The Impact of Fasting

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In the article **Fasting: A Catalyst for Change**, we looked at why we fast and pray and where it is seen in Scripture. Here are some testimonies from our Four12 partners about the impact that prayer and fasting has had on their lives and in their churches.

Testimonies

Martin Janssen
(Elder – Joshua Generation Church, South Africa)
At the moment of my conversion in 2010, I believe I received a gift of supernatural faith that instantly empowered my prayer life. At the time, my life and identity were in pieces, but I prayed (for every little thing – broken or missing things etc.), read my Bible and got involved in church life.

On the 1st January 2011, God led me to lay down alcohol for 40 days, after which He said I was never to drink it again. It has been almost 12 years of complete abstinence. In February 2011, I received the gift of tongues and was led to fast again for 7 days. On the first day, I was instantly delivered from an 18-year nicotine addiction, and on the 7th day the Lord brought a freedom to my life that I never thought possible.

Then I began to read about 40-day fasts in Scripture and thought that I'd probably 'work my way up' to one. So I was totally unprepared when, one morning, as I was reading about Elijah's 40-day trip to Horeb on the strength of one meal, I felt the Holy Spirit say, 'Eat today and start tomorrow, and go for 40 days'. This was overwhelming for a 7-month-old Christian, but I felt a confirmation almost instantly.

The next morning my hunger was completely gone, and I just took it one day at a time. One week turned into 2, then 3. No hunger, felt great. When I hit 30 days, I helped a friend with a renovation project and had to work with a breaker for 3 days to demolish a concrete slab from an old jacuzzi. I hadn't eaten in a month, but I felt better than I ever had – full of life, faith and power. I was supposed to be at my weakest physical point, yet somehow God granted me access to His supernatural power to complete the job.

For the past 11 years I have had a meal on Easter Sunday and then the Lord has taken away my hunger and allowed me to walk through the wilderness, just like that first time. This has resulted in an extended fast between Easter and Pentecost every year, for anything from 42 – 53 days. This is totally supernatural. Sometimes someone notices that I am fasting and will ask, 'How long are you going to go?' or 'Are you doing 40 again'? My answer is always: 'I don't know. I just walk into the wilderness one day at a time. I fast until the grace runs out; as long as the Lord leads.' I also bring my wife, Jo-Anne, into this process for extended fasts since it also affects her (I am very thankful for her support).

There are many ways to fast – on my annual fast I don't eat, but I do feel a freedom with drinks. I usually have coffee, tea with some honey, low cal flavoured water, or juice. I lay down my hobbies and sport completely as part of the fast, and sometimes entertainment. I aim to spend quality time with the Lord in the morning – at least 2 hours of prayer, worship and devotions before my family wakes up. The rest of my life proceeds as normal – I keep all my family, work and church commitments. I also take as many opportunities as possible to pray and minister to people during a fast, as I believe for a supernatural outworking of God's power in these times of increased faith. Towards the end of the fast, my sleep patterns are disrupted and I often sit wide awake, praying through the night, because I feel so filled and energised by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I am too tired to pray, and I just lie awake and think about God or listen to the audio Bible. I do sometimes experience moments of extreme weakness, and on a very low day, I may need to drink something with some sugar in it to give my body a bit of a boost. I also make a point of going to sleep earlier, and I usually feel much better by morning.

During a fast, I give myself to much more prayer than usual. I cannot stop interceding for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the activation of gifts, revival in the church, for the Lord to touch His people, give evidence of His presence, heal the sick, and give us power to drive out demons. I now understand that these prayers don't originate from me but the Spirit. So if the Lord ever stirs our hearts to set aside special times of prayer and fasting, there is a Kingdom purpose involved

and we would do well to obey.

Peter Chanda
(Elder – Signs & Wonders Ministries International, Zambia)
At the beginning of 1994, I fasted for 30 days. This was not planned; I just felt to fast. I did not feel hungry on any of those days – it must have been a God-prompted fast! Little did I know that I was being prepared for a great encounter with demonic powers in Kabwe, where I had been invited to speak at a week-long conference! As a result of that fast, many miracles took place on all five days of that conference.

