

## THE CALL TO A FAST

In the Book of Joel - Chapters 1 and 2 - The Lord is directing a fast.

“...turn and keep on coming to Me with all your heart ...” *Joel 2:12 AMPC*

“Rend your hearts and not your garments and return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness; and He revokes His sentence of evil ...”

*Joel 2:13*

“Blow the trumpet in Zion: set apart a fast - a day of restraint and humility; call a solemn assembly. Gather the people, sanctify the congregation...” *Joel 2:15-16 AMPC*

Fasting is a time set aside where we do without “something.” That is generally difficult for us. The “something” can be that which comes between us and God, like an idol, or that which takes up unnecessary time from our relationship with Him. It is a time for arresting the desires of the flesh and for taking on a spirit of humility.

Typically, fasting has come to be known as the giving up of food. If it is a food fast - it might be to take in liquids only; it may be to fast one or two meals per day, with liquids; it might also be where just specific foods are eliminated for the period of fasting.

However, in this day and age there are far more “things” that can place a wedge between us and our God. Fasting can also be about putting down hobbies, games, TV, internet - anything that demands more of our attention than spending time with the Lord. Only Holy Spirit knows that the best fast is for each of us. Ask Him - recognizing that whatever it may be, the grace to carry us through comes from Him.

Fasting is not only about putting down something; it is about picking up something. It is a time to replace what time that was previously used by eating, surfing the net, etc. with reading the Word, praying, quiet time with the Lord, and perhaps serving Him in a new capacity.

*Joel 2:18-27 AMPC* goes on to tell us that when the people fast, repent and pray in sincerity of heart, “then was the Lord jealous for His land and had pity on His people.” vs. 18 The Lord speaks to the land and says, “Fear not...” vs. 21 to the beasts of the field, “Be not afraid ...” vs. 22; to the people He says, “Be glad...” vs.23 “...I will restore or replace for you the years that the locust has eaten...” vs. 25 “And you shall know, understand, *and* realize that I am in the midst of Israel and that I the Lord am your God and there is none else....” vs. 27.