



## Spiritual Disciplines

# SESSION 4: FASTING

Based on *Celebration of Discipline*  
by Richard Foster

What are some of the motivations to fast?

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

What impressions do these verses give you?

Fasting is difficult for many reasons

- There isn't a set of directions that you can look up in Scripture on how to do it
- Self-denial on a bodily or physical level is not something we are accustomed to
- We are out of sync with seasons because of our modern lives

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1-4

Do we know how to live on every word that comes from the mouth of God? Is this our food?



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**SESSION 4: MEDITATION**  
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### Types of Fasts

- Food related: Water fasts, Juice Fasts, Absolute fasts, Delicacies fasts
- *Non-food related: Media, TV, Sports, Activities*

### Suggestions on Fasting

- Medical Disclaimer: Talk to a doctor if you have health issues about what might be healthy in terms of fasting.
- Limit telling people about your fast
- Start small and build endurance
- If you feel faint or like you can't go on, stop the fast.
- The less sugar and more protein the last meals before a fast helps ensure success
- Habits like frequent snacks all day long hinder fasting on days you fast
- Caffeine issues
- Drink water through the day especially when hungry
- Focus on your mood and tone during fasting – Learn what you need to work on
- Plan on something to do with the Lord when you would normally eat

### Fasting Frequencies or When to Fast

- Didache: Wednesday and Friday fasting until the 9th hour (3 o'clock)
- Once a week
- Once a month
- During Lent
- Continually in prayer about when God might want you to fast

Ask all the people of the land and the priests, "When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?"

Zechariah 7:5