

Fasting

STRENGTHENS US SPIRITUALLY AND TEMPORALLY

Fasting has been part of the gospel of Jesus Christ since Old Testament times (see, for example, Daniel 9:3; Joel 2:12). Fasting strengthens people spiritually and increases the effectiveness of their prayers (see Isaiah 58:6–11). Today members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fast and give the money they would have spent on food to the Church to help the poor and needy.

“The Church designates one Sunday each month, usually the first Sunday, as a day of fasting. Proper observance of fast Sunday includes going without food and drink for two consecutive meals [in a 24-hour period], attending fast and testimony meeting, and giving a fast offering to help care for those in need.

“Your fast offering should be at least the value of the two meals you do not eat. When possible, be generous and give much more than this amount.

“In addition to observing the fast days set aside by Church leaders, you can fast on any other day, according to your needs and the needs of

others. However, you should not fast too frequently or for excessive periods of time.”¹ Those with a medical condition that would be worsened by fasting should exercise wisdom and modify their approach.

Members of the Church fast for various purposes. We can fast and pray for a family member who is sick, for example. We can fast to express gratitude to God, to develop greater

humility, to overcome a weakness or sin, to receive inspiration for our Church responsibilities, and so on. Fasting helps us feel compassion for those who regularly experience hunger. Fasting also helps our spirit triumph over the body. ■

NOTE

1. *True to the Faith* (2004), 67–68.

For more on this topic, see Matthew 6:16–18; Alma 5:46; 6:6.



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Fasting means voluntarily going without food or drink for the purpose of drawing closer to the Lord and asking for His blessings.



We are encouraged to be generous in our fast offerings: the Church uses the money to help the poor and needy.



Fast Sunday includes the bearing of testimonies in sacrament meeting.



Fasting is more effective when accompanied by prayer.



Fasting has always been practiced by true believers. The ancient Jews, for instance, fasted for Esther so she could ask the king for protection for her people (see Esther 4:16).

"[Fasting] is simple and perfect, based on reason and intelligence, and would not only prove a solution to the question of providing for the poor, but it would result in good to those who observe the law. It would . . . place the body in subjection to the spirit, and so promote communion with the Holy Ghost, and insure a spiritual strength and power which the people of the nation so greatly need. As fasting should always be accompanied by prayer, this law would bring the people nearer to God."

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 197–98.