**A Time to Fast**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1 To everything [there is] a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: NKJV**

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that provides an avenue for us to seek God and renew our spiritual commitment to serve His purpose for our lives. It may not seem like there is a good time to fast, yet we know there is a right time. Biblical fasting is recognized as an effective means to receive a breakthrough in our spiritual walk. The goal of fasting is to become closer in our walk with God by voluntarily denying the demands of the flesh. It is a time to dedicate ourselves to God.

**The Biblical model**

In the book of Daniel, chapters 1 and 10, Daniel describes two examples of his personal fasting and the dramatic results. Isaiah described God's chosen fast in Isaiah 58. Jesus fasted in the wilderness Matthew 4 and spoke of the necessity of fasting for believers. It was a normal part of early church life. Fasting is one way we respond to the admonition throughout the Scriptures to die to our self-will and not to accommodate the desires of the flesh.

Fasting is a sacrifice that exhibits a desire to follow the will of God. It is a voluntary step of humility, which demonstrates seriousness in seeking the heart of God and His Kingdom influence in our lives.

**Daniel 9:3** “So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek [Him by] prayer and supplications, with fasting...” NASB

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that helps us put the flesh under, helping us to gain a greater sensitivity and understanding and insight to what God has for us. It is an opportunity to recognize what doors God has or is opening to us. We need to get ready for heavens blueprint for our destiny. Be prepared to receive plans, strategies, and God’s agendas.

John, in his vision on the Island of Patmos saw a door standing open in Heaven, and he heard God's voice proceeding from it. The Lord desires to reveal His plan for our lives as we seek Him.

**Revelation 4:1 “**After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." NIV

How we enter this year affects the entire year. Seeking God through prayer and fasting early in the New Year sets in motion the first fruits principle that brings the blessing and favor of God on the entire year. When a church unites and focuses on the Lord through a 21-day fast at the beginning of the year the results are astonishing. Jentezen Franklin, Senior Pastor of Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia stated *“…the spiritual atmosphere of the church soars.... The greatest miracles we have ever experienced came during these periods. Miracles and salvation are common, doors of opportunity and favor open.”*

**Matthew 6:33** “and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.” NLT

**When you fast…**

* **Matthew 6:16-18** "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 18 "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. NKJV
* **Matthew 6:16-18** "When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don’t make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity, but it won’t make you a saint. 18 If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. 18 God doesn’t require attention-getting devices. He won’t overlook what you are doing; he’ll reward you well. Message

**Some Benefits of Fasting**

1. **Demonic attacks and opposition can be broken through fasting**

**Matthew 17:15-21 "**Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him. 21Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." NKJV

1. **Fasting provides protection**

**Ezra 8:21-23** “There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. 23 So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.” NIV

**The Fast that God chooses**

1. **Fasting breaks bondages and addictions**

**Isaiah 58:6** "[Is] this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?” NKJV

1. **Fasting gets you to get your eyes off yourself so you can recognize the needs of those around you.**

**Isaiah 58:7** “[Is it] not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?” NKJV

1. **Fasting results in healing.**

**Isaiah 58:8** “Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.” NKJV

1. **Fasting helps you to gain God’s perspective so you can minister effectively to others.**

**Isaiah 58:9-10** “Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I [am].’ "If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10[If] you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall [be] as the noonday.” NKJV

1. **Fasting develops a greater sensitivity to spiritual things.**

**Isaiah 58:11** “The LORD will guide you continually, watering your life when you are dry and keeping you healthy, too. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.” NIV

1. **Fasting can break the grip of poverty and lack.**

**Joel 2:12-13 "**Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." 13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.” NIV

A pure motive is essential when you determine to allow fasting to be part of your walk of humility with God. You will begin to experience more of what He has for you and those you love. Get ready to encounter greater things. God Bless