

FASTING WITHOUT EXCUSES

SKETCHES FOR

21 DAYS OF THE DANIEL FAST

January 8th-29th 2017

Eagles Christian Family Center
aguilascfc.org

FASTING WITHOUT EXCUSES I

17 But when you fast, comb your hair[a] 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 6:17-18 NLT

<p>Interactive Questions:</p> <p>What is the purpose of fasting?</p> <p>Why should we fast?</p> <p>In which ways, can we fast?</p> <p>How does God want us to fast?</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand why we should fast. ❖ Discover the different ways in which you can fast. ❖ Learn to make fasting a lifestyle.
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***Illustration:** Moses was a man called by the Great I Am to deliver the people of Israel from the Egyptians' cruelty. Nevertheless, the fear and lack of identity in Moses, caused him to make excuses as to why he couldn't follow God's commands. When the Lord had appeared to him in a burning bush, he protested, "... Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?" Still, God assured him, that He would go with him. Every time the Lord speaks to you and commands you to do something, His blessing will always go with you. There is no reason for you not to obey Him! It is time to re-focus our attention on the Heavenly Father, and to seek His guidance in the beginning of 2017. Remember, we're only in this world for a short time. The Lord is coming soon...*

Introduction: *God has good plans for you and your family, therefore there are no excuses to stop you from receiving His blessings. One of the keys in reaching the Lord's promises is learning to listen to His guidance through fasting. Let's view the following points:*

1. WHAT IS FASTING?

- A.** Fasting refers to omitting foods or activities in order to focus and connect with God. It means, to take the time to consecrate yourself and become more sensitive to the Lord's voice.
- B.** The Bible does not teach that fasting will help you "win-over" God's favor or make Him think you deserve something. Instead, fasting aligns you to what the Lord wants to tell you, so you fulfill your purpose.
- C.** While you fast, you must make time to worship the Heavenly Father, pray and read His Word. When you seek His face in intimacy, He will reveal His heart and give you the guidance to make the right decisions that will bring acceleration and changes to your life.
- D.** Fasting is not only about giving up food, but you can also choose to fast television or a daily activity, and instead use that time for praying and reading the Bible. The point is to set yourself apart from the worldly atmosphere and come closer to the Father.

2. THE THREE KINDS OF FASTINGS.

- A. The natural fast.** This fast was practiced by the Lord Jesus and it consists in not eating, only drinking water, and resting. The Bible doesn't say that he didn't eat or drink, like in other parts, it only says that he did not eat. It states that he was hungry, but not thirsty (*Luke 4:1-2*).
- B. The total fast.** You are not able to eat anything or drink any kinds of liquids. Although, this kind of fast cannot be for too long, because the body needs water. Some biblical examples are found in *Ester 4:16*, *Acts 9:9*, *Deuteronomy 9:9* and *1 Kings 19:8*.
- C. The partial fast.** During this fast you abstain from some foods, but you can eat legumes and fruits, choose to only have shakes or eat once a day. For example, Daniel fasted with vegetables and water (*Daniel 10:2-3*). He most likely did it this way, because of his job.
- D.** During these 21 days, you will be doing a partial fast just as prophet Daniel did. When you choose to fast on your own, you will need to ask the Lord what kind of fast you should do. Be careful, be wise and take it easy.

3. THE PURPOSE OF FASTING.

- A. *Fasting reveals the things that control you.*** If there is pride, anger, or fear inside of you, God will show it to you so that you can be set free. If there is pain, resentment, or lack of forgiveness in your heart, the Holy Spirit will reveal it to you when you're praying so you can be healed.
- B. *Fasting helps you maintain a balanced life.*** It is very easy to be distracted from what really is important and lose your focus on the Lord. Paul said, "You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you" (*1 Corinthians 6:12*).
- C. *Fasting helps you develop discipline.*** David wrote, "I humbled my soul with fasting: (*Psalms 35:13 KJV*). This is not asceticism, it is discipline and discipline brings freedom. When you are someone that is disciplined, you are able to resist temptations, problems in life and the circumstances without wavering your faith.

Conclusion: *Do you want to cast out the excuses? Then, make fasting a habit and get disciplined to triumph in this journey towards success. God wants to bless you greatly, but first you must have him in your heart. If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, pray the following prayer:*

Weekly Announcements:

- *Daniel Fast- January 8-29*
- *First fruits- February 5th*
- *Adult Retreat- January 20-22*

Personal Application:

- ✓ Join us in fasting for 21 days and receive God's direction for your life.
- ✓ You can fast television and use that time to pray or read the Bible.

Salvation Prayer

Lord Jesus, I recognize I have sinned and that you died for me. Today I repent and ask for forgiveness. I give you my life and my heart so you can be my Lord and personal Savior, amen.

