

Weeping
Inquiring
Confession/repentance
Intercession or petition
Deliverance
Temptation
Preparation for ministry
Spiritual warfare

Community
Individual
Hypocrisy/False Fast

Judg 20:26 Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and **fasted** that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

Weeping | Inquiring | Community

The people of Israel fasted with weeping. They fasted because there was a great slaughter in a battle. And they also fasted as they “inquired of the Lord” (Judg 20:27) what to do next.

1 Sam 7:6 So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured *it* out before the Lord. And they **fasted** that day, and said there, “We have sinned against the Lord.” And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.

Confession/repentance Community

Samuel warns the people to put away their idols and serve God only. He tells them to “prepare your hearts for the Lord.” He prays for the people. The people fasted in the context of confessing their sins against the Lord.

1 Sam 31:13 Then they took their bones and buried *them* under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and **fasted** seven days.

2 Sam 1:12 And they mourned and wept and **fasted** until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

1 Chron 10:12 all the valiant men arose and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons; and they brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and **fasted** seven days.

Weeping Community

A fast to remember and grieve over the deaths of King Saul and Jonathan

2 Sam 12:16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David **fasted** and went in and lay all night on the ground.

2 Sam 12:21 Then his servants said to him, “What *is* this that you have done? You **fasted** and wept for the child *while he was alive*, but when the child died, you arose and ate food.”

2 Sam 12:22 And he said, “While the child was alive, I **fasted** and wept; for I said, ‘Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’

2 Sam 12:23 But now he is dead; why should I **fast**? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

Confession/repentance Individual Intercession or petition Weeping

David fasted with a petition that God might hear his prayer. He also fasted in the context of confession of sins. It is here where he wrote Psalm 51, a great Psalm of repentance and confession of sin.

1 Kings 21:9 She wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a **fast**, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people;

1 Kings 21:12 They proclaimed a **fast**, and seated Naboth with high honor among the people.

1 Kings 21:27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and **fasted** and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.

Hypocrisy/False Fast

A false fast! Jezebel declared a “fast” so she could have someone murdered there in the name of God. This type is condemned in Isaiah. It shows that the abstaining from food can be completely for show.

2 Chron 20:3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a **fast** throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

Community Deliverance

Jehoshaphat declared a fast because enemies were threatening the people. This was a fast for deliverance.

Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a **fast** there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions.

Ezra 8:23 So we **fasted** and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.

Community Deliverance

Ezra proclaimed a fast because they had trusted God to return to Jerusalem with no protection from the army and were now recognizing that the journey was difficult as well as dangerous from enemies. So they all fast to ask for deliverance.

Ezra 9:5 At the evening sacrifice I arose from my **fasting**; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God.

Confession/repentance Individual (but praying as if communal) Intercession or petition

Ezra fasts as a response to the sin of the people having intermarried with the pagan people around them, and the forsaking of God. He confessed the sins of the people on their behalf. He prays individually, but on behalf of the entire nation.

Neh 1:4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was **fasting** and praying before the God of heaven.

Weeping Individual Intercession or petition

Nehemiah heard the state of Jerusalem. How its walls were still destroyed. He weeps over the judgment and the state of the people.

Neh 9:1 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with **fasting**, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.

Community Confession/repentance

The Feast of Tabernacles—a time of joy and feasting—just ended on the 22nd day. So two days later, after spending all that time hearing the Word of God read, and remembering God, they choose a spontaneous fast of repentance following days of feasting. As they did it, they stood and heard the Word of God read for ¼ of the day, then the next ¼ of the day they confessed their sins and worshiped God. And then they rested.

Esther 4:3 And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with **fasting**, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Community Weeping Deliverance

The people fast and cry out with a bitter cry when Heman plans to kill the Jews across the land.

Esther 4:16 “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and **fast** for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will **fast** likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”

Community Deliverance Intercession or petition

Esther, as the wife of a pagan king. Risks going to him and asking for his protection for the Jews. There was a chance interrupting him and asking this could lead to her own death. So she requests every Jew to fast 3 days and nights with her.

Esther 9:31to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their **fasting** and lamenting.

Deliverance **Weeping** **Community**

This was a declaration that the Jews should remember these days called “Purim” to be forever tied to fasting.

Ps 35:13But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with **fasting**; And my prayer would return to my own heart.

Intercession or petition **Individual**

David fasted for people who eventually betrayed him. But the concept is that this was intercession for when they were sick. And it was individual.

Ps 69:10When I wept and chastened my soul with **fasting**, That became my reproach.

Individual **Confession/repentance**

This is a Psalm that includes David speaking of his own foolishness and sin. He mentions crying to the point of being weary of crying.

Ps 109:24My knees are weak through **fasting**, And my flesh is feeble from lack of fatness.

Individual **Deliverance**

David is specifically crying out to God for deliverance from his enemies.

Isa 58:3‘Why have we **fasted**,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ “In fact, in the day of your **fast** you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers.

Isa 58:4Indeed you **fast** for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not **fast** as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high.

Isa 58:5Is it a **fast** that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a **fast**, And an acceptable day to the Lord?

Isa 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?

Hypocrisy/False Fast

This is a rebuke from God of what was presented as a “fast” yet did not have the heart of God. They had the ashes, the sackcloth, they cried out loud to God. Yet they had no mercy for others. No desire to please God by loving others.

