**River Church Fasting Guide**

The goal of fasting is to draw nearer to God. Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose; it hits the reset button of our soul and renews us from the inside out. It also enables us to celebrate the goodness and mercy of God and prepares our hearts for all the good things God desires to bring into our lives. Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and, most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

**Types of Fasts**

**Complete Fast**

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically with light juices as an option.

**Selective Fast**

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meats, sweets and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and vegetables for food.

**Partial Fast**

This fast is sometimes called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown.

**Soul Fast**

This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

**Timing of a Fast**

At River Church, we encourage fasting for 21 days each year in the month of January. This is part of 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, a season of focused prayer as a church family. You may also choose to fast at other times during the year for your own spiritual development. It’s very typical to fast a single meal, a whole day, or three days or more. The timing of your fast is not as important as the strength of your focus on God as you fast.

**Miscellaneous Fast**

This type of fast will fast something like social media, TV, or some type of activity. Maybe no sports or hunting... Spent the time usually spent on the activity on prayer.

**Scriptures on Fasting**

**Matthew 6:16–18 (NLT) — *16 “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. 17 But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. 18 Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you***.

**Matthew 9:14–15 (NLT) — *14 One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?” 15 Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.***

**Luke 18:9–11 (NLT) — *9 Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: 10 “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector!***

**Acts 27:33–37 (NLT) — *33 Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. “You have been so worried that you haven’t touched food for two weeks,” he said. 34 “Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish.” 35 Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. 36 Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat—37 all 276 of us who were on board.***

**Nehemiah 9:1–3 (NLT) — *1 On October 31 the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. 2 Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. 3 They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the Lord their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the Lord their God.***