

# Fasting in the Day of Golden Arches

Matthew 9:14-15

In a society where virtually every street corner has a shrine to the golden arches and a variety of pizza temples, fasting seems out of step with the times.

John Wesley said, *“Some have exalted religious fasting beyond all scripture and reason; and others have utterly disregarded it.”*

## A. Four dominant reasons why fasting has received a bad name

1. The excessive ascetic practices of the Middle Ages
2. We are bombarded with propaganda that we must eat three large meals a day or we are on the verge of starvation.
3. False teaching that has allocated fasting to another dispensation.
4. Rebellion ... *“Nobody is going to tell me whether or not I can eat food.”*

## B. Fasting

### 1. What it is not

- It is not a diet
- It is not a hunger strike.
- It is not self-abasement, seeking to gain God’s approval.
- It is not simply abstaining from food.

### 2. What it is

- Definition: *“Abstaining from all food (and drink other than water) for a limited period of time in order to seek God and gain answers to prayer.”*
- It helps to shift our focus from the physical to the spiritual.
- It is the quickest way to get ourselves into the position where God can give us what He wanted to give us all along.

## C. But is fasting biblical? Yes, but it is not a command. (Used 65 times in the Old and New Testaments)

1. A list of Old Testament all-stars who fasted: Moses, Elisha, David, Esther, Nehemiah, Daniel, Israel, Ninevah
2. A list of New Testament all-stars who fasted: Anna, Paul, Barnabus, John the Baptist, Jesus, the Church at Antioch, the early church in general  
Jesus said, *“When you fast ....”* Matthew 6:16, 9:14-15
3. Throughout church history a list of Christian all-stars fasted: Polycarp, Cotillion, St. Francis of Assisi, Savanarok, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, David Brainer, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Andrew Murray)

## Famous Quotes from Famous People on Fasting

Andrew Murray *“Prayer is reading out after the unseen, fasting is letting go of the seen.”*

Charles Finney *"Finding myself empty with power I would set aside a day in private fasting and prayer."*

Martin Luther *"It was not Christ's intention to reject of despise fasting. It was His intention to restore proper fasting."*

In 1756 The King of Great Britain called for a day of silent prayer and fasting because of the threatening invasion of the French. On February 6, 1756 John Wesley wrote in his journal, *"The fast day was a glorious day such as London has scarcely seen since the restoration. Every church in the city was more than full and a solemn seriousness sat on every face. Surely, God heareth prayer and there will yet be a lightening of our tranquility."* As a footnote, he wrote, *"Humility was turn into national rejoicing for the threatened invasion of the French was diverted."*

John Wesley *"First, let it (fasting) be done under the Lord with our eyes singly fixed on Him for our intention herein be this and this alone, to glorify our Father who is in heaven."*

John Wesley *"It was not merely by the light of reason that people of God in all ages have been directed to use fasting as a means, but they have been taught it of God Himself by clear and open revelation of His will ... now whatever reasons there were to quicken those of old, in the zealous and constant discharge of this duty, they are of equal force still to quicken us."*