

Prosperous New Year

Grace and Peace in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I want to thank each of you for joining me this month to move in the direction God is calling our congregation. This month, Hope Christian Center will begin our Daniel fast. It is a 21-day fast, which will surely bless your life should you decide to join us. I have prepared the guidelines below to bring clarity to some of your questions and concerns.

The Daniel fast is a great model to follow and one that is extremely effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline, and purification of the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred-to fasts; however, within the Daniel fast there is room for broad interpretation. In the book of Daniel we find two different times where the prophet Daniel fasted. Daniel 1 states that he only ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods, as well as no meat or wine. So based on these two verses, we can see that either of these, or combinations of the two, constitute a Daniel fast. Again, it is important to mention that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Just remember: find your personal Fast Zone.



Before You Begin

- *Ask God for forgiveness*
- *Set yourself apart for God to use you*
- *Ask for strength to resist temptation*

Before You Begin

- *We will begin Sunday, January 8, 2012 midnight – January 29, 2012*
- *We will pray daily*
- *We will read the Gospel of St. John (one chapter per day)*
- *I will post a video devotion daily that will be available on hopetouch.org*
- *No meats, no sweets, no added sugar, no caffeine*
- *Set a goal to pray 3 times per day*
 - *Morning between 3-6 am*
 - *Noon 12 pm*
 - *Night 6 pm*
- *Ask God for personal power and deliverance*



Theme of the fast—fasting and prayer: Your goal in fasting is to become closer to God by voluntarily denying the demands of your flesh, increase your prayer life during this time, and study the Scriptures with a new intensity. When the fast is over, you should have a new spiritual strength from overcoming the cravings that usually control your life and from dedicating yourself to God.

Biblical model—In the book of Daniel, chapters 2 and 10, Daniel described two examples of his personal fasting and the dramatic results. Isaiah described God's chosen fast in Isaiah 58. Jesus fasted in the wilderness (Matthew 4, etc.) and spoke of the necessity of fasting for believers. It was a normal part of early church life. Fasting is one way we respond to the admonition throughout the Scriptures to die to our self-will and not to accommodate the desires of the flesh.

Following your own conscience—The precise details of your fast are between you and God. In Romans 14, the Apostle Paul describes how we should relate in love to one another in the matter of what we eat or choose not to eat. He says, "Each person is free to follow the convictions of his own conscience" (Romans 14, *The Message*). If you fast often, you may need to turn up your fasting another level during this time. If this is your first fast, you may not be able to endure as many restrictions as someone else who fasts frequently. In the future, live a "fasted lifestyle," increasingly accommodating God and not the flesh.

Accountability and support groups—You will probably be most successful with this fast if you make yourself accountable to at least one other person during this fast. You may want to form a group of five to seven people who meet occasionally or talk by phone. Encourage one another. If someone falls and eats the wrong foods, do not condemn them. Help them start again. Walk in love and mercy.

Restricting television and entertainment—It will be difficult for you to consecrate yourself if you feed yourself on television and movies during this time.

Overview of the fast—The Daniel fast drastically restricts normal food intake by cutting away many of the foods you commonly eat to satisfy your appetite. During the Daniel fast, there will be a sense of hunger much of the time and a sense of sacrifice even when we eat. We recommend that you restrict yourself to only one meal a day, leaving a small hunger.

Foods to INCLUDE in your diet

All fruits: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch for added sugar). Apples, Apricots, Avocados, Bananas, Berries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Breadfruit, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Coconuts, Cranberries, Dates, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Grenadine, Guava, Honeydew melons, Kiwi, Limes, Mangoes, Melons, Mulberry, Nectarines, Oats, Olives, Oranges, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini, Lemons

Vegetables: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch salt content). Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili peppers

Legumes: Dried beans, Black beans, Cannellini, Pinto beans, Split peas, Lentils

Seeds: All nuts (raw, unsalted) Sprouts Ground flax

Whole Grains: Whole wheat, Brown rice, Collard greens, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Ginger root, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Peppers, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Black eyed peas, Green beans, Green peas, Kidney beans, Peanuts (includes natural peanut butter), Cashews, Walnuts, Sunflower, Millet, Quinoa, Lentils, Lupines, White peas, Sesame, Almonds, Natural Almond Butter, Oats, Rolled oats, Plain oatmeal - not instant, Barley grits (no butter)

