

# The “Daniel Fast”

*“But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine...give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink...” Daniel 1:8, 15*

**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) 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 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 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 a 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.

**Food usually 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 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 or aspirin.

**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 selected, *The Message*).