

Some Importance Reasons for Fasting

Exodus 34:28; Deut. 9:9; Judges 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:6; 31:13; 2 Sam. 1:12; 3:35; 12:16; Psalm 35:13–14; 1 Kgs 19:8; 2 Chr 20:3; Jonah 3:5; Joel 1:14; Isa. 58:3–14; Jer. 14:11–12; Daniel 6:18; 9:3; Ezra 8:21–23; Matthew 6:16–18; Luke 5:33–35; Luke 2:37; Acts 9:9; 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27; Omni 9:6; Mosiah 27:22–23; Alma 5:46; 6:6; 13:3; 17:3,9; 28:2–6; 30:2; Hel. 3:5; 9:10; 3 Ne. 13:16–18; 27:1; 45:1; 4 Ne. 12; D&C 59:13–14; 88:76,119; 95:16; 109:8,16



The Prophet Isaiah taught concerning the true spirit of fasting and the benefits that flow therefrom (**Isaiah 58:3–14**).

He summarized some of the purposes for which we may fast:

- v. 8 For enlightened minds.
- v. 8 For good health.
- v. 8 For righteousness & the companionship of the Lord
- v. 9 That our prayers will be answered
- v.11 For guidance from the Lord.
- v.11 For happiness or to relieve sorrow
- v.12 For the Kingdom of God and the Lord's people
- v.14 For the blessings of Jacob (temple blessings)

Following are some examples from the Old Testament of how fasting was used to accomplish the purposes that Isaiah lists:

Scripture:	Person and Event:
For Inspiration: Exodus 34:28	Moses fasted 40 days/nights on Mt. Sinai while receiving the covenant tablets.
In Gratitude: Judges 20:26	The children of Israel fasted in gratitude for their victories over their enemies.
For Forgiveness: 1 Samuel 7:6 Jonah 3:5 Jeremiah 14:11–12	Israel fasts while seeking forgiveness for their wickedness and idolatry. The people of Ninevah fast for forgiveness after Jonah calls them to repentance. Israel's ritual fasting is rejected by the Lord because of their wickedness.
For Strength While In Mourning: 1 Samuel 31:13 2 Samuel 1:12 2 Samuel 3:35	Those in Gilead fast in mourning for their dead King Saul and his sons. All Israel fasts in mourning for their dead King Saul and his son Jonathan. David fasts in mourning for his dead friend Abner, who died in battle.
On Behalf Of Others: Psalm 35:13–14 Daniel 6:18	David fasts for his enemies, presumably to have their hearts softened. King Darius fasts on behalf of Daniel who has been cast into the lion's den.
For Protection: 2 Chronicles 20:3 Ezra 8:21–23	Jehoshaphat and all Israel fast for protection against their Ammonite enemies. Ezra and the returning Israelites fast and pray for protection while traveling.
In Preparation For A Great Spiritual Event: Daniel 9:3 Joel 1:14.	Daniel fasts and prays for all Israel as he looks forward to the Messiah's coming. Joel advises us to fast and gather to the temple when the Lord comes again.

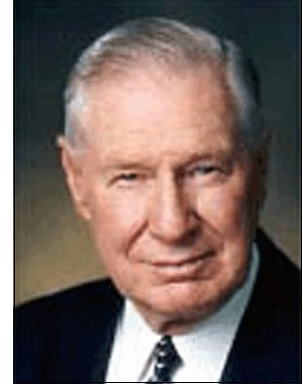
The Power of Fasting and Prayer

Exodus 34:28; Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35; Psalm 35:13–14; 1 Kings 19:8; 2 Chr 20:3; Jonah 3:5; Joel 1:14; Isaiah 58:3–14; Jer. 14:11–12; Daniel 6:18; Daniel 9:3; Ezra 8:21–23

James E. Faust said:

“I emphasize that fasting and prayer is a great way to receive the moral strength and spiritual strength to resist the temptations of Satan. But you may say this is hard and unpleasant. I commend to you the example of the Savior. He went into the desert, where he fasted and prayed to prepare himself spiritually for his ministry. His temptation by the devil was great, but through the purification of his spirit he was able to triumph over all evil.”

