid and certain ones that are especially beneficial. Because of their acid content, most nutritionists do not advise orange or tomato juice (these are better tolerated if mixed with equal portions of water). The best juices are fresh carrot, grape, celery, apple, cabbage or beet. They also recommend "green drinks" made from green leafy vegetables because they are excellent "detoxifiers."
- ◆ Fruit juices are "cleansers" and are best taken in the morning. Since vegetable juices are "restorers" and "builders," they are best taken in the afternoon. I suggest that you do not drink milk because it is a pure food and therefore a violation of the fast. Any products containing protein or fat, such as milk or soy-based drinks, should be avoided. These products will restart the digestion cycle, and you will again feel hunger pangs. Also, for health reasons, stay away from caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea or cola. Caffeine is a stimulant and therefore has a more powerful effect on your nervous system when you abstain from food. This stimulant works both against the physical and spiritual aspects of the fast.
- ◆ Another key factor in maintaining optimum health during a fast is to limit your physical activity. Exercise only moderately, and rest as much as your schedule will permit (this especially applies to extended fasts). Short naps are helpful as well. Walking a mile or two each day at a moderate pace is acceptable for a person in good health and on a juice fast.

*Excerpts with permission: Personal Guide to Fasting by Dr. Bill Bright.
<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.10.html>*

What to Do When You Don't Feel God's Presence

I want to talk to you about spiritual fire and to encourage you to stay “on fire” for the Lord in this pivotal season. For you to be effective spiritually and truly fulfilled in life, it is absolutely essential that you remain ablaze with spiritual fire! I came across this excellent article by Rick Reiner (published May 2021) that is so appropriate for this hour and our season of 21 Days Ablaze.

“Perhaps you can remember a time when your heart was ablaze with passion for the things of God — but you’d admit that since that time, the fire has diminished. If that describes you currently, please take the time to consider the following:

What happened along the way to diminish or quench that fire that once burned so brightly?

What should you have done differently to keep it burning — and what can you do right now to stoke those glowing embers and get your inner fire blazing again?

When any kind of natural fuel serving as a catalyst for fire is depleted, it’s just a fact that the fire will eventually go out. Similarly, if fuel isn’t constantly added to your spiritual fire, and if you don’t stoke those embers and fan the flames, the fire will begin to go out. Those embers have to be tended to regularly in order to keep the fire going. And it takes lots of attention and work to keep a fire burning bright! This makes me think of Paul’s words to Timothy in Second Timothy 1:6, where Paul wrote, “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.” The words “stir up” in this verse is a translation of the Greek word *anadzopureo*, a triple compound of the Greek words, *ana*, *zoos*, and *pur*. The word *ana* carries the idea of repeating an earlier action or doing something again.

The word *zoos* is from the word *zao*, which means to be enthusiastic, fervent, passionate, vigorous, wholehearted, or zealous. The word *pur* is the Greek word for fire. But when these three Greek words are compounded, they form the Greek word *anadzopureo* — the very word Paul used in Second Timothy 1:6 when he told the younger minister to “stir up” the gift of God that was in him. It implies that the fire in Timothy’s heart had ebbed to just embers or that it was on a low burn. That is the reason Paul told Timothy to begin to passionately and rigorously stoke and stir up the gift of God in his life. Paul was telling Timothy that, just as one would stoke the embers of a fire in a hearth or fireplace, it was time for the younger minister to take action. Paul was commanding Timothy to reach within himself and to begin to rekindle, or kindle anew, the fire in his heart.

At the time Paul wrote to Timothy, this young man was surrounded by a great deal of chaos and confusion because of the intense persecution that was taking place at that time. It is probable the younger minister was physically and emotionally exhausted from dealing with an onslaught of problems and his own spiritual fire was beginning to wane. That is why Paul told him to take action before the fire inside him that burned for the things of God went out completely. In other words, Timothy needed to open the door to his heart, look inside to determine the condition of his inward fire, and then take action to stir up the gift of God inside him. Like a person would stoke the coals in a fireplace, Timothy was being called to stir the embers and then “put more wood on the fire.” This would not occur accidentally. Timothy would have to be intentional and proactive to keep that flame burning. But if he would heed Paul’s command, that inward fire — which was beginning to wane — would blaze once again in the core of Timothy’s spiritual being.”

Oh, it’s so very vital that we determine to stay ablaze with the Spirit and power of God! If you’ve ever seen a campfire, you know its flames can burn very bright and hot. But what happens if no one keeps adding fuel to the fire? If no one adds more fuel to the flames, eventually that fire will go out altogether. Let me encourage you to keep adding fuel to the flames of your heart. We are saved by grace and the Lord has given us His precious Holy Spirit to teach, guide and assist us but we have a work to do as well. Keep your fire burning hot for the Lord and His work. When you adopt the attitude that you’re going to start fueling your fire, consistently utilizing to the fullest all the spiritual fuels God provides, I guarantee you that your inner man will burst into spiritual flames! But you are the only one who can choose to “add the fuel” and “stoke the coals” to keep the Holy Spirit’s fire burning brightly in your life. I’m reminded of the ten virgins with the oil for the lamps; five were wise & five were foolish. I’m determined to stay on the side of the wise and I trust you will too. I encourage you to make a serious commitment before the Lord that you will stay ablaze with God’s fire for the rest of your life. I encourage you to set aside time with the Lord to ask Him for His help and His strategies as you purpose to add more fuel to your spiritual fire. Then determine to do whatever the Spirit of God tells you to do to keep your inner man burning like a spiritual inferno!