

21 Day Fasting and Prayer Information

These 21 days are a time for victory and breakthrough, believing God for the impossible, for amazing miracles! It is a time for us to draw near to God and watch Him draw near to us! It is time for us to get healthier spiritually, emotionally, physically, and financially. This year we are moving in our God-given purposes!

This is not a time of condemnation and guilt. When you fall down, brush yourself off, and get back up!

This will be a battle between your flesh and your spirit. You will see your flesh roaring its ugly head for the first several days of the fast. You might experience headaches, fatigue, leg cramps, cravings (like that special candy you haven't eaten in awhile or that coffee you drink everyday!) Remember, your body is reacting and wanting to be in control. Once your flesh knows that your spirit is in charge, you will see things get easier. When your flesh creeps in and screams at you, remember, this is the time to pray and turn to God for help; and He will help!

I want to encourage you to change your routine over the next few weeks; think outside the box!

- Watch TV?
 - Watch Christian programming instead
 - Watch things that inspire and encourage you in the things of God
 - Get off the couch and go for a walk; talk to Jesus while you are out there.
- Listen to music or radio?
 - Listen to worship music, and worship!
 - Listen to the Bible on the Bible app while you cook, clean, drive, or hike!
 - Listen to Christian programming
- Indoors a lot? In a car a lot? Sit at a desk much?
- Get outside
 - Do a Jesus run
 - Go on a God Hike
 - Take a Holy Spirit Bike Ride
- Experience God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit wherever you are at and wherever you go!

This is about freedom in Jesus, not legalism, laws, or rituals. This is about our hunger for more of God in our lives, for us to become more like him. This is not about starvation; although, at times, during this fast it may feel that way... it a lie, a distraction. During this time we are saying we are willing to lay down our flesh for the next 21 days and put it in submission to the Spirit of The Living God. We are declaring He is number one in my life - He is I Am and i am not I AM!

Recognize the flesh for what it is. It will try to:

- Get you to compromise
- Give in and give up
- It will try to make you feel guilty
- It will try to throw you under the bus

As a body, I want to encourage us all to do the Daniel Fast. I know that there are several kinds of fasts we can do as a church body. There is the no water or food fast, the water only fast, the restricted time fast (eat at only certain times of the day) and there is the partial fast (omit certain foods or drinks). I believe the Daniel Fast is a great way for all to participate and is very doable for all.

I understand if you have medical issues and you need to substitute things or do a completely different fast that is completely fine. If you do have a medical condition and/or are pregnant, please consult your doctor first. No matter what you decide to do, all I ask is that you determine what it is that you will do beforehand and stick to it; don't make those decisions in the middle of the fast when your flesh is crying out!

You can find examples of this fast in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament starting in chapter 1. This is a time that Israel was taken into captivity and Daniel and a few of his buddies were to be trained in the language and literature of Babylon (**Daniel 1:4**) They were treated special and were brought food from the king's kitchen. Because of Daniel's standards and belief in his God (the living one!) he did not want to partake of the pagan king's food and defile himself. He knew that he and his friends should be set apart from the "normal" culture of the day. This is exactly what we are doing and what we should continue to do after the fast - Be Set Apart. Daniel asked for special permission, in verse 8 of chapter 1, to have a different diet than the rest. After much consideration (after all, he could get his head lopped off if they were not in as good of health as all the others Vs.10), he gave in after a little negotiating from Daniel to give it a try for 10 days (vs.12). Guess what happened? At the end of the 10 day trial they looked better and were healthier than all the others!! This is something to look forward to at the end of our 21 days together!!

So why 21 days and not 10? Glad you asked! As we read on, we read another example of Daniel in Chapter 10. This is time we see that Daniel was mourning for three weeks, most likely because of his people being in bondage. What did he do? Let's look at verse 3. Daniel states here that, "All that time I had eaten no rich food. No meat or wine crossed my lips, and I used no fragrant lotions until those three weeks had passed." It is here that we pick up on this 21 days of consecration to God in order to hear what He was saying.

This week you will want to prepare yourself as we move toward our start date of the fast, January 8th (Monday). Some people want to binge before they start (not advised, it will make it more difficult for you). I recommend you start this week by drinking more water, ween off the caffeine (especially if you have several cups a day, can we say, a little addicted?!?!) and cut back on the sugars.

