

MT. ZION'S 2012 FRESH START FAST

Weekdays through January 3rd-20th, 2012

WHAT IS FASTING

It is abstaining from food, drink, or other items for a period of time in order to spend concentrated time praying and seeking the Lord. Fasting takes a lot of discipline and strength – strength that you can only receive from God. Your private discipline will bring you rewards in Heaven, Matthew 6.

The 2012 FRESH START FAST is a **Corporate Fast**: which means that all members are encouraged to participate. Scriptural examples of this kind of fast are as follows: 1 Sam. 7:5-6, Ezra 8:21-23, Neh. 9:1-3, Joel 2:15-16, Jonah 3:5-10, Acts 27:33-37

FASTING OPTIONS

DANIEL FAST – No meat or animal products (including dairy), sweets, dairy, caffeine, breads, processed foods or foods with additives. Only vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains & legumes, natural unsweetened juices, herbal teas & water.

WEEKLY FAST – One day a week, water or juice only.

CULTURAL FAST – No television, movies or any other type of social media.

FULL FAST – No food or juices, water only

DAILY PARTIAL FAST - A partial fast is from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sun up to sundown. This fast can be a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or [give up at least one item of food](#).

HOW TO BEGIN YOUR FAST

Excerpt from “7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting and Prayer” by Bill Bright

1. Set Your Objective-Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your time of prayer and fasting. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

2. Make Your Commitment-Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. How long will you fast—one meal, one day, five days, one week? The type of fast God wants you to undertake (water only, water and juices, “Daniel fast”—just vegetables, or fasting from some other fleshly desire such as, television, sports, chocolate, etc..) What physical or social activities will you restrict? How much time each

day will you devote to prayer and God's Word? Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

3. Prepare Yourself Spiritually-The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Un-confessed sin will hinder your prayers. Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." (NKJ)

Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Confess any sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Matt. 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4)
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1-2)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6)
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Gal. 5:16-17)

4. Prepare Yourself Physically-Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Try tapering back on caffeine (coffee, cokes) prior to fasting to help alleviate caffeine withdrawal. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

5. Put Yourself on a Schedule-For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be. Make scheduled times in the morning and evening that you will spend time with the Lord without any distractions. Try to make several "quiet times" in your daily schedule (these need not be long, maybe 2-3 minutes) to simply praise God and give Him thanks (Col. 3:15).

6. End Your Fast Gradually-Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Sudden reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have a negative effect. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. Be especially cautious of reintroducing red meats & dairy to your diet. This could cause a shock to your system.

What to Expect From a Fast

1. Fasting Creates a New Hunger *“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.” ~Ezra 8:32* When you fast ... you become hungry. At first, it may be hunger for food or whatever you are fasting from, but as the initial hunger pangs or longings cease, a new desire is formed. Fasting causes you to hunger in the midst of abundance.

2. Fasting Increases Sensitivity to God *“There was also a prophetess, Anna...she never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem” ~Luke 2:36-38* From this account of the widow woman, Anna, we can see that fasting and prayer had developed such a keen sensitivity in her that she perceived the Christ child at only a few days old. She could hear clearly what God was saying.

3. Fasting Works Humility *“Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered...” ~Psalm 35:13* When we fast, we deny ourselves food; we often feel our natural strength wanting. In our weakness, we find ourselves more dependent upon God. It is a confrontation with the flesh; a time when we deny it satisfaction and provision. It is a time of turning aside from what we can provide, and turning toward what God alone can give. This is often the setting for a confrontation between the spirit and the flesh. After forty days in the wilderness, Jesus was hungry physically; Satan came to tempt Him - to use His position as the Son of God to create bread from stone. But, instead, Jesus humbled Himself and answered, *“It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” ~ Matthew 4:4*

4. Fasting Disciplines *“When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting that became my reproach.” ~Psalm 69:10* David maintained His spiritual life by means of bringing his body into subjection. Through self-inflicted chastening, we steady and strengthen our spiritual walk.

5. Fasting Changes Our Appetite *“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’.” ~Acts 13:2* While fasting, you may find that God reveals a “change of plans” from what you are currently doing or even feel “called” to do. God often uses times of fasting and prayer to speak to the desires of our hearts, and to reveal His purpose and destiny for our lives.

6. Fasting Increases Our Capacity *“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is*

against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” ~Esther 4:16 This fast prepared Esther to overcome the fear of man - and even greater, her fear of death. This fast increased her capacity for self- sacrifice while it imparted wisdom. The survival of a nation depended on her willingness to lay down her life. She knew it was more than she could face in her present condition with her present information, so she drew on God’s strength.

