

Digital Fasting

We are challenging you this week to fast from digital media for an entire day. Anything that comes at you from a code of 1s and 0s (television, internet, streaming services, smart phones, texting, social media, email), we are asking you to take a break from. Of course, we are not asking you to sacrifice work or other responsibilities. Try to pick a day that is free from those responsibilities that require digital communication.

Why We Fast

When we fast, it is not for anyone but God. Fasting is not about impressing our friends or family. It is not about fodder for social media. Jesus encourages us to do it in secret. "And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6:16-18) We fast as an act of humility towards God. Fasting is surrender. It says to God that He is in charge and we are not.

Have a Plan

It is not wise to jump into any type of fast without a plan. We are doomed to either failure or to not reap the proper spiritual benefits from it. Here are some tips for digital fasting:

- Plan some activities to do that will replace the time that you normally spend in the digital world. Start a book, an art project, a garden, a journal, etc.
- Put the devices away. Do not let them be a temptation by having them about in the house or in your purse or pocket.
- So much of digital life happens inside. Try getting out of your house. Take a walk. Do some gardening. Hammock in the park.
- Do not let your digital fast become a fast from relationships. Continue to interact with the people around you. Instead of texting, make an actual phone call (yes, this is allowed) or write a letter. Instead of playing Fortnite with your siblings, play a board game or throw the ball around in the back yard.
- Music is allowed. Just make it public. Do not close yourself off in headphones. Rather let the music be something your whole household or apartment enjoys together.

While Fasting

Most importantly, make sure that some of the activities that you plan are focused on time in scripture, prayer, and meditation. You will be surprised how pushing back the clutter of the digital noise allows God's voice to ring clearer and truer in your heart and mind. We fast to reduce the digital din and allow our Creator to speak his truths into our lives. And finally, notice how often you desire to go to your devices. Ask yourself, "Why?", "How much of a hold does this have in my life?", "Is the digital noise guiding my thoughts and heart more than the words of God?"

Resources

If you want to dig a little deeper and make digital fasting a more regular part of your life, here are some helpful books to check out:

- The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place by Andy Crouch
- Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World by Cal Newport