

Fast & Prayer for 2021 & for America

“The 21 Day Daniel Fast”

“So when you give to the needy do not announce it with trumpets”...

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen”...

“When you fast do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:2, 6, 16-18

In the New Testament we see fasting by the early Christians as they sought God’s guidance and direction. Fasting is the spiritual discipline which causes man and women to “humble” themselves before God. “Humility” is a prerequisite to fellowship with the Lord.

Fasting refers to the abstinence from food or food and drink for spiritual purposes. In the Old Testament fasting was most often observed in connection with times of distress, trouble, or affliction. Hence, our need to fast and pray for America in this season of great distress. It involved mourning over sin, repentance and brokenness. In the New Testament we see fasting by the early church in seeking God’s guidance and direction. Hence, our need to fast and pray for the new year – 2021 for guidance in our personal lives and in the life of our Church.

Psalms 35:13 David writes, “I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting.”

Esra 8:21 says, “There by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast so that we might humble Ourselves before our God”

How do we know Fasting if for today?

In Matthew 6 Jesus was teaching on three topics: giving, praying and fasting. In each case **He said “WHEN” you give, pray, and fast.** He did not say, “if” you give pray and fast. It was assumed that as a follower of Christ you would do all three!

See Matthew 6:2, 6, 16-18 (above) and note that it is “When” you give, pray, and fast.

Again, in Matthew 9:15, Jesus said that the time for His followers to fast would be after He was taken from them: Jesus answered “How can the guest of the bridegroom mourn while He is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, then they will fast.” In our 21st century, we have been so appetite and pleasure driven that most of us have an aversion to the discipline of fasting. Fortunately, there is a new awakening and awareness of fasting as Christians around the world are beginning to practice this almost lost discipline of the Christian faith.

When I was first introduced to Fasting 15 years ago, I was introduced to the Daniel Fast (Daniel 1:11-20 & Daniel 10:10-14). I was compelled to do a 21 Day Fast alone. No one knew I was fasting and praying and I became so taken up by the renewed peace and presence of God, that I went before my congregation. I walked down into the midst of my people and began to talk to them about Fasting and my experience of Fasting. They knew I would never ask them to do anything that I had not already experienced. That January, three fourths of our congregation covenanted together to Fast and pray. They canceled their January party until the 21 Days were complete. They shared recipes and my pig farmer gave up eating meat for 21 Days. That Fast led our church to a vision to sell the old church and build a new Sanctuary, prayer room, nursery, lobby and attach it to the Old Elementary School they had purchased ten years before and remodeled into Christian Education, Missions and Office. All the votes for the vision and the construction was 100% to which we sang, "Victory in Jesus".

****The Key to FASTING is to couple it with PRAYER.****

There is a great spiritual benefit in fasting only if our fasting is coupled with prayer. Fasting alone will be a meaningless sacrifice unless we also pray during the time of our fast. When we sincerely seek God and spend much time in prayer and Fasting, we will realize the Spiritual benefits:

- It humbles us and reminds us of our own inadequacies and dependence upon God.
- It reveals things that control us...pride, anger, bitterness, jealousy, greed, and fear will surface during fasting. This is why it is important to fast regularly. When a person only fasts occasionally, they will never get past this point. The more you fast the more effective it will be.
- In fasting you are placed in a position to hear from God.
- It draws our focus away from ourselves to God.
- It helps us keep balance and perspective in our lives...what's really important.
- It helps us live out the spiritual principles of self-denial that says we are serious about seeking God.
- It brings repentance. All great revivals in history were the product of prayer and fasting.

There are also physical benefits to fasting. We do not fast for the physical benefits, but rather focus on the Spiritual Benefits. However, you will notice in your physical body:

- You will learn how much food your body actually needs as opposed to how much you normally eat.
- You will lose the dull bloated feeling you have from over-eating.
- You will feel lighter and more alive.

There is things you need to consider before you make a decision to Fast.

- If you have health conditions, contact your physician to make sure it's safe for you.
- Pray over your reasons for taking on the fast and commit the fast to the Lord.
- Commit to praying through the time that you get hungry or are tempted to eat something you're fasting from. The Daniel fast is typically done to gain clarity through prayer with God.
- Spend extra time in prayer, Bible study, and worship during your fast.

- Rid your home of tempting food in preparation for your fast.
- Stock your refrigerator with vegetables and fruits. You'll feel like eating a lot more than you normally do as your body weans itself off meat and other sources of protein.
- Prepare your fruits and veggies ahead of time by peeling and cutting them so that they're easily accessible and ready to eat.
- Plan most of your meals before you begin the fast. This way your focus will be on seeking God rather than meal planning.
- Drink lots of water and only water. To teas, coffees or other things you may normally drink. Plan to drink at least eight glasses of water every day.

FOODS TO INCLUDE DURING THE DANIEL FAST

All fruits. Fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are not limited to apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, melons, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines.

All vegetables. Fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are not limited to artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains, including but not limited to whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds, including but not limited to sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including natural peanut butter.

All legumes. Canned or dried. Include but not limited to dried beans, pinto beans, French beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils including but not limited to olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

FOODS TO AVOID ON THE DANIEL FAST

All meat and animal products including but not limited to beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.

All dairy products including but not limited to milk, cheese, cream, butter and eggs.

All sweeteners including but not limited to sugar, raw sugar honey, syrups, molasses, & cane juice.

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

All refined and processed food products including but not limited to artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

All deep fried foods including but not limited to potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

Beverages including but not limited to coffee, teas, carbonated drinks, energy drinks, and alcohol.

The Daniel Fast teaches us to deny our “selves” and instead put our spirit in control over our flesh. As you plan your meals and eat your food, keep in mind that the definition of a fast is
To deny food for a spiritual purposes.

IF YOU HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS THAT ARE NOT FASTING, FIX YOUR VEGETABLES AND THEN ADD A MEAT FOR THOSE NOT FASTING. This will give them a full meal. They may even begin to like vegetables.

Daniel Fast Recipe

The Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast with 21 Daily Devotionals \$14.99 on Amazon or You can Google Daniel Fast Recipes. Two examples are:

ultimateDanielFast.com/recipes

and 21Healthy, Delicious Recipes to Kick-start your Daniel Fast.

Tested recipes from my Fasting Mentor:

Vegetarian Chili

2 medium green peppers, chopped	1/4 t ground red pepper
1 onion chopped	2 16 oz. cans pinto beans
1 zucchini sliced	2 16 oz. cans black beans
1 yellow squash sliced	2 16 oz. cans tomatoes
2 T olive oil	1 4 oz. can green chilies
2 T chili powder	1 4 oz. can tomato paste
3/4 t salt	

Sauté the vegetables in the oil until tender. Add remaining ingredients and simmer until flavors combine. We love just letting it simmer for a while on the stove. Quite yummy!!!

Submitted by: Rev Stacy & Lisa Crawford (were my Mentors for my 1st Fast)

If any of you would like a support system while you FAST, email me at Pastorpeggy@trinityumnc.com or call me 717-433-1670.