

7 Reasons to Fast

People fast for several reasons. Following are seven circumstances in the Bible in which believers sought God through this discipline.

1. To prepare for ministry. Jesus spent forty days and nights in the wilderness fasting and praying before He began God's work on this earth. He needed time alone to prepare for what His Father had called Him to do ([Matthew 4:1-17](#); [Mark 1:12-13](#); [Luke 4:1-14](#)).

2. To seek God's wisdom. Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted for the elders of the churches before committing them to the Lord for His service ([Acts 14:23](#)).

3. To show grief. Nehemiah mourned, fasted, and prayed when he learned Jerusalem's walls had been broken down, leaving the Israelites vulnerable and disgraced ([Nehemiah 1:1-4](#)).

4. To seek deliverance or protection. Ezra declared a corporate fast and prayed for a safe journey for the Israelites as they made the nine-hundred-mile trek to Jerusalem from Babylon ([Ezra 8:21-23](#)).

5. To repent. After Jonah pronounced judgment against the city of Nineveh, the king covered himself with sackcloth and sat in the dust. He then ordered the people to fast and pray. [Jonah 3:10](#) says, "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He relented and did not bring on them the destruction He had threatened."

7 Reasons to Fast

6. To gain victory. After losing forty thousand men in battle in two days, the Israelites cried out to God for help. [Judges 20:26](#) says all the people went up to Bethel and “sat weeping before the Lord.” They also “fasted that day until evening.” The next day the Lord gave them victory over the Benjamites.

7. To worship God. Luke 2 tells the story of an eighty-four-year-old prophetess named Anna. Verse 37 says, “She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.” Anna was devoted to God, and fasting was one expression of her love for Him.