



DAY 07 - FASTING

LIVE THE FLOURISHING LIFE: FLOURISHING FAITH

Fasting is abstinence from some or all kinds of food or drink for a set period of time. Today, fasting might be done for medical reasons, as a diet, or even as a form of protest. It has also been applied to things other than food or drink, like TV or social media, often for the sake of self-improvement. Traditionally, though, fasting has been observed for religious reasons, and this is still the most common purpose of fasting. In ancient Greece and the tribes of North America, fasting was connected with revelation through dreams or visions. The Incas of Peru fasted as penance after they confessed to a priest, and the Pueblo Indians fasted before major ceremonies. Among a majority of religions today, fasting is still practised and connected with repentance and purification from sin, with meditation and revelation, and with religious festivals.

Whether or not you belong to a religion that encourages fasting, it can be of great benefit to your faith. It's a way to prioritise the spiritual over the physical. In many practices, the time usually spent on food—or whatever you're fasting from—is devoted to prayer or some other spiritual activity. This can help you to grow in your faith and your awareness of God, especially when physical feelings of hunger turn your attention to the reason for your fast. According to [Dr. Ayesha Chaudhry](#), 'instead of engaging with the world primarily in a physical way, you engage with it in a spiritual way first... you try to prioritise your soul at the expense of your body'

'You try to prioritise your soul at the expense of
your body'

- [Dr. Ayesha Chaudhry](#)

Fasting can also help to strengthen communities of faith. It can draw your attention to what you have, increasing your thankfulness and awareness of those in need. The Islamic fast during the month of Ramadan includes a social justice component that emphasises providing for the poor, and many Christians focus on charity during the season of Lent. Fasts are often broken over communal meals, which bring families and faith communities together.

DAY 07 FAST ING

LIVE THE FLOURISHING LIFE: FLOURISHING FAITH

If you want to fast to grow in your faith, the purpose should always be to take your mind off physical things and focus on the spiritual. Abstaining from food can be a great way of doing this since hunger is a strong physical reminder. But if fasting from food would feel like a diet to you and increase your focus on your body, or if there is something else that you feel distracts you from spiritual things more often, you might want to abstain from something other than food. You also shouldn't fast without guidance from a doctor if you're elderly, pregnant or lactating, or have type 1 diabetes. If you have a health condition or mental illness or are on any medication, consult a medical professional before undertaking a food fast. If you can't or don't want to abstain from food for any reason, other sorts of fasts can be just as beneficial for your faith. Try giving up something that often distracts you or takes up a lot of your time, like your phone or Netflix. Devote the time you gain to a spiritual practice like prayer, reading scripture, worship or meditation.