



# **40.Day Season of Prayer and Fasting**

**Toa Payoh Methodist Church**

**1 July to 9 August 2025**



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# 40.Day Prayer Season

This nationwide season of united prayer was inaugurated by LoveSingapore in 1997, and has continued annually ever since, even throughout the COVID years. The purpose of this prayer season is to encourage every believer in Singapore from all walks of life to pray during the 40 days leading up to Singapore's National Day, starting on July 1 each year. The 40.Day Prayer Season will culminate in the **Day of His Power** on 8 August 2025, where we come together for this nation-wide gathering of the family in Christ to praise and pray for God's will and kingdom over His church and over our nation.

From 1 July to 9 August 2025, look out for daily devotionals and prayer pointers either through the LoveSingapore website ([www.lovesingapore.org.sg/en](http://www.lovesingapore.org.sg/en)) or from the link sent from our TPMC Whatsapp Broadcast.

## How You Can Participate

We encourage all in TPMC to participate in the 40.Day Prayer Season and to practice the spiritual discipline of fasting. Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-14) and denied Himself to give His life for the world, so as Disciples@TPMC, we fast and practise denying ourselves that we may intercede for the glory of God to be seen in our lives, our churches and our nation. (Matthew 16:24)

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is often neglected in our modern day of abundance and feasting. There are also misconceptions, or lack of understanding when it comes to fasting.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, regularly fasted twice a week – every Wednesday and Friday. He did so with a desire to be more like Jesus; to be perfected in love towards God and others. From the Bible, Wesley viewed fasting as a “means of grace” – a God-given discipline that helps us encounter the Lord more deeply, grow in love for Him and others, and be transformed into Christlikeness.

In this 40-Day Prayer Season, we encourage you to take time to fast, pray and wait upon the Lord. The Apostle Paul encouraged Christians in Ephesus saying, “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...” (Ephesians 6:18).

Fasting is abstaining from our trust and dependence on something (usually food and other indulgences) and affirming that our trust and dependence is ultimately on God. And out of such trust and dependence on God flows strength to not worry for ourselves and instead to give ourselves sacrificially to love and serve others. (Matthew 6:16-34) Through prayer and fasting, may we encounter Christ afresh and grow in our call to Love God, Love One Another, Love One More, and Love Our Church.



## What Fasting is Not

The motivation and purpose of fasting is to draw near to God in prayer, and be spiritually transformed to be like Christ in our relationship with God and others.

- It is not a weight-loss strategy.
- It does not make us more spiritual than others.
- It is not a legalistic requirement or ritual.
- It is not a hunger strike to “arm-twist” God for a request to get what we want.

# Misconceptions About Fasting

## 1. *Fasting is bad for health.*

A misconception is that fasting may cause gastric problems or puts our body into a starvation mode. Prolonged nutrient and calorie deficit can cause health problems but skipping a meal a day certainly will not put the body into a starvation mode. Instead, short term fasts increase the metabolic rate and the stored fat in the body acts as fuel for the body to function.

Medical studies have shown that short term fasting can improve insulin sensitivity, reduce stress and inflammation, and induces a cellular repair process<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. *Fasting is about not eating food.*

While the practice of fasting is typically abstaining from food for a certain period of time, the spiritual discipline of fasting is not just about not eating. The act of turning away from dependence on physical food is a reminder for us to turn to dependence on God for spiritual transformation.

If you are not able to fast from food due to health or medical reasons, there are other various types of fast you can do (eg, fast from sugar, caffeine, social media, gaming, etc.). It is basically turning away from indulgences and turning to God.

## 3. *I know I don't have the discipline, so I might as well not try.*

Disciplines start from somewhere and does not happen overnight. Just like how we gain the discipline of reading the Bible, worshipping God, or serving in church by taking small practical steps, the spiritual discipline of fasting is not daunting. If you're new to fasting, you might begin by fasting a meal a day. If in the process, you give in to your hunger/cravings, acknowledge your struggles to the Lord. Then try again. If it is your desire to grow in spiritual dependence on God, the Holy Spirit will certainly give you the strength and discipline to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> Alirezai M, Kemball CC, Flynn CT, Wood MR, Whitton JL, Kiosses WB. Short-term fasting induces profound neuronal autophagy. *Autophagy*. 2010;6(6):702-710. doi:10.4161/auto.6.6.12376

#### 4. *Fasting is for overly religious zealots.*

Some may have the misconception that only very pious and overly religious people fast. But biblical fasting has been practiced for thousands of years for spiritual purposes by many people.

- Jesus fasted for 40 days before He began His public ministry (Luke 4:1-2).
- Nehemiah (Cupbearer to king) fasted to help him confess his sins to God, and prayed for favour from the king of Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4).
- David (Shepherd and king) fasted to ask God to intervene because of injustice (Psalm 69:10)
- Mordecai and the Jews (Ordinary people) fasted upon receiving news of the plot for genocide against the Jews (Esther 4:3).
- The early church (Ordinary people) practiced fasting with worship (Acts 13:2) and sought God's guidance for the appointment of leaders through fasting (Acts 14:23).

