

Should
Christians
Fast?



Old Testament Examples

- **The Day of Atonement – Leviticus 16:29-31**
 - Psalm 35:13, Isaiah 58:3, Acts 27:9
 - A spiritual purpose



Old Testament Examples

Repentance

1 Samuel 7:5-6
1 Kings 21:27-29
Jonah 3:4-10
Daniel 9:3-5

Petition

2 Samuel 12:15-20
2 Chron. 20:3-4
Ezra 8:21-23
Esther 4:3,16

Mourning

1 Samuel 31:13
Nehemiah 1:4

God blessed almost all these fasts!



Old Testament Examples

- **What we learn...**

- Fasting had a spiritual focus
 - *To humble self*
 - *To seek God's favor*
- Fasting most often accompanied by prayer
- No consistent pattern or legislated procedure



New Testament Examples

- **Jesus fasted – Matthew 4:1-2**
 - For 40 days!
 - Just like Moses (Deut. 9:9) & Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)



New Testament Examples

Repentance

Acts 9:9

Petition

Acts 13:2-3

Acts 14:23

Service

Acts 13:1-2

Luke 2:36-38

God blessed all these fasts!



New Testament Examples

- **What we learn...**

- Fasting is appropriate in certain situations
 - *Struggling with temptation*
 - *Seeking forgiveness*
 - *Petitioning God*
- Fasting can be done as a church
 - *Seeking blessing for a new work*
 - *Appointing shepherds*
- Fasting needs to be accompanied by prayer!



Should Christians Fast?

- **Yes!**

- Jesus assumes we will with the Father's blessing – Matt. 6:16-18

- **But, two caveats...**

- With true humility – Matt. 6:16-18, Luke 18:12,14
- No one should impose man-made regulations – Colossians 2:16-17

Purposefully, seriously, prayerfully, humbly