Liquids: Water (spring, distilled, filtered), Drink 8 glasses of water daily throughout the fast! Unsweetened soy milk

Other: Tofu soy products, Herbs, Small amounts of honey, Small amounts of sea salt

Foods to AVOID on a Daniel Fast

All animal products including all Meat, Poultry, Fish, White rice, White bread, All deep fried foods, Whole wheat pasta, Popcorn, Plain rice cakes, Herbal (caffeine free) Tea, 100% Fruit/Vegetable Juice (w/ added sugar), Small amounts of Olive Oil, Spices (read the label to be sure there are no preservatives), Caffeine Coffee (including decaf b/c contains small amount of caffeine), Carbonated beverages, Energy drinks, Alcohol, Foods containing preservatives & additives, Refined foods, Processed foods, Food additives, Refined sugar, Sugar substitutes, Raw sugar, Syrups, Molasses, Cane juice, White flour, Margarine, Shortening, High fat products, Butter, All leavened breads, Baked goods, All dairy: Milk, Cheese, Yogurt, Cream, Eggs, Mayonnaise

FAQ**What about prepared foods?**

Read the labels of all prepared foods. Remember the Daniel Fast is sugar-free and chemical-free. So, if you use any canned fruits, vegetables, packaged foods, or prepared sauces you must read the label to be aware about just what is in there.

What about pasta?

Make sure the label says whole grain pasta with no additives (watch for sugar). Whole grain pasta offers 7 grams of protein per serving (3/4 cup of dried pasta).

I know it says raw, unsalted nuts, but what about roasted nuts?

The goal would be to stick to raw, unsalted nuts. But these are harder to find so in a pinch just make sure you get plain roasted, unsalted nuts with no preservatives.

How do I get enough protein in my diet while on the fast?

The following are protein-rich foods that are allowed on the Daniel Fast... almonds, sunflower seeds, lentils, quinoa, brown rice, split peas, whole grains, and tofu.

What kind of peanut butter is allowed?

A natural peanut butter with no additives...watch for sugars including molasses. Smucker's creamy natural peanut butter has nothing but peanuts in it.

How can I identify whole grain foods?

Typically if the ingredient lists "whole wheat", "rolled oats", or "whole corn" as the first ingredient, the product is a whole grain food item. Another way to identify whole grains in the foods you eat is to look in the nutritional facts information and check if the food item contains dietary fiber. If it contains a significant amount, it most likely contains whole grains. "Wheat flour" is not a whole grain and therefore does not indicate a whole grain product.

What about salad dressing?

Olive oil and lemon or lime are options.

Do I need to eat organic foods while on the fast?

No, but it is suggested because organic foods are produced without the use of feed or fertilizer of plant or animal origin and without employment of chemically formulated fertilizers, growth stimulants, antibiotics, or pesticides.

Where can I go out to eat?

Well, we think you can go anywhere and order cautiously, asking lots of questions to the wait staff, knowing ahead of time that you may be ordering a salad with olive oil and a baked potato with no extras.

What about bread?

We are recommending the Ezekiel bread found in the freezer section of your grocery/health food store.

How much can I eat?

As long as they are the appropriate foods, we are recommending eating until satisfied with no limits.

Side Effects

You may experience moderate to severe headaches for the first day or two as your body rids itself of caffeine, salt, sugar, and various impurities. You may need to take Advil, aspirin, or a Goodies (smile).

Important Exceptions

Anyone with a medical condition related to eating or under the treatment of a physician must consult their doctor. Children, especially small children, will have special needs that must be considered. Under these conditions, find some sacrifice in the area of food that can be made without endangering health. Also, if you have extreme difficulty with the fast, such as impairment of your ability to work at your job, you will have to make adjustments. This is not a failure of will but is wisdom. Seek the Lord and discuss it with other Christians involved in the fast to find alternatives.

"God's kingdom isn't a matter of what you put in your stomach . . . It's what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy. Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ." (Romans 14, The Message)

May God Bless You Immensely During This Time

Tyrone Stevenson, Senior Pastor