

## Prayer-Part Nine-Fasting

Fasting is the deliberate abstinence from food (outside of your normal time), usually for a specific purpose. Fasting for a Christian is (or should be) as much a part of his or her life as prayer. We pray regularly, and at times combine our prayer time with fasting. Moses fasted (Ex.34:28) while he spent time with God to receive the words of the covenant the second time, for forty days and nights. Anna served God in the temple with fastings and prayers day and night (Luke 2:37). Jehoshaphat fasted and proclaimed a fast for the nation (II Chronicles 20:3) (Comment from Spirit Filled Life Bible: Fasting was one of the keys to releasing the deliverance Judah experienced. ...Fasting is not a tool by which one manipulates God to accomplish something. Fasting is simply an outward indication of an inward sincerity, evidence of the urgency we feel when praying for special needs. The early church fasted (Acts 13:3) (Commentary from Spirit Filled Life Bible: Fasting is a spiritual exercise, a voluntary restraint from food for the purpose of seeking. This practice was encouraged by Jesus own teaching. Jesus also fasted, first recorded for forty days and nights (Mtt.4:2; Luke 4:2 and after Luke 4:14 Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit)

Mathew 6:16,17 – Jesus instructs about fasting saying WHEN thou fastest, which seems to indicate that there was an expectation—the person seeking God would include fasting. In Mathew 17, Jesus was teaching his disciples about faith because they could not cast out the spirit from the “lunatic” and in the 21<sup>st</sup> verse he added “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

In Joel 1:12-14 – sanctify ye a fast; Joel 2-12-13,18-32

Isaiah 58:6-12

Fasting is a sacrifice unto the Lord, abstaining from food to seek him. Fasting changes us, and thus can have an impact on our prayer and prayer life. When we fast, we empty ourselves so that God can fill us up with his faith, his wisdom, his power. Less of us and more of him. We are aware that we are denying ourselves food to seek him, to be closer to him, to have communion with him. We put God first, even above feeding ourselves. During fasting, we should focus on God. Fasting should help us create an environment for prayer, for praise and worship.