FASTING WITHOUT EXCUSES II

⁴ *When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.*
Nehemiah 1:4 NLT

Interactive Questions:

What should you do while you are fasting?
 Why is it necessary to read the Bible and how does it help you receive God's guidance?

Objectives:

- ❖ To know the essential parts of fasting.
- ❖ Apply the necessary requirements to obtain glorious results.

***Illustration:** Daniel was one of the young men chosen by King Nebuchadnezzar from the royal families that had been sent captive to Babylon. Daniel, was and continues to be a peculiar example of constant holiness in the believers' life. This young man, from the moment that he was called to the palace, teaches us how he abstains from the royal foods and drinks in order to consecrate himself (Daniel 1:12). Due to this act, his appearance stood out and he was rewarded to serve in the royal palace. He teaches us how he prayed three times a day and how his efficient relationship with the Lord caused him persecution, but most of all it provoked God's glory in his life (Daniel 6:10, 22). Also, we see how he fasted for three weeks and at the end the Lord answered him through an impressive vision, letting him know what was to come. During these 21 days of fasting, the Father also wants to reveal His direction for your life.*

Introduction: *Many have tried to fast, but they do not get the wonderful outcome they expect because they don't do it the right way. There are essential parts that should be included when fasting to receive God's answers and blessings. Today, we will learn about those indispensable requirements.*

1. PRAYER. *Matthew 6:6 NLT*

- A. It is in prayer where you can converse with the Lord and form a genuine relationship with Him. You must approach His throne as His child and recognize Him as your Heavenly Father in order to find favor.
- B. You need to pray in the name of Jesus, because the Father gave him the name that is above every name, the name that overcame and that has authority in the heavens and earth (*Matthew 28:18*).
- C. God knows the future and He knows what's best for you. Therefore, it is best to consult with Him before making any decisions; and fasting, will make you more sensitive which enables you to receive His advice.
- D. Prayer releases the power of miracles and the answers just as it happened with Nehemiah; also, it cancels every work of the enemy that is against you. Remember this: a lot of prayer, a lot of power; a little prayer, a little power.

2. READING THE BIBLE.

- A. One of the most powerful weapons you can use is the Word of God, because His will is in it (*1 John 5:14-15*). The Bible feeds your spirit, helps you mature and it teaches you how to recognize the Father's voice.
- B. Take some extra time to read your three daily chapters according the Bible calendar. Maybe, the hour you dedicated to watching the news can be invested in reading the scriptures.
- C. Before reading the Bible, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you so that you receive a revelation. Fasting will help you enjoy the biblical passages, because your spirit will be more susceptible to God's presence.
- D. Reading the Word, will synchronize you with the Father's heart because it is where you get to know His promises and plans for your life.
- E. Many prayers have not been answered, because they were asked wrong. The best way to be guided in prayer is by using the Bible and praying in accordance to it, that guarantees your prayer is aligned to the Lord's will; therefore, it assures an answer in the right time.

3. READ EDIFYING BOOKS.

- A. It is important to grow personally by reading books that will edify you in all areas of your life. They can be books that help you mature in your leadership, vocation, finances or spiritually.
- B. Definitely, the most important book you should make a habit in reading is the Bible, but it is also smart to read books that will educate you as a person, in order to become the best version of yourself and to be successful in everything you do.
- C. Read books that have to do with an aspect in which you desire to grow. In our library located in the church lobby, there are tons of books from which you can choose to minister any part of your life.
- D. The book of the month is called, "A Blessed Life". It will teach everyone in the church how to access "the" blessing of God. Join us and discover how to start living in abundance on a daily basis.

Conclusion: *There is something God wants to release over your life, but it's up to you to seek His presence and dig into His Word. Maybe, you still haven't joined the fast or you haven't accepted Jesus Christ into your heart. I guarantee that, if fasting brought supernatural blessings to Jesus, it will do the same for you. Come on, pray the following prayer:*

Salvation Prayer

Lord Jesus, I recognize I have sinned and that you died for me. Today I repent and ask for forgiveness. I give you my life and heart so you can be my Lord and personal Savior, amen.

Weekly Announcements:

- *Daniel Fast- January 8-29*
- *First Fruits- February 5th*
- *Adult Retreat- January 20-22*

Personal Application:

Get a notebook to jot down what God speaks to you as you read the Bible and write the following:

1. God's message today (write the verse that caught your attention).
2. God's promise for my life.
3. The commandment to obey (every promise is tied to a commandment).
4. Personal Application (write what you'll practice).

FASTING WITHOUT EXCUSES III

⁶ ... *this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. **Isaiah 58:6 NLT***

Interactive Questions:

- What are some benefits when fasting?
- Is fasting healthy? Why or why not?
- What are you expecting after you finish fasting?

