



Fasting - Family One-Sheet

What is fasting?

Simply put, fasting is taking a break from food for a planned amount of time for the purpose of offering our whole self to God. We give up food to be filled up by God.

Why do we fast?

We fast because it helps us focus our minds on God and reminds us of our need for the Holy Spirit. Just as we need to feed our body for nutrition, our spirit needs to be fed, and filled, by God.

How do I fast?

Take a look at the [Fasting Habit Card](#) and the [Fasting FAQ](#) sheet, these have some tips on what to do before you fast, while you fast, and when you break your fast. Remember, though, to start where you are, not where you think you should be. While the suggestion for the starting practice is 12 hours, it might be helpful for you to start with fasting from one meal. Journal about and reflect on your experience with fasting, and think about how you can do this with others (i.e. family, your small group/life group).

What could it look like to fast as a family?

Invite your whole family to practice fasting. This might look different for each family member, and that is okay. It is best to consult with a doctor before fasting, especially for kids, pregnant women, elderly, and those with eating disorders or pre-existing medical conditions. As a family, pick a day that you will fast together, and leave the freedom for each person to decide if they will fast and how long they will fast. Think about how you can check in with and encourage each other throughout the day, gather together for a time of family prayer and worship, and plan to break your fast together with a meal!

What if I'm unable to fast?

We realize that it might not be safe or appropriate (based on age, stage of development, physical/mental health) to fast. Check out the back of this sheet for ideas of how you and your family can give up other things (besides food) and to fill up on God. Giving up something that isn't food might be a great starting practice, especially for kids and students, if fasting from food is not a possibility. It could be social media, TV, video games, coffee, etc. Remember the goal of this all is to offer our whole self to God.



Keep in mind...

- You do not have to fast. There are many ways to connect with God; this is just one.
- Fasting is more than “not eating food” and it is not a diet. The main goal of fasting is to lean on and turn our thoughts toward God, the giver of every good and perfect gift.
- Fasting is *not* punishment. We don’t fast to earn God’s love or to be “perfect.”
- God cares about your body and the whole of who you are. Do not fast if it puts your physical or mental health at risk. Remember that food is a good gift from God.
- Fasting will likely look different for each person - that is okay! Start small, then stretch.
- Fasting will be hard at first, but it will get easier with practice/time.
- Fasting and feasting go hand-in-hand; celebrate and reflect as you end/break your fast.

Additional Ideas for Practice

Kids

- Fill out a “give up” and “fill up” chart. In the “give up” jar write a few things you can take a break from that day (sweets, snacks, TV) and in the “fill up” jar write some ways you’ll invite God to fill you (worship, memorizing a verse, prayer).
- In the chart above, draw in the face bubbles how you were feeling during those times.
- Make a prayer bracelet as a reminder that you can talk to God throughout the day.

Students

- Swap out video games, social media, and TV for worship, scripture, silence/solitude.
- Donate the money you would have spent in one day on snacks, boba, drinks, desserts, etc. to a local or global organization.
- Check-in with yourself and God by journaling about your experience.
- Pray during transitions (on your way to school, walking to class, before/during meals).

Family

- Memorize a Bible verse you can repeat during the day to keep your focus on God.
- Swap out screen time or snack time with family prayer and worship time.
- Eat a simple meal of rice and beans once a week. Pray for people in your community who are experiencing food insecurity and do not have access to a variety of foods.
- Prepare/serve a meal with Street Life Ministries or Bags of Love, local partners caring for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Learn more at cpc.org/homelessness.