MCC Prays

A Simple Guide to Fasting

What Is Fasting?

Fasting is the intentional practice of giving something up, most often food, for a period of time in order to focus more fully on God. In Scripture, fasting is often connected to **prayer, humility, repentance, and renewal**.

Fasting is not about earning God's favor or proving spiritual strength. It is about **creating space** and reducing distractions so we can listen, seek, and respond to God more attentively.

> *"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do… but put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting."*
> —Matthew 6:16–18

Why Do People Fast in the Bible?

Throughout Scripture, people fasted when they:

- Sought God's guidance or wisdom
- Responded to sin or repentance
- Prayed for renewal or revival
- Interceded for others
- Prepared for significant moments or important decisions

Examples:
Joel 2:12–13 • Nehemiah 1:4 • Esther 4:16 • Acts 13:2–3

What Fasting Is (and Is Not)

Fasting is:

- A voluntary spiritual practice
- A way to deepen prayer and dependence on God
- An act of humility and focus

Fasting is not:

- A requirement to participate in prayer
- A measure of faith or spiritual maturity
- A way to manipulate God
- Something that should harm your health

Ways to Fast

There is no single "right" way to fast. Choose what is wise, healthy, and appropriate for you.

- **Food fast** – Skipping one meal, several meals, or a full day

- **Partial fast** – Eating simpler foods (e.g., Daniel-style fast)
- **Time-based fast** – Fasting for a specific window (morning, afternoon, evening)
- **Non-food fast** – Giving up social media, screens, entertainment, or other distractions

If you have medical conditions, are pregnant, or have a history of disordered eating, **do not fast from food** - choose a non-food fast instead.

Fasting & MCC Prays

Fasting is **optional**, not expected. It is simply one way, among many, to join God in prayer as we seek renewal in ourselves, our church, and our community.

Whether you fast or not, **your prayers matter**.