

Fast once a week and contribute toward ending hunger.

Consider fasting one day a week and donating the money you save toward ending hunger. Some great places to contribute those monies would be either Jackson House, Samaritan Ministries, or the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

If you have never fasted, then there are some basics you need to know. First, decide what your fast includes. Some people fast from food only and drink fruit juices or other liquids to maintain a balance in their body as they fast. Others, fast from food and drink only water. Some will do a strict fast from both food and water. If you have never fasted before, you may want to ease your way into the discipline. Perhaps, you should start with just missing a meal the first week, then two the next and then by the third week have no meals. Your physical health and limits may dictate which type of fast you should do. If you have dietary issues like diabetes or being hypoglycemic fasting may not be the discipline for you.

How to get the most out of your fast.

- 1) Have a clear purpose for you fast. Without a purpose you most likely will just get hungry. You can use a fast to focus your mind or prayers around what it must be like to suffer from hunger. The fast will move you toward greater empathy. You can also use your hunger pangs as a catalyst to reflect on Christ's suffering. Whatever your focus is, have one.
- 2) Pray when either you find yourself reflexively wanting to eat or feel hunger. God will help you with your fast.
- 3) Clean-up your regular diet before fasting. If you normally consume a lot of sugar or caffeine, you may be in for a massive headache when you fast. If you diet is heavy in carbohydrates you may also experience heavy craving. The cleaner your diet ahead of time the easier the fast.

What are difficulties you may encounter when fasting?

- ◆ Your energy may slump and you may find yourself having to move more slowly.
- ◆ You may become hyper aware of how much you reflexive respond to cravings like going to the refrigerator without really thinking or grabbing for the cookie jar.
- ◆ You may have headaches or feel light-headed. If you are not doing a strict fast, then staying hydrated will go a long way toward staving off these reactions.
- ◆ You may feel chilled. If so plop on an extra layer of clothes and just keep moving.

What are blessings you can expect?

- ◆ You may find yourself spiritually open, discerning and sensitive in ways you have never experienced.
- ◆ You may find yourself drawn into deeper and deeper levels of prayer.
- ◆ You may grow in self-discipline and awareness and become more reliant upon God. You learn to surrender more to God's strength when your strength is lacking.
- ◆ You can gain some detachment from not only cravings for food, but other cravings like watching television reflexively.
- ◆ You will assuredly touch the life of a hungry person with Christ's love if you will contribute the money you save to purchasing food for the needy.