

## **Fasting and Prayer as Your Spiritual Worship**

### **by Ronnie W. Floyd**

The disciplines of prayer and fasting are not reduced to a formula or a hoop that we are to jump through as if we are a kind of spiritual circus. Nor are they physical tests or exercises in mental discipline. True prayer and fasting are attitudes of the heart and cries of the soul.

#### **God-Honoring Fast**

Through fasting, we confirm the words uttered by Jesus in the face of temptation during His forty-day fast, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Through prayer and fasting we forsake our own physical needs and the creature comforts of this world and call upon God as the Originator, Giver, Source, and Sustainer of all life, especially our own. We exalt Him as our hope and salvation. True spiritual fasting will result in submission and devotion to God.

#### **God Blesses When Our Fasts...**

- Focus on Him and honor Him.
- Have spiritual purposes.
- Cause individuals to humble themselves and submit to the authority of God and His Word.
- Cause individuals to acknowledge and repent of sin.
- Deprive our natural desires and lusts to focus on the spiritual.

#### **A Practical Guide**

I can't explain why God has chosen prayer and fasting as the gateway to supernatural power. One thing I do know: scripture, prayer, and fasting are the ways believers humble themselves in the sight of the Lord. When we humble ourselves, He promises to exalt and lift us up at the appointed time (I Peter 5:6; James 4:10). God also indicates that He will give grace to the humble (James 4:6). Again, II Chronicles 7:14 indicates the importance of humbling ourselves before God.

Fasting brings a sharp focus to the dramatic difference between our physical and spiritual natures. Eating is one of the most fundamental things we do as physical beings. One of the most natural desires is for food. Without proper nourishment we die. By exercising our wills and depriving ourselves of food for spiritual purposes, we acknowledge our spiritual natures and honor our Creator-Father. When we deny the natural for the purpose of calling upon God to do the supernatural, He will enable and empower us to experience the supernatural. One of the primary functions of prayer and fasting is to help us discover what His ordained will is. God will work and bless in ways consistent with His will.

#### **Spiritual Suggestions**

- No. 1 - If God does not call you to fast, don't fast!
- No. 2 - Determine in advance the length of the fast God is calling you to undertake.
- No. 3 - Identify, confess, and repent of all revealed sin before and during your fast.
- No. 4 - Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting in all areas of your life including reconciliation.
- No. 5 - Pray fervently and continually.
- No. 6 - Always reserve time to be still and quiet before the Lord.
- No. 7 - Skipping meals alone will not result in a meaningful fast! You must set aside time to pray.
- No. 8 - Praise God verbally and in song for who He is and what He has done: Worship Him.
- No. 9 - Use scriptural prayers during some of your prayer time.
- No. 10 - Ask God with whom, when and how you may want to share your fasting experience when it has come to an end

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