Here is a sample of foods for the Daniel Fast from Dr. Axe. Again, many people have their own interpretation of what they think it is and is not. Remember this is not about fear, guilt, shame, legalism, or law. Just determine what it is you are going to do and **stick to that.**

Beverages

- Water
- Water is HUGE for you; this will be your greatest asset during this 21 days.
 - Did you know that if you don't stay hydrated throughout the day, your energy levels and brain function can start to suffer?
 - (<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-much-water-should-you-drink-per-day>)
- Dr. Axe recommends a goal of drinking 50% of your body weight in ounces per day. Others say to use the 8X8 rule, eight 8 ounces of water per day. Whatever the case, DRINK LOTS OF WATER!! Drink this over other beverage option
- Water must be purified/filtered; spring or distilled water is best

- Almond milk
- Coconut milk
- Coconut water
- Coconut kefir,
- Vegetable juice,
- Fruit juice - fresh, not processed
- Coffee - In Extreme Moderation (No dairy creamer or sugar) - note: this is not on Proper Daniel Fasts
- Tea - In Extreme Moderation (No dairy creamer or sugar) - note: this is not on Proper Daniel Fasts
- WATER - Did I say to drink water?!?!

Vegetables (should form the basis of the diet)

- Fresh or cooked
- May be frozen and cooked but not canned (organic is better for you)
- Examples: Vegetables (preferably organic and fresh or frozen)
 - Artichokes
 - Asparagus
 - Beets
 - Broccoli
 - Brussel sprouts
 - Cabbage
 - Carrots
 - Cauliflower
 - Celery
 - Collard greens
 - Corn
 - Cucumbers
 - Eggplant
 - Green beans
 - Kale
 - Leeks
 - Lettuce
 - Mushrooms
 - Mustard greens
 - Okra
 - Onions
 - Peppers
 - Potatoes
 - Radishes
 - Rutabagas
 - Scallions
 - Spinach
 - Sprouts
 - Squash
 - Sweet potatoes
 - Tomatoes
 - Turnips

- Yams
- Zucchini

Fruits (consume in moderation 1–3 servings daily)

- Fresh and cooked
- Ideally low glycemic index fruits like stone fruits, apples, berries, cherries and citrus fruits
- May be dried but should not contain sulfites, added oils or sweeteners
- Preferably organic and fresh or frozen - not canned
 - Example:
 - Apples
 - Apricots
 - Avocados
 - Bananas
 - Blackberries
 - Blueberries
 - Cantaloupe
 - Cherries
 - Coconuts
 - Cranberries
 - Dates
 - Figs
 - Grapefruit
 - Grapes
 - Guava
 - Honeydew melons
 - Kiwi
 - Lemons
 - Limes
 - Mangoes
 - Melons
 - Nectarines
 - Oranges
 - Papayas
 - Peaches
 - Pears
 - Pineapples
 - Plums
 - Prunes
 - Raisins
 - Raspberries
 - Strawberries
 - Tangerines
 - Watermelon

Whole grains (consume in moderation and ideally sprouted. if cooked, cooked in water)

- Brown rice
- Oats
- Grits

- Quinoa
- Millet
- Amaranth
- Buckwheat
- Barley cooked in water
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Whole wheat pasta
- Whole corn tortillas
- Popcorn (No butter - try coconut oil!)

Beans & Legumes (consume in moderation)

- Dried and cooked in water
- May be consumed from can as long as no salt or other additives are contained and the only ingredients are beans and water
- Examples:
 - Black beans
 - Black-eyed peas
 - Garbanzo beans
 - Kidney beans
 - Lentils
 - Mung beans
 - Pinto beans
 - White beans
 - Split peas

Nuts & Seeds (sprouted are best)

- Raw, sprouted or dry roasted with no salt added
- Preferably organic, raw, unsalted and soaked/sprouted
- Nuts & Seeds Examples:
 - Almonds
 - Almond butter
 - Cashews
 - Peanuts
 - Peanut Butter (All natural, no added sweeteners)
 - Chia seeds
 - Flaxseeds
 - Pumpkin seeds
 - Sesame seeds
 - Sunflower seeds
 - Walnuts

Oils (Use Quality, preferably organic oils)

- Coconut Oil
- Olive Oil
- Avocado Oil
- Peanut Oil
- Sesame Oil
- Grape Seed Oil

Foods to avoid:

- All Meat and animal products
- All dairy Products
 - Milk
 - Cheese
 - Cream
 - Butter
 - Eggs
- Leavened Bread
- All refined and processed foods
 - Artificial flavorings
 - Food additives
 - Chemicals
 - White rice
 - White flour
 - All foods that have artificial preservatives
- Deep Fried foods
 - Potato Chips
 - French Fries
 - Corn Chips
- Solid Fats
 - Shortening
 - Margarine
 - Lard
 - Foods high in fat
- Beverages
 - Carbonated drinks
 - Alcohol
 - Energy drinks
- Sugar
- Artificial sweeteners

Be sure you read labels - it is amazing what you find in your food that you do not even know you were eating!

I am excited for this next 21 days together! God is going to do an amazing thing! Fill your hearts full of Great Expectations and don't forget to participate in the Fresh Fire Fridays at 7:30 on January 12, 19, 26.

Helpful websites where some of the information above came from:

Dr. Axe - Daniel Fast
<https://draxe.com/daniel-fast/>

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