BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF FASTING

taken from Fasting For Spiritual Breakthrough by Elmer L. Towns

The Disciple’s Fast
**Purpose:** To loose the bands of wickedness (Isaiah 58:6) – freeing ourselves and others from addictions to sin.

**Key verse:** “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:21)

**Background:** Jesus cast out a demon from a boy whom the disciples had failed to help. Apparently they had not taken seriously enough the way Satan had his claws set in the youth. The implication is that Jesus’ disciples could have performed this exorcism had they been willing to undergo the discipline of fasting. Modern disciples also often make light of “besetting sins” that could be cast out if we were serious enough to take part in such a self-denying practice as fasting – hence the term “Disciple’s Fast.”

The Ezra Fast
**Purpose:** To undo the heavy burdens (Isaiah 58:6) – to solve problems, inviting the Holy Spirit’s aid in lifting loads and overcoming barriers that keep ourselves and our loved ones from walking joyfully with the Lord.

**Key Verse:** “So we fasted and besought our God for this: and He was intreated of us.” (Ezra 8:23)

**Background:** Ezra the priest was charged with restoring the Law of Moses among the Jews and the rebuilt the city of Jerusalem by permission of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, where God’s people had been held captive. Despite this permission, Israel’s enemies opposed them. Burdened with embarrassment about having to ask the Persian king for an army to protect them, Ezra fasted and prayed for an answer.

The Samuel Fast
**Purpose:** To let the oppressed (physically and spiritually) go free (Isaiah 58:6) – for revival and soul winning, to identify with people everywhere enslaved literally or by sin and to pray to be used of God to bring people out of the kingdom of darkness and into God’s marvelous light.

**Key Verse:** “So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day, and said there, ‘We have sinned against the Lord.’” (1 Samuel 7:6)

**Background:** Samuel led God’s people in a fast to celebrate the return of the Ark of the Covenant from its captivity by the Philistines, and to pray that Israel might be delivered from the sin that allowed the Ark to be captured in the first place.

The Elijah Fast
**Purpose:** To break every yoke (Isaiah 58:6) – conquering the mental and emotional problems that would control our lives, and returning the control to the Lord.

**Key Verse:** “He himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness...He arose and did eat and drink; and went in the strength of that meat forty days and nights.” (1 Kings 19:4,8)

**Background:** Although scripture does not call this a formal “Fast,” Elijah deliberately went without food when he fled from Queen Jezebel’s threat to kill him. After this self-imposed deprivation, God sent an angel to minister to Elijah in the wilderness.
The Widow’s Fast
Purpose: To deal thy bread to the hungry and to care for the poor (Isaiah 58:7) – to meet the humanitarian needs of others.
Key Verse: “And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.” (1 Kings 17:16).
Background: God sent the prophet Elijah to a poor, starving widow-ironically, so the widow could provide food for Elijah. Just as Elijah’s presence resulted in food for the widow of Zarephath, so presenting ourselves before God in prayer and fasting can relieve hunger today.

The Paul Fast
Purpose: that thy light break forth as the morning (Isaiah 58:8) – bringing clearer perspective and insight as we make crucial decision.
Key Verse: “And he [Saul, or Paul] was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.” (Acts 9:9)
Background: Saul of Tarsus, who became known as Paul after his conversion to Christ, was struck blind by the Lord in the act of persecuting Christians. He not only was without literal sight but he also had no clue about what direction his life was to take. After going without food and praying for three days, Paul was visited by the Christian Ananias, and both his eyesight and his vision of the future restored.

The Daniel Fast
Purpose: So “thine health shall spring forth” (Isaiah 58:8) – to gain a healthier life or for healing.
Key Verse: “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.” (Daniel 1:8)
Background: Daniel and his three fellow Hebrew captives demonstrated in Babylonian captivity that keeping themselves from pagan foods God had guided them not to eat made them more healthful than others in the king’s court.

The John the Baptist Fast
Purpose: That thy righteousness shall go before thee (Isaiah 58:8) – that our testimonies and influence for Jesus will be enhanced before others
Key Verse: “He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.” (Luke 1:15)
Background: Because John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus, he took the Nazarite vow that required him to “fast” from or avoid wine and strong drink. This was part of John’s purposefully adopted lifestyle that designated him as one set apart for a special mission.

The Esther Fast
Purpose: That “the glory of the Lord” will protect us from the evil one (Isaiah 58:8)
Key Verses: “Fast ye for me... and my maidens will fast likewise; and I will fast... And I will go to the king... And she found favor in his sight.” (Esther 4:16; 5:2)
Background: Queen Esther, a Jewess in a pagan court, risked her life to save her people from threaten destruction by Ahasuerus, king of Persia. Prior to appearing before the king to petition him to save the Jews, Esther, her attendants and her cousin Mordecai all fasted to appeal to God for His protection.
**TYPES OF FASTING**
also by Elmer L. Towns
(Obviously, these should be modified as God directs.)

**The Normal or Regular or Fast**
Going without food for a definite period during which you ingest only liquids (water and/or juice). The duration can be 1 day, 3 days, 1 week, 1 month or 40 days. Example: “And in those days he [Jesus] did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.” (Luke 4:2). A Regular Fast, traditionally, means refraining from eating all food. Most people still drink water or juice during a regular fast. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the Bible says after fasting forty days and forty nights he was hungry. This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty.

**The Absolute or Full Fast**
Allows no food or water at all, and should be short; normally no more than 3 days. Examples: “And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.” (Acts 9:9), Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9), Israel (Ezra 10:6), Israel (Esther 4:16). Moses fasted for 40 days. These fasts are complete – no food and no drink. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16 “and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

**The Partial or “Daniel” Fast**
One that omits certain foods or is on a schedule that includes limited eating. It may consist of omitting one meal a day. Eating only fresh vegetables for several days is also a good partial fast. Examples: “Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.” (Daniel 1:16), also in Daniel 10:3. Elijah practiced partial fasts at least twice. John the Baptist and again Daniel with his three friends are other examples of those who participated in partial fasts. People who have hypoglycemia or other diseases might consider this kind of fast. A partial fast can also be from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sun up to sundown. This type of fast generally refers to omitting a specific meal from your diet or refraining from certain types of foods. Daniel 10:2-3 says, “In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” In Daniel 1:12, they eliminated meats, dairy and sugars from their diet: “Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.” For more detailed information on what can be eaten in the Daniel Fast, download this document.

**Regular**
Fast days that commemorate an event or weekly fasts on a regular day. Examples: Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27; Psalm 35:13; Isaiah 58:5), a fast day (Jeremiah 36:6), four separate festivals (Zechariah 8:19), twice a week (Luke 18:11-12).
Scripture References for Fasting

Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word
1 Samuel 1:6-8,17-18; Nehemiah 1:4; Daniel 9:3,20; Joel 2:12; Luke 2:37; Acts 10:30; Acts 13:2

Corporate Fasting
1 Samuel 7:5-6; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 9:1-3; Joel 2:15-16; Jonah 3:5-10; Acts 27:33-37

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12; 1 Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast!

If you are faithful and obedient unto God in this time of fasting and praying as a corporate body of believers under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ at The Connection, you will be a part of the outpouring the Lord has already begun in the heavens for this ministry.