

Doctrine of Fasting

1. Fasting took place on a voluntary basis during the days of Nehemiah. The people humbled themselves by dressing in sackcloth and throwing dirt upon themselves. Then they confessed their sins, the sins of their fathers, and refrained from food in order to show how serious they were about repentance.
 - *Nehemiah 9:1 Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.*

2. When the Jews were about to endure a pogrom during the reign of King Xerxes they fasted in the face of persecution.
 - *Esther 4:3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.*

3. The Psalmist humbled his soul by fasting and found more freedom to pray for those who were sick.
 - *Psalms 35:13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*

4. It was predicted that the Messiah would fast and weep for the sins of the people whose cause He would advocate before the Father and for the judgment coming in consequence upon them.
 - *Psalms 69:10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*

5. In times of emotional duress, there is the loss of appetite and so fasting takes place.
 - *Psalms 109:24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.*

6. On special fast days the *Word of the Lord* was read.
 - *Jeremiah 36:6 Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.*

7. Fasting, or the abstaining of food, can take place by non-Christians for non-religious reasons.
 - *Daniel 6:18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.*

8. Daniel fasted in order to seek the face of God.
 - *Daniel 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:*
9. Sometimes the Lord commands His people to fast as a sign of genuine repentance.
 - *Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:*
10. Sometimes the Lord wants His people to stop fasting lest they injure their health.
 - *Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*
 - *Mark 8:3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.*
 - *Acts 27:33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.*
11. There are certain situations that cannot be resolved except by prayer and fasting.
 - *Matthew 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*
 - *Mark 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*
12. While Peter fasted and prayed he saw a spiritual union containing the will of God.
 - *Acts 10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,*
13. Ministers are to be set aside for pastoral work by prayer and fasting.
 - *Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*
14. In marriage time can be targeted for prayer and fasting but not to the neglect of other duties.
 - *1 Corinthians 7:5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*