7. Fasting Brings Answers to Prayer *“Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I.” ~Isaiah 58:9* A godly fast will bring answered prayer. It is the atmosphere for answers to questions, direction, help, and the revelation of God. It is a time when He says, “Here I am...I’m over here. Come to me.” This revelation may come through His Word, or as a still small voice, or by a strong confirmation of what He has previously shown us.

8. Fasting Leads to Quick Healing *“Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear.” ~Isaiah 58:8* God set up the fast as a manner of healing His people - a time when the darkness of oppression, depression or infirmity is dispelled by light, such as the dawn. When this light breaks forth, healing soon follows. This could mean many things. It could be a revelation of sin, which, when repented of, allows healing to spring forth. It could mean a revelation of His will or Word, which brings healing and freedom where there was once darkness or ignorance. This healing could be physical, mental or spiritual.

Even natural medicine supports this - many illnesses occur in the digestive system. A short fast gives your body a chance to refocus its energies on healing instead of eating. (Please consult a physician before undertaking a fast if you are ill.)

9. Fasting Opens the Door to God’s Protection & Provision *“Then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard” ~Isaiah 58:8* God promised to be a guard before us and behind us. A fast renews your righteousness and sends it on before you. Then, as you give God the glory, He returns righteousness as your rear guard.

10. Fasting Looses Chains of Injustice *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke...”~Isaiah 58:6* The kind of fast God leads us into has the power to loose any unjust chains that bind us. It also unties the cords tethering us to any yoke. This application is not limited merely to a personal liberation for us - it represents God’s desire to see us reach out and loose the ties that bind others, and remove the chains of oppression.

11. Fasting Frees the Oppressed & Breaks Every Yoke *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke”~Isaiah 58:6* A fast is a time when we take our eyes off of ourselves and our

own needs, and look around at the oppression and pain of others. In response, we learn to reach out in compassion and help - becoming agents of healing.

Jesus said that His yoke was easy and His burden was light. When we are carrying a burden other than His; it is cumbersome, awkward and heavy. There is nothing more frustrating than feeling responsible for something over which you have no authority. It will weigh you down with hopelessness and frustration. During a fast, God checks these areas in our lives and exposes the yokes of fear, worry, stress and turmoil. He removes them and readjusts His yoke for our life, the one that keeps us dependent upon Him. If you're feeling weighed down perhaps you are carrying too much.

12. Fasting Motivates Us to Provide Food for the Needy *“Is it not to share your food with the hungry...” ~Isaiah 58:7* The benefit is obvious - if you are not eating because of a fast, then you are free to share your portion with those less fortunate. Maybe you should give away any food lingering in your refrigerator or pantry that has a significant pull on you. Share with someone else, but don't proclaim or herald your fast... just give it to them.

Fasting is Not a Burden - It's a Privilege

Fasting is intimate and private. It originates in the secret place between you and God. He waits in the secret place for you to join Him. After we visit Him in secret, He will reward us openly. Inward transformation brings about an outward anointing, blessing and provision. Inward transformation positions us for the promotion of the Lord.

Prayer Points

PRAY FOR OUR PASTOR, FIRST LADY, MINISTERS & OFFICERS- **Pray For:**

- Continued protection and provision of Pastor Smith & Sis Lashonna, Ministerial Staff, and all Officers.
- Added strength to lead and guide what God has placed them over.

PRAY FOR OUR PEOPLE- **Pray For:**

- People who are leading ministries inside and outside of our church.
- Entire membership of our church.
- Growth, addition and multiplication, multi-generational, multi-economic church that will display the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

PRAY FOR GOD'S PROVISION-**Pray For:**

- Continued financial resources to fulfill the vision God has given us.
- Pray for people to get financial breakthroughs during this tough economic season.
- The church and people to be blessed with more than enough.
- God to open doors for great opportunities.
- Those that participate in 2012 Seed Offering at any level of giving, that God would bless their hands, and their offering.

PRAY FOR GOD'S POWER-Pray For:

- Greater release of the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit.
- The Gifts of the Spirit to be released in and through the church body.
- More signs, wonders, healings and miracles.

PRAY FOR GOD'S PLANS-Pray For:

- God to clearly layout plans and strategies for all areas of our church in order that we will be the church that God has called us to be
- For workers to help us carry out the plans, vision and mission that God has given our church

PRAY FOR PURITY-Pray For:

- Righteousness, holiness, repentance and purity in all of our people and leaders.
- Pure hearts, pure motives and a singleness of heart and vision.

PRAY FOR PRINCIPALITIES-Pray For:

- Our community and all those in authority over it.
- Pray against all of the powers of darkness that dominate this region.

PRAY FOR GOD'S PEACE-Pray For:

- Continued unity and agreement in our church.

**Information contained above was adapted from the website: MySanctuaryChurch.com*