

FASTING - From Dickerson's Notes (Ages - Master Christian Library)

Fasting is considered an ordinance by some Plymouth brethren and a few Baptists.

We will not take time to look at references, but let us list some of the things that we know about fasting.

1. Some suggest it is used as a reminder to pray for a specific item. The hunger will remind you.
2. Others feel that the time usually spent eating should be given to prayer.
3. It is usually linked to prayer in the Scripture. However, the term can be used simply of "no food." (

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Mark 8:3)

4. The disciples and the followers of John fasted.
5. It gives proof of the sincerity of the individual that is praying.

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6. Fasting is used heavily in the Old Testament in relation to remorse or contrition. It seems to be used that way in

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Acts 9:9 when Saul was

waiting for the Gospel after the road to Damascus. Otherwise, the New Testament does not necessarily have that connotation.

7. Christ fasted for forty days and nights.

8. Fasting is not an item that is commanded nor is it one that is prescribed for the Church. The indications are, however that fasting is not wrong and indeed it is for the Church age if an individual would desire to become involved in it. (

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Acts 13:1ff mentions the Church leaders fasted before they sent Saul and Barnabus out;

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Acts 14:23 mentions that Paul fasted after he had ordained elders in the Churches;

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Acts 27:33 seems to be

the context of not being able to eat rather than a religious fasting — Paul is speaking to the sailors of the ship that had been shipwrecked; I Co. 7:5 indicates that fasting is for this age, in that he mentions married couples involved in fasting and praying;

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2 Corinthians 6:5 tells us that it was one

of Paul's practices, though some may indicate that this was referring to

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Acts 27:33 and the shipwreck.)

From my vast acquired knowledge and experience, I will mention a few other points.

1. There are missionaries that fast once a week, and it is a time of prayer for special needs.
2. I know of no pastor that fasts, yet I might add I don't know that many

missionaries that do. I will also add, that fasting is not the type of thing that a person advertizes. It may very well be something they desire to be special between themselves and their Lord.

3. Fasting, by those that I have talked to, never leaves a person hungry as such. They might notice their stomach is feeling differently, but it is not hunger. Usually people mention they never miss the meal, but tremendously enjoy the fellowship with the Lord.

I would encourage you to consider fasting as something special, usually for a certain item of concern in prayer. I might illustrate by telling of what one day of fasting resulted in for one couple. A missionary couple was placed before a large Church as an item for prayer and fasting. The congregation gave their lunch time over to prayer, and committed themselves to pray as the Lord brought the item before them.

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The next day the missionary was able to schedule a meeting with a man that he had been trying to meet with for two years. The couple was informed they had been given a large sum of money to be divided monthly over a number of months. The couple was informed that their Church had decided to meet concerning supporting them.

Fasting may not always produce such nice results, but you may be assured any special time given to the Lord will be a blessing.

Revival is linked to fasting at times in history. Jonathan Edwards for example fasted three days before he preached his great sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," which moved many people to repentance and salvation.

Though I do not see that fasting is an ordinance, it is plain that it is for today as the believer is led. It is an item which has not gained wide usage in most circles to my knowledge, though it probably should.