

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PREPARING YOUR BODY FOR THE 21 DAY FAST
FEBRUARY 1, 2015

Pastor Miles has been talking about the entire congregation joining him on a 21 day fast which starts Sunday February 8, 2015. Before we jump into the fast we have to ask ourselves a couple of questions. What is a fast? Why fast? How do I prepare my body to fast?

WHAT IS FASTING?

The word *fast* in the Bible is from the Hebrew word *sum*, meaning "to cover" the mouth, or from the Greek word *nesteuo*, meaning "to abstain." For spiritual purposes, it means to go without eating and/or drinking.

So as we *fast* we are voluntarily abstaining from eating or drinking or giving up some of the things we've made as necessities (coffee, Social Media, TV, etc) and by doing this we are denying ourselves of some of the basics – our desire as we *fast* is that we begin to turn to God first for the basics, giving God our *First Fruits*. We want to prioritize our lives during this 21 day *fast* so we can have some focused times of prayer, reading God's word and maybe even some times of solitude.

WHY FAST?

The bible presents fasting as something that is good, profitable, and beneficial. The book of Acts records believers fasting before they made important decisions (Acts 13:2, 14:23). One of the things it's important to understand is that our focus in *fasting* isn't to lose weight, it's not to 'tell people we are fasting', we want *fast* so that we can draw closer to God. So try not to confuse your fasting goals with the MOST foundational reason which is to meet with God, to hear God's voice, to slow down our lives to finally hear what God has been trying to tell us for a long time – this is the biggest blessing of your fasting experience!

FASTING IN THE BIBLE

- Repentance – Jonah 3:5 and Daniel 6:18
- Courage and Wisdom – Esther 4:3, 16 and 9:31
- Grief – 1 Samuel 31:13 and 1 Chronicles 10:12
- Times of distress – 2 Samuel 1:12
- Wisdom – Acts 14:23
- Mourning – Daniel 10:1-3
- Revelation – Exodus 34:27-28
- Recuperation – 1 Kings 19:1-9



PREPARING FOR YOUR FAST

Set aside some time, try to get away from the noise of life, grab a piece of paper and a pen – and just sit quietly. If sitting and slowing down isn't a normal rhythm in your life this may be a bit difficult so fight the urge to get up and do something, just sit and be. After some time just sitting and slowing down spend some time in prayer asking God to speak to you. It may be good to confess some things you know have been hanging you up and tripping you up before you begin your fast, knowing that God is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Grab the piece of paper and a pen you have and think about some spiritual goals you have for these 21 days. Start by thinking about day 21 and think when this *fast* is over what is it that I hope to see, to hear, to know, to feel, to realize about your relationship with God.

One of the best things to do is to find a consistent time and place to meet the Lord where there will be no distractions. Maybe you want to grab a journal for these 21 days and be ready to write down what the Lord is going to tell you and show you.

MEMORY VERSE

Meditate and Memorize James 4:8

Draw near to God and he will draw near to you

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Have you ever gone on a fast? If so, describe what it was like and what you learned.
2. Why do you want to go on a fast?
3. What are your expectations as we go on this 21 day fast?
4. Why do you think fasting from food/media/coffee/etc is important for your spiritual life?

STUDY QUESTIONS

READ: Mathew 6:33

Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

1. What is the Kingdom?
2. What does it mean to seek first the Kingdom?
3. What does it mean to be righteous?
4. What are some things that are keeping you from seeking the Kingdom first? Take some time to explain a few of these things.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE – WEEK 1: PREPARE

To make sure there is a smooth transition it's highly recommended to prepare your body for the huge transition by slowly cutting back. Consider cutting back the foods/drinks that you typically 'crave' or your go-to's when you feel stressed/sad/anxious/angry/etc.

Most of us regularly don't eat fresh fruits, vegetables or nuts – but maybe during this time you can think about adding these to your diet. If this is the way you want to go make sure you think through ways you can cut back your solid food intake so your digestive system can gradually adjust to your new low caloric intake during these 21 days. Also make sure you increase your water intake to at least 64 ounces a day staying hydrated is huge for our health. Increase the time you spend reading the Bible and in prayer.

TAKE IT HOME!

1. Start preparing a Grocery list of foods for your 21 day fast.
2. Look in your refrigerator/freezer and pantry if you have anything you feel may be a stumbling block during these 21 days consider maybe giving it away.
3. Designate a daily time and place where you will sit and spend some time with God.
4. Write down your expectations of what you want during the 21 day fast.

