

Daniel Fast

*"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."
(Psalm 50:5 KJV)*

Theme of the fast—fasting and prayer: Your goal in fasting is to become closer to God by voluntarily denying the demands of your flesh. Increase your prayer life during this time. Study the Scriptures with a new intensity. When the fast is over, you should have a new spiritual strength from overcoming the cravings that usually control your life and from dedicating yourself to God.

Biblical model: Do a personal study of fasting. In the book of Daniel, chapters 2 and 10, Daniel describes two examples of his personal fasting and the dramatic results. Isaiah described God's chosen fast in Isaiah 58. Jesus fasted in the wilderness (Matthew 4, etc.) and spoke of the necessity of fasting for believers. It was a normal part of early church life. Fasting is one way we respond to the admonition throughout the Scriptures to die to our self-will and not to accommodate the desires of the flesh.

Following your own conscience: The precise details of your fast are between you and God. In Romans 14, the apostle Paul describes how we should relate in love to one another in the matter of what we eat or choose not to eat. He says, "Each person is free to follow the convictions of his own conscience" (Romans 14, *The Message*). If you fast often, you may need to turn up your fasting another level during this time. If this is your first fast, you may not be able to endure as many restrictions as someone else who fasts frequently. In the future, live a "fasted lifestyle," increasingly accommodating God and not the flesh.

Accountability and support groups. You will probably be most successful with this fast if you make yourself accountable to at least one other person during this fast. You may want to form a group of from five to seven people who meet occasionally or talk by phone. Encourage one another. If someone falls and eats the wrong foods, do not condemn them. Help them start again. Walk in love and mercy.

Restricting television and entertainment. It will be difficult for you to consecrate yourself if you feed yourself on television and movies during this time.

Overview of the fast: The Daniel fast drastically restricts normal food intake by cutting away many of the foods you commonly eat to satisfy your appetite. During the Daniel fast, there will be a sense of hunger much of the time and a sense of sacrifice even when we eat. We recommend that you restrict yourself to only one meal a day, leaving a small hunger.

Types of food included in this Daniel fast:

- Vegetables, preferably fresh or frozen vegetables. Vegetables such as potatoes, beans, and soybeans will help provide substance.
- Pure fruit juices or fruit (no sweetened drinks or sweetened fruit): apple juice, orange juice, grapefruit juice, cranberry juice
- It is advisable to take vitamin, mineral, and possibly protein supplements during the fast. You may also include various nuts to serve as a protein supplement.

Foods not included in this Daniel fast:

- Sugar and sugar products (desserts, soft drinks, etc.)
- Drinks including caffeine (coffee, tea, etc.)
- Bread, grains, and rice
- Meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, eggs

Water: Drink 8 glasses of water daily throughout the fast. This is very important.

Side effects: You may experience moderate to severe headaches for the first day or two as your body rids itself of caffeine, salt, sugar, and various impurities. You may need to take Advil, aspirin, or a Goodies (smile)

Important exceptions: Anyone with a medical condition related to eating or under the treatment of a physician must consult their doctor. Children, especially small children, will have special needs that must be considered. Under these conditions, find some sacrifice in the area of food that can be made without endangering health. Also, if you have extreme difficulty with the fast, such as impairment of your ability to work at your job, you will have to make adjustments. This is not a failure of will but is wisdom. Seek the Lord and discuss it with other Christians involved in the fast to find alternatives.

"God's kingdom isn't a matter of what you put in your stomach . . . It's what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy.

Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ."

(Romans 14, The Message)

INFO DANIEL FAST

STEP ONE: BE SPECIFIC

Daniel was not vague in his objection to the Babylonian diet. He defined the problem immediately.

1. The king's food was against dietary laws.
2. Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine.
3. The king's food had been offered up to idols/demons.

STEP TWO: FAST AS A SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT

The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8).

STEP THREE: REFLECT INNER DESIRE BY OUTER DISCIPLINE

Many people have an inner desire for better health, but they can't discipline themselves to avoid junk food, and other foods that were not good for health. The physical health you seek from God may be more than an answer to prayer. Your physical health may be linked to any of the following factors:

- a. Your food choices.
- b. The level of your spiritual commitment as reflected in constant prayer during the fast.
- c. Your time commitment. If you determine to fast for a certain time, keep it. For example, if you determine to fast 21 days, don't stop on Day 20.
- d. Your testimony commitment. Your fast is a statement of faith to God that you want Him to heal your body.

Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast.

STEP FOUR: PRAY TO PERCEIVE SIN'S ROLE IN POOR HEALTH

Notice James 5:13-16:

- Sin is something related to the cause of sickness.
- Lack of health/healing may be the result of spiritual rebellion.
- Lack of health/healing may be due to sin of wrong intake, i.e. drugs, pornography.
- Repentance is linked to health according to James.
- Elders have a role in healing both spiritual and physical health.
- Sick people must desire to be well
- The anointing oil could mean
 1. medicine for healing,
 2. symbolic of the Holy Spirit, or
 3. it could be baptism
- Prayer alone may not gain healing, faith is the major factor.
- In Greek there are several words for "sick". James uses "Kanino", which not only includes disease, but also means weak or weary.
- Attitude is important. James said, "are there any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms."

STEP FIVE: FAST AS A STATEMENT OF FAITH TO OTHERS

Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared the overseer to compare the appearance of the four sons of Israel with the young men who ate the king's food.

STEP SIX: LEARN THE EFFECTS OF THE FOOD YOU EAT

Why are some foods good for us, and other foods not? What does certain food do to your body? If we really knew, there would likely be some things we would never eat again.

STEP SEVEN: YIELD ALL RESULTS TO GOD

Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Dan. 1:13).

REMEMBER:

- The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "to those four young men God gave knowledge".
- The Daniel Fast is longer than one day. These young men fasted for ten days.
- The Daniel Fast is a partial fast. They ate, but only vegetables and water.
- The Daniel Fast requires abstinence from party or junk foods.
- There is no indication that they ever began to eat the king's food.

GUIDELINES FOR DANIEL FAST

(Foods We May Eat)

Whole Grains: Brown Rice, Oats, Barley

Legumes: Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas

Fruits: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantelope, Cherries, Cranberries, Oats, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangeloes, Tangerines, Watermelon

Vegetables: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gingerroot, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Liquids: Spring Water, Distilled Water, 100% All-Natural Fruit Juices, 100% All Natural Vegetable Juices

(Foods to Avoid)

Meat

White Rice

Fried Foods

Caffeine

Carbonated Beverages

Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives

Refined Sugar

Sugar Substitutes

White Flour and All Products Using It

Margarine, Shortening, High Fat Products