Objectives:

- ❖ Discover the benefits and rewards that are received after fasting.
- ❖ Share testimonies about what God has done in the lives of each H.O.P member.

***Illustration:** The Bible narrates the story of a young Jewish girl named Esther. She became a queen during the reign of King Xerxes. In that time, the king had promoted a man named Haman as the most powerful official in the empire. Mordecai, who was Esther's cousin and who had saved King Xerxes from being assassinated, did not want to follow Haman's orders, because his Jewish background did not allow him to do so; which caused Haman to convince King Xerxes to kill the entire Jewish race, because they had different laws from theirs. The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing his signet ring from his finger and giving it to Haman. The king did not know that Queen Esther and Mordecai were Jewish, nevertheless, Esther called all the Jewish people to join in fasting and prayer for three days, so that the Lord would give them favor with the king. At the third day of the fast, Esther came before the king's throne, and asked him for permission to have a banquet where she would reveal her request. It was so, and it was there where she let them know about the evil Haman had caused. Finally, Haman was hung at the king's command; and Esther's request to deliver the Jewish people, from death, was met (Esther 2-7).*

Introduction: *We are about to end the last week of the congregational fast. You have been praying, reading the Bible and the book of the month, now God is about to manifest His glory, or maybe He has already answered you. Today you will be learning about the benefits and rewards that are received after fasting.*

1. The Spiritual Benefits. Isaiah 58:4 -6

- A.** You are empowered to break all sinful yokes and habits. You are delivered from demonic oppression and can obtain a spiritual breakthrough in your life (*Isaiah 58:9-10*).
- B.** Fasting helps you develop habits like prayer and reading the Word, which feeds your spirit and makes you someone spiritually strong, invincible, and unbeatable.
- C.** You become more sensitive and compassionate towards other peoples' needs (*Isaiah 58:7*).
- D.** You learn to submit, consecrate and sacrifice your body, and when a body is subjected, the flesh has nothing to hold on to and it is controlled (*Romans 12:1*).
- E.** Fasting releases the power of revelation which keeps you revived. It helps grow your faith, giving you the strength to overcome those giants in the spiritual world that wanted to steal your blessings.

2. The Emotional Benefits. *Psalms 35:13*

- A. Your soul is humbled before the Father's presence. Most of the problems that believers deal with are found in their soul and not in their spirit. Their ego gets in the way, dominating their thoughts and feelings, but the moment they break down before His presence, Jesus heals them.
- B. It also helps you forgive and let go of those who have hurt you, which in return sets your soul free.
- C. Fasting recharges your spiritual batteries, therefore when you go through tough days, you're delivered from discouragement and depression (*Matthew 11:28*).
- D. Fasting helps you monitor your emotions to keep them healthy so that you do not fall into the traps of offense.

3. The Physical Benefits. *Daniel 1:15*

- A. During the fast, you will get headaches and your bones might even hurt, because your body is being detoxed.
- B. It brings rest to your nervous and digestive system.
- C. It reduces the arterial pressure and bad cholesterol.
- D. Your body is renewed and your mental capacity is sharpened.
- E. It breaks with the addiction to junk food and to an uncontrollable appetite.
- F. It helps you lose weight and maintain a healthy diet.
- G. It improves your emotional state.

4. The Glorious Rewards *Esther 8:15-17*

- A. There are certain blessings that we have to take by force in order to grab them (*Matthew 11:12*). In the story of Esther, you can see how the Jewish people joined in fasting and prayer, and how the Lord had favor and mercy with them, saving the Jews from being exterminated.
- B. In the book of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered from death even though they were in the middle of a fiery furnace (*Daniel 3:26-27*). Further on, Daniel is freed from being devoured in the lions' den (*Daniel 6:18-23*).
- C. Jesus, being the best example of all, was a blessing wherever he went because of his constant lifestyle of prayer and fasting. The supernatural power was always coming out of him! (*Luke 8:44-46*).

Conclusion: *There is multiplication, healing, deliverance, and abundance for you in the Lord. Make the effort to finish strong this last week of fasting and grab hold of your victory. If there are new guests that haven't accepted Jesus Christ, lead them into making the following prayer, so they also receive the blessings:*

Weekly Announcements:

- Daniel Fast- January 8-29
- First Fruits- February 5th
- Adult Retreat- January 20-22

Personal Application:

- ✓ Testify about what happened after this fast and share it with someone who does not know Jesus. Then, invite them to the H.O.P or church.

Salvation Prayer

Lord Jesus, I recognize I have sinned and that you died for me. Today I repent and ask for forgiveness. I give you my heart and life so you can be my Lord and personal Savior, amen.