

RE:HOPE

FASTING GUIDELINES

Introduction

The Leadership of Re:Hope invite you to join us in January, for a week of prayer and fasting as we seek God together for His incredible, supernatural breakthrough and Reawakening.

This fasting week is right at the heart of what we believe we - as a church - should be doing: a people who pray together and seek God's direction, revelation, help, and power on behalf of our church, city and nation.

We are excited about what God can do during this week of fasting, but we are also fully aware that it's a huge challenge. In this fasting guide, we hope to explain the heart behind this fast and why we would encourage you to join us and experience for yourself the incredible work God does when we seek Him together so powerfully.

What is fasting?

When the word "fasting" appears in both the Old and New Testament, it means "to abstain from food". Although abstaining from luxuries or habits like caffeine, watching TV or using social media can be helpful to realign and grow spirituality, our week of prayer and fasting will be a food fast.

In other words, we're inviting you to join us in not eating for five days. Sounds crazy, and it is! That's the point. Fasting is a spiritual discipline of extreme surrender to fleshly desires, and desperately seeking God's supernatural intervention in revelation, direction, help and breakthrough.

Why do we fast?

We believe that fasting and prayer are extremely powerful in seeing God release favour, revelation and breakthrough, not to mention the personal benefits.

You may choose to fast when prompted by the Holy Spirit, or based on a personal decision in a time of need. However, most of the fasts recorded in the Bible are ones in which leaders call people to join them in seeking God with prayer and fasting together. Whatever the reason, fasting is an act of physical humility, a great posture for times of intentional prayer and seeking.

Yet when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting, and my prayer was genuine.
Psalm 35:13

At the end of a time of fasting, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tested. "Man does not live by bread alone." (Matthew 4:4) When fasting, we adopt this attitude too - acknowledging that God can sustain us even in physical weakness.

Why a corporate fast?

"But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others 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 6:16-18

Many Christians believe that fasting should only be done in secret. However, we believe this a misapplication of what Jesus said. In this passage He challenges the people on their heart motives for fasting - are they fasting for the purpose of appearing spiritual, or for the purpose of meeting with the Father? When we read about fasting in the Bible, it is not kept a secret.

Fast details

- Our fast will be Monday 00:00 through to Friday 23:59.
- Any beverage is ok for this fast.
- Start and end your fast in prayer.
- Set designated prayer times. If you are not accompanying fasting with prayer, it becomes a physical practice, not a spiritual one as you are just simply starving yourself.

Fasting tips

Fasting is hard. We are denying our bodies of a natural need in an act of spiritual dependence on God. We have all tried and failed many one-day fasts, but also succeeded at much longer ones.

Much like training your body and mind to run long distances without stopping, fasting requires will power, determination and perseverance. Starting with shorter fasts will make a longer one much easier. These things come more naturally with practice.

As long as the heart motive is humility and a desire to seek God in prayer, you will not fail. And if you find it too hard the first time, don't let this put you off. Just try again another time. In the meantime, here are some tips:

Before:

- If doing an extended fast, avoid high-fat and sugary meals in the days before the fast.
- Eat smaller meals.
- Eat plenty fresh fruit, raw vegetables and cereal like porridge.

During:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Some people avoid caffeine, sugary drinks and artificial sweeteners. Soy protein drinks can cause health problems during a fast.
- Raw fruit or veg juices help stabilize blood sugar.
- If doing an extended fast, taking multivitamins daily will help keep your stores up.

After:

- Break your fast with a light meal consisting of fruit and vegetables. Wait until later to eat animal proteins like meat or dairy.
- If you have fasted for more than two days, your stomach will have shrunk, so eat smaller meals.
- Keep taking multivitamins while your stores rebuild.

Do I have to fast?

There are many good reasons to not fast, medical being the foremost. Additionally, expectant or breastfeeding mothers, and people whose jobs require physical labour or exercise, may not be able to go five days with no food.

Please consider carefully if you are able to participate and do not feel pressured to join. You could try a partial fast, like vegetables only, or a short fast. Feel free to chat to us if you want to discuss what is right for you.

In short, our vision is this: to see God move in our church, city and nation, reawakening hearts to Him, and saving the lost. We believe that throughout history God has responded quickly and powerfully to the humble and urgent prayers of his people. We are convinced that if we take fasting and prayer seriously, we will see significant breakthroughs in our church, captives set free, the sick healed, the lost saved and our culture transformed. It's happened before and we believe we can be a part of seeing it happen again.

To Him be the glory!