

“What should I do if fasting just feels like going hungry?”

There may be times when you skip a meal because of a tight schedule or some other reason. Is that fasting? No, that’s going hungry. A true fast includes prayerfully desiring to draw closer to Heavenly Father. It may help to think of the reasons *why* we fast. “The Lord has established the law of the fast and fast offerings to bless His people and to provide a way for them to serve those in need (see Isaiah 58:6–12). . . . Blessings associated with the law of the fast include closeness to the Lord, increased spiritual strength, temporal well-being, greater compassion, and a stronger desire to serve” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 6.1.2).

There are many reasons to fast: one is for spiritual growth, and another is to help the poor and needy through fast offerings. You might also fast for a friend or family member who is going through a hard time. All are important ways of becoming more like the Savior.

So how can you make your fast more meaningful and enjoyable? Consider the following ideas:

- Begin and end your fast with prayer.
- Fast with a purpose. For example, you can fast for someone who is sick or for yourself to receive greater spiritual strength.
- Fast with a happy countenance (see Matthew 6:1–4). Don’t make a show of suffering while you are fasting.
- Attend fast and testimony meetings. Bear your testimony when you feel prompted.
- Pay a generous fast offering. Remember that this is an important part of the experience.

When we are obedient to this law, we will be blessed: “He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). **NE**

Think about Why You’re Fasting

You can enjoy fasting more by thinking about what you are fasting for. It really helps you focus on that reason and not on how hungry you are. You can write in your journal about the things you are fasting for, spiritual things, or fun experiences that have happened lately. You can play hymns on a musical instrument or just listen to them. Write to a friend or family member. Try to keep peace in your home with your siblings and parents so the Spirit can be there. These things keep you focused on the spirit of fasting and not on your hunger.

Lia H., 15, Alabama, USA



Focus on the Reason for Fasting

Look at fasting as a blessing, not a forced and dreaded chore.

I used to focus on my hunger pains on fast Sunday until my mom told me to fast with a purpose. She said every time you have a hunger pain, think of what you’re fasting for and say a silent prayer. I tried that the next fast Sunday, and it really helped! I didn’t feel hungry, and I saw the effects of my fast when

I received the help I had fasted for. I gained a testimony of fasting that day, and ever since, fast Sunday has always been a blessing to me.

Janae S., 15, California, USA



Fast with Faith

Fasting with any kind of purpose makes it so much more meaningful. Whether it be for school, yourself, or family. It can be something small, but as long as you have a purpose and have faith, God will help you and fasting will be more enjoyable.

Dallin L., 17, California, USA

Fast Offering Blessings

If you think of what you are fasting for, you might see that it isn't just going hungry. You can think of the person you are giving a meal to through your fast offering. When you fast, you will receive blessings.

McKayla R., 15, New Mexico, USA

Have a Purpose

I have noticed that having a purpose helps a lot. Many people fast for families in need, a chance to regain their own testimonies, or maybe even an opportunity to practice missionary work. When your thoughts

are centered on these topics and the people you love, your hunger will turn into meaning. We need the feeling of sacrifice just as Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, has felt. With this in mind, feeling hungry won't go away, but it can become easier and more rewarding.

Dallin B., 16, Utah, USA



Find Things to Fast For

I used to feel like I would be starving myself each fast Sunday, but then I realized that I needed to find things to fast for, like if I needed help with a problem or if someone was having a hard time, I could fast for it.

Evelyn W., 15, New Mexico, USA



FASTING BRINGS A CHANGE IN OUR NATURES

"The brief time we fast every month

and the small amount we offer for the poor may give us only a small part of the change in our natures to have no more desire to do evil. But there is a great promise, even as we do all that we reasonably can to pray, to fast, and to donate for those in need: ... 'Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am' (Isaiah 58:9)."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?" *Ensign*, May 2015, 25.

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.

UPCOMING QUESTION

As a young woman, how can I know if Heavenly Father wants me to serve a mission?

Send your answer and photo by July 15, 2016.

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Responses may be edited for length or clarity.