Jer 14:12 When they **fast**, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.”

Hypocrisy/False Fast

Another example of hypocritical fasting. They cry out to God and “fast” but it is not with a pure heart. It is not truly after God.

Jer 36:9 Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, **that they proclaimed a fast** before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem.

Confession/repentance **Community**

Another example of a declared fast for repentance.

Dan 9:3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with **fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.**

Confession/repentance **Individual** but prayed for the whole community.

Daniel prayed on behalf of the sins of his people.

Joel 1:14 Consecrate a **fast**, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders **And all the inhabitants of the land** *Into the house of the Lord your God*, And cry out to the Lord.

Joel 2:12 “Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With **fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.**”

Joel 2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a **fast**, Call a sacred assembly;

Confession/repentance **Community** **Weeping**

All the fasts in Joel are meant to be as a lament over the judgment they have faced and a confession of the sin that led to that judgment and will lead to further judgment.

Jonah 3:5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a **fast**, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.

Confession/repentance Community

A pagan nation, threatened with the wrath of God, confessed and repented together.

Zechariah 7:5 “Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: ‘When you **fasted** and mourned in the fifth and seventh *months* during those seventy years, did you really **fast** for Me—for Me?’

Hypocrisy/False Fast

More hypocritical fasting. They did it for themselves.

Zechariah 8:19 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘The **fast** of the fourth *month*, The **fast** of the fifth, The **fast** of the seventh, And the **fast** of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.’

This is God’s alternative to their hypocritical fasting in Zechariah. It includes the things Isaiah 58 does. Where they should be doing the fast as they speak truth to their neighbor and they do what is right and makes for peace.

Matt 4:2 And when He had **fasted** forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

Preparation for ministry Individual Temptation

Jesus began his ministry by being baptized and then immediately fasted for 40 days and 40 nights in preparation of being tempted.

Matt 6:16 “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.

Matt 6:17 But you, when you **fast**, anoint your head and wash your face,

Matt 6:18 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.

Response to: Hypocrisy/False Fast

Jesus assumes we *will* fast. He assumes it involves food. He warns against the hypocritical fasting. He sums up the hypocrisy v. genuine fasting as being a matter of what the heart’s

motivations are. One wants to be seen by men and ultimately commend themselves. The other wants to please God in secret.

Matt 9:14Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees **fast** often, but Your disciples do not **fast**?”

Matt 9:15And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will **fast**.

Mark 2:18The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were **fasting**. Then they came and said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees **fast**, but Your disciples do not **fast**?”

Mark 2:19And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom **fast** while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot **fast**.

Mark 2:20But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will **fast** in those days.

Luke 5:33Then they said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John **fast** often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?”

Luke 5:34And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom **fast** while the bridegroom is with them?

Luke 5:35But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will **fast** in those days.”

Weeping

The assumption is that we would fast even after Jesus ascended. This is not only an Old Testament discipline.

Matt 17:21However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and **fasting**.”

Mark 9:29So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and **fasting**.”

Spiritual warfare

There is power in fasting that impacts spiritual warfare.

Luke 2:37and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with **fastings** and prayers night and day.

This is Anna. We are not told why she fasted, just that she did it often.

[Luke 18:12](#) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

Hypocrisy/False Fast

The Pharisee is a picture of a self-righteous and deceived man. Proclaiming his own goodness. Desiring to commend himself while despising others. Perfect summary of Isaiah's and Jesus's warnings.

[Acts 10:30](#) So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Preparation for ministry Individual

Cornelius was a Roman soldier who feared God. He was fasting and received a vision that Peter would visit. This would be a major interaction that signified to Peter that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well in a way he had never previously understood.

[Acts 13:2](#) As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

[Acts 13:3](#) Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Preparation for ministry Community

Barnabas and Saul's missionary trip to share the gospel began with prayer and fasting.

[Acts 14:23](#) So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Preparation for ministry Community

More laying the foundation of a church with fasting. It appears it was common practice that appointing elders included prayer and fasting.

[1 Cor 7:5](#) Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Fasting and prayer as a married couple. Tied with prayer. Seems to include a particular purpose is included.

Occurrences where people fasted, but the word is not used:

Exodus 34:28—So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water.

Preparation for ministry Individual

Moses on Sinai, receiving the law.

1 Samuel 1:7—So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.

Intercession or petition

Hannah fasted as she went to the house of the Lord. Hannah prays a prayer that she describes as “pouring out her soul before the Lord.” She wept and prayed because she desired a child.

1 Kings 19:8—Elijah—So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

Individual Deliverance

Elijah was fleeing persecution. After this fast, he ends up going to the very mountain Moses fasted on. It was a significant moment in Old Testament history that shows God was still with His people despite the persecution.

Ezra 10:6—Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.

Individual on behalf of community Confession/repentance

Ezra fasts because of the guilt of the people. More confession/repentance.

Dan 10:2–3—those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Individual Weeping

Daniel fasted because he felt sick over the visions of Israel’s future trouble.

Acts 9:9—And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank

Individual Confession/repentance Preparation for ministry

Saul fasted after he received a vision of Jesus. He believed the truth. His fast took place for three days just before Ananias arrived to pray over him and lay hands on him (a sign of anointing for ministry).