## Types of Fast

### Partial Fasts

#### 1. *The Wesley Fast*

John Wesley fasted weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays. He fasted from solid foods and took only water or tea from sundown (about 7pm) on Tuesday until 3pm Wednesday afternoon; and from sundown on Thursday until 3pm Friday afternoon.

#### 2. *The Daniel Fast*

Daniel lived in Babylon during the time when Israel was exiled. For three weeks, he abstained from "delicacies" like meat and wine (Daniel 10:3).

### 3. *No Solid Food Fast*

This means to abstain from solid, chewable food. You can take juice, soup or other liquid drinks that will provide you with more energy than water-only fasts.

#### Complete Fasts

A complete fast means drinking only water for an extended period. The average healthy person can go without food between 21 and 40 days. Do consult your doctor before beginning any full fast lasting longer than three days.

#### Media Fast

Indulgences that we have become so dependent and even addicted in our modern society today is the consumption of media. A media fast is to abstain from using social media (eg, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram) and/or media entertainment (eg, digital games, Netflix, TV), and to use the time instead to read the Bible, read Christian literature, worship God through songs and praying.

#### Seek Medical Advice

There are some people who for physical and medical reasons should not fast from food, e.g. diabetics, expectant mothers, heart patients, cancer patients, and others. If you have any questions about your fitness to fast, seek medical advice.

# How to Fast

If you're fasting for the first time, or you have not practiced fasting for quite a while, begin by fasting a meal or two in a week.

## *Before the Fasting Period*

1. Pray and decide what kind of fast you will do.
2. Start cutting back or reducing your intake of caffeinated drinks and soft drinks as these tend to dehydrate you and are not good for the digestive system.

## *During the Fasting Period*

1. Make sure to always drink plenty of plain water while fasting. During the first few days, it is not uncommon to experience headaches as you abstain from taking caffeine.
2. Do not brag or announce to others that you are fasting (Matthew 6:16-18). But you don't have to be secretive about it either. You may want to let a few trusted friends or family members know for accountability purposes or for practical reasons. (E.g. letting the family know why you are not having a meal with them; informing them not to cook your portion.)
3. The time spent fasting should be set aside for prayer, worship and reading the Bible. It should be unhurried time. Find a conducive location or space where you will be undisturbed. Take time to be still to listen to God. Have your journal and record what God impressed on you through Scripture and prayer.
4. Sleep early.

## *Ending the Fast*

1. If you plan to fast for a meal/day or two, you can break the fast with a small glass of fruit juice, soy milk, soup or porridge. Then gradually have easily digestible foods like fish, vegetables and fresh fruit.



2. If you plan for an extended fast for a few days, you can break the fast with liquid foods for a few days before slowly introducing solid foods in small quantities thereafter.
3. Whether you are fasting for a short or an extended period, never break your fast with large amounts of food and having a heavy meal. Avoid spicy and oily food when breaking a fast.

This 40-Day Prayer Season, let's take time to humble ourselves before God, meditate on His word and seek His face. As a church family, let's pray for the Lord to transform us to be like Christ, to pray for our church to be revived, for our nation to be transformed and for the world to know Him.

As you prepare to fast, come with expectancy for God to reveal fresh spiritual insights, allow the Holy Spirit to reveal areas in your life to change. Have faith in the transforming power of God and His sufficient grace for spiritual formation in your life.

**Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

## Further Reading & Reflection on Fasting

### 1. Biblical Purposes of Fasting:

- Repentance and Contrition (1 Sam 7:2–6; Neh 1:1–11; Jonah 3:1–10)
- Seeking God's Guidance (2 Chron 20:1–30; Ezra 8:21–23)
- Preparation for Ministry (Matt 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–11; Acts 13:3)
- Dedication and Worship (Luke 2:36–37; Dan 1:1–20)
- Grief and Lament (Ps 35:13–14; Ps 69:10; 2 Sam 12:1–23)
- Justice and Righteousness (Isa 58:1–11; Zech 7:1–10)

### 2. Jesus' Teachings on Fasting

- Fasting with sincerity (Matt 6:16-18)
- Disciples will fast when the Bridegroom is away (Matt 9:14-15)

### 3. John Wesley on Fasting as a Means of Grace

- "The Means of Grace" (Sermon 16) – A summary in modern English:  
<https://kevinmwatson.com/2020/08/04/john-wesleys-sermon-the-means-of-grace-a-brief-summary/>
- "Upon Our Lord's Sermon On The Mount: Discourse Seven" (Sermon 27) – A summary in modern English:  
<https://kevinmwatson.com/2020/10/13/john-wesleys-sermon-upon-our-lords-sermon-on-the-mount-discourse-the-seventh-a-brief-summary/>
- "On Zeal" (Sermon 92), <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-92-on-zeal/>

Let us fast not out of ritual, but with hearts ready to encounter the living God. May these 40 days draw us closer to Christ and to one another in love and truth.