—*In The Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust*, 302



Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“I would suppose that on this campus at least 20,000 people have been fasting and that you have accompanied your fasting with earnest prayer. I think that’s a most remarkable phenomenon. Most of you, I assume, have fasted and prayed with a purpose—that you might find answers to perplexing personal problems or the needs of others, or that moisture might fall upon these arid western lands. I hope you haven’t prayed for snow with the hope that you could go skiing on Sunday. I believe that the Lord will hear our earnest supplications, if we will back up our fasting and prayers with goodness in our lives.”

—“Forget Yourself,” *BYU Devotional Speeches of the Year*, March 6, 1977, 43; see also *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 217

Ed J. Pinegar said:

“Prophets pay a high price to be the spokesmen for the Lord. Such was the case with Elijah. Yet in his hour of need, he taught us a great truth: through fasting and prayer we can be comforted, and the Lord will reveal the things we should do.

The power of prayer and fasting is demonstrated in the following verses:

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| ● To overcome and avoiding temptation | 3 Nephi 18:15, 18 |
| ● To restore Alma the Younger’s health | Mosiah 27:22 |
| ● To give thanks and worship | Alma 45:1 |
| ● To know the things of God | Alma 5:46 |
| ● To enjoy the spirit of revelation and prophecy | Alma 17:3 |
| ● To help those who know not God | Alma 6:6 |
| ● To gain faith and humility | Helaman 3:35 |
| ● To become sanctified | Helaman 3:35 |

“The power of fasting and prayer has been shown throughout the scriptures. Today the Lord continues to bless us as we humble ourselves in prayer and fasting, pay our fast offerings, and seek blessings at His hand. Within our own families we should testify of the blessings that we have received through fasting and prayer.”

—*Teachings and Commentaries on the Old Testament*.

President Kimball's Teachings on Fasting

Exodus 34:28; Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35; Psalm 35:13–14; 1 Kings 19:8; 2 Chr 20:3; Jonah 3:5; Joel 1:14; Isaiah 58:3–14; Jer. 14:11–12; Daniel 6:18; Daniel 9:3; Ezra 8:21–23

Spencer W. Kimball said:

“Fasting is a commandment. Likewise, failing to fast is a sin. In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, rich promises are made by the Lord to those who fast and assist the needy. Freedom from frustrations, freedom from thralldom, and the blessing of peace are promised. Inspiration and spiritual guidance will come with righteousness and closeness to our Heavenly Father. To omit to do this righteous act of fasting would deprive us of these blessings.”

—*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 98

“Fasting brings spiritual blessings. The law of the fast is another test. If we merely go without food to supply welfare funds, it is much of the letter, but in real fasting, for spiritual blessings, come self-mastery and increased spirituality. (51–08)”

“On a full stomach it's easy to talk about fasting. The test comes, of course, when a grumbling stomach demands food. (57–02)”

“Fast with purpose. We must ever remind ourselves and all members of the Church to keep the law of the fast. We often have our individual reasons for fasting. But I hope members won't hesitate to fast to help us lengthen our stride in our missionary effort, to open the way for the gospel to go to the nations where it is not now permitted. It's good for us to fast as well as to pray over specific things and over specific objectives. (76–24)”

“Do not force children to fast. Many parents leave it up to the child to make his mind up when he will begin to fast. . . . Because his older brothers and sisters fast, he will want to as soon as he can. He should not be forced to do it but should be taught and trained and educated to do it. It's amazing how much your little children know about life. (75–34)”

“Generous fast offering develops unselfishness. We wish to remind all the Saints of the blessings that come from observing the regular fast and contributing as generous a fast offering as we can. . . .

“This principle of promise, when lived in the spirit thereof, greatly blesses both giver and receiver. Upon practicing the law of the fast, one finds a personal wellspring of power to overcome self-indulgence and selfishness. (78–05)”

“If we give a generous fast offering, we shall increase our own prosperity both spiritually and temporally. (77–33)”

“Collecting fast offerings is an important responsibility. I thought it was a great honor to be a deacon. My father was always considerate of my responsibilities and always permitted me to take the buggy and horse to gather fast offerings. My responsibility included that part of the town in which I lived, but it was quite a long walk to the homes, and a sack of flour or a bottle of fruit or vegetables or bread became quite heavy as it accumulated. So the buggy was very comfortable and functional. We have changed to cash in later days, but it was commodities in my day. It was a very great honor to do this service for my Heavenly Father: and though times have changed, when money is given generally instead of commodities, it is still a great honor to perform this service. (75–14)”

—*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 145

