

# Theme Introduction

## Rediscovering Fasting: A Kingdom Key to Breakthrough

The first time God called me to fast was entirely unexpected. I was driving down the freeway, crying out to Him about a friend's situation. I asked the Lord, with a tone of desperation, "What else can I do? How much more can I pray?"

A thought came to mind. You can fast.

Startled, I put away the snacks sitting on the seat next to me. I knew nothing about fasting. I knew of no one else who fasted. But I was convinced I had just heard from the Lord. And somehow, in my spirit, I knew it was to be for seven days.

My fast started immediately that weekend. I simply stopped eating. But I knew I needed to understand more. So I went to a Christian bookstore on Monday morning and sought out the prayer section. I pulled every book about prayer off the shelf, looking for chapters on fasting, and started reading about common fasts. Oh, I can have juice and other liquids. That's good, I thought. Oh, but milk shakes don't count. That's a disappointment.

By the end of the week, I had walked through my first fast with amazing grace and enablement from the Lord. I prayed with frequency and fervency—and felt strengthened the entire time. Of course, I did all the wrong things when I finally broke my fast. I learned that throwing a steak on the grill and eating a huge meal was not the best way to do it!

But God answered my prayer for my friend that week. I saw a breakthrough in her situation. More than that, God started teaching me to fast in ways I never thought possible.

Along this journey over many years, I continued fasting, when I sensed the Lord was calling me to it, for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it was a Daniel Fast (fruits and vegetables) for 21 days. Other times, it was a simply no food for a day. I was terrified of a 40-day fast—so wouldn't you know—of course God called me to that. Twice. It was hard, but not impossible.

Sometimes I fast for specific situations (the health of a friend, a struggling marriage, a prodigal). But more often my fasts focus on a longing for spiritual breakthrough, especially revival. This is becoming increasingly true.

## **When You Fast**

For many, fasting is either a mystery or a fearful thought. Although Jesus said in Matthew 6:16, “when you fast” (not, “if you ever have occasion to”), it is not a common practice in much of the Western Church.

In this issue, you will learn from our authors—Lynne Baab, Dean Trune, and Richard LaFountain—about Old and New Testament fasts, various ways and reasons to fast, the necessity of a right heart motive, reasons people shy away from it, and some of the hopeful outcomes of fasting. Most likely any question you have about fasting will be answered by one of these writers.

Whether or not you have fasted before or even considered it as a regular, ongoing spiritual discipline, may I suggest a corporate fast for all of us in the next few months? Will you join me in fasting for one of our most urgent needs of the day—a move of God in revival in the Church?

Let's combine fasting with our prayers and ask God to send another great spiritual awakening in our nation. That is certainly worth the sacrifice of a few meals.

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