

a month of **fasting** | Buford Church of Christ

For the month of April, we invite you to join our church family in four unique efforts of fasting. Each week, we'll give some simple instructions on how to engage in this practice, and provide you with ways to turn each fast into an opportunity to glorify God.

Week 1: fasting from comfort

Purpose: A comfort fast involves refraining from consuming, using, or engaging in something that is a modern-day convenience. This type of fast is practiced to focus on contentment.

Practice: For this fast, choose a comfort [going out to eat, watching TV, playing golf, etc.] and abstain from it for a set period of time, from one day to an entire week.

Week 2: fasting from technology

Purpose: A technology fast centers around removing major daily distractions, and is practiced to help us reflect on how we prioritize the things we consume.

Practice: For this fast, choose any technology or media that occupies your time [facebook, YouTube, phone apps] and refrain from using it for 24 hours or multiple days.

Week 3: fasting from finances

Purpose: A financial fast involves abstaining from spending money for a set period of time, and is practiced to help us focus on personal stewardship.

Practice: For this fast, forgo an unnecessary expense for multiple days [afternoon coffee run, etc.] or make arrangements to refrain from spending money for one or multiple days.

Week 4: fasting from food*

Purpose: In the Bible, a fast always involved the action of abstaining from food, and was practiced to help an individual focus on their dependence on God.

Practice: For this fast, consider a 24-hour fast from food [beginning after dinner and conclude with dinner the next day] or forgo a specific meal each day for an entire week.

**Please consult with your doctor before attempting a fast from food if you have any medical condition that could be affected by this practice.*

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discussed the proper mindset and practice of giving (*Matthew 6:2-4*), praying (*Matthew 6:5-13*), and fasting (*Matthew 6:16-18*), establishing fasting as a spiritual exercise on par with the other two. As we engage in the discipline of fasting throughout this month, it's important for us to remember that Jesus instructed us to fast in a way that it is not known or observed by others. Instead, our fasts are to be reserved for the knowledge of God alone *"who sees in secret."*

As you engage in the discipline of fasting, consider finding ways to turn what you are fasting from into an opportunity to glorify God. For example, if your fast results in money not being spent, then take the money you typically would spend and give it to God in some fashion. You can use it to support a ministry of the church, or give those funds to someone who is in need. If your fast removes something that typically takes up your time, then take that spare time and devote it to God instead. You can practice one of our three previous spiritual disciplines (*prayer, memorization, or worship*), spend time reading the Bible, or listen to biblical teaching through streaming services and podcasts.

When you find yourself tempted to break your fast prematurely, spend time in prayer asking God to give you the strength to endure the discomfort that you are experiencing. Consider reading *Matthew 4:2-4* and reflect on the meaning of Jesus' quotation from *Deuteronomy 8:3*, which says that *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* Other passages of Scripture worth reading and meditating on could include *Proverbs 3:5-8; Isaiah 40:28-31; 58:6-12; Joel 2:12-14; Philippians 4:10-13; 1 Timothy 4:7-10; and James 4:7-10.*

It may also be helpful to spend time praising God in song or listening to praise songs. In those difficult moments when you want to quit, be intentional about engaging with God in some way because, as *Philippians 4:13* says, *we can do all things through him who strengthens us.*

what should I do during my time of fasting?