I also remember a time when we had just returned from praying and fasting in the mountains for 14 days, and as we walked through the compound, demon-possessed people were reacting and manifesting.

Lovemore Tom
(Elder – Joshua Generation Church, South Africa)
God has graciously opened my eyes to this very important truth: **I am weak and limited**. I lack divine knowledge and understanding of who God is and how He perceives life. Prayer is a glorious privilege for me to become one with God and to tap into the knowledge of His will and align myself with that. I give myself to fasting to silence any other voices or desires of the flesh, and to raise my spiritual antennae to hear the whispers and frequency of heaven.

In my early days as a new believer, I was encouraged to fast if I wanted more of God. On fire with His first love, I engaged in fasting and prayer – God's presence was unbelievable. Fasting shifted prayer from being a duty to a way of life. God immersed a passion for prayer in me and it has become the driving force of my life. Fasting opened me up to dreams, visions, hearing God, and has strengthened my inner man beyond measure. I cannot testify enough of its power and impact!

Fasting has impacted how I pray. I now pray, "Holy Spirit, I align myself with You, according to the will of the Father" and pray in the spirit (Romans 8:26). And, amazingly, He drops the Father's desires into my heart and then I start praying and believing Him for it. "Äsk me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come" (Jeremiah 33:3, NLT). Indeed, God has revealed His remarkable thoughts and plans that have filled me with so much faith and made me patient, content, steadfast and able to rest in Him completely.
In 2018, three weeks before I got married, God revealed that I was going to plant a congregation together with my wife. Lo and behold, the following week the leaders asked us to consider planting a congregation in Khayelitsha.

In 2020, God impressed upon my heart that He was going to add a group of people to our congregation (JoshGen Khayelitsha). We prayerfully waited on God – not knowing when, how or

who – and now God has fulfilled it. Sanctuary Family Church, a Four12 partnering church in the Cape Flats region, has merged with us – hallelujah!

I believe fasting and prayer exists for us to become entwined with God in His desires, thoughts and plans for the manifestation of His Kingdom on this earth, as it is in heaven.

Fikile Mpolo
(Elder – New Voice Assemblies of God, South Africa)
The day I got saved, I became hungry for the things of God. In 1997, when I was 7 months old in the Lord, I went home to Rouvelle, Rockville, on fire for the Lord. When I arrived, I took to the streets to preach to people and to testify about Jesus. People got saved, those who were sick got healed, and people living in bondage were delivered. What followed was a night of demonic attack, so my journey of prayer and fasting started the next day.

One Monday morning in 1981, the Holy Spirit told me to fast for 7 days. A bomb had been planted in the electric fields near the mines where I worked – one that was so big that it had the potential to destroy the entire Rustenburg location. But when it erupted, the damage was not great. I saw the importance of listening to God, as whatever He tells us to do is for own good. Fasting is not imprisonment but a form of turning the children of God into humble people.

Fasting has helped me by giving me the strength to fight temptations, which has led me to pray for others as well. I've done various fasts – from one or two days, 14-21 days, or more. I recently went on a 40-day fast to pray for myself, the church and for breakthrough next year.
My daughter, Ruth, started fasting at the age of 8 for 3 days with a sister, Nomalanga, as she had heard of satanic attacks against young people, and she stuck through it, of her own will. She was not pushed by anyone to do this.

The church went on a fast when my son, Stephen, was 13. His mother cooked dinner for him, but he stored the plates of food in the oven without our knowledge. The day we broke the fast, my wife found his food in the oven. He told us that he wanted to join us in prayer.

From the age of 8, my daughter Esther was also fasting, because she saw us doing it at home and wanted to follow us. We have always been a family of prayer and fasting.

In Namibia, we fasted and prayed with the team that I was working with at the crusade. On the day we were to break the fast, the Lord spoke to me and said that I should continue with it. On the third day, a young girl testified that Satanists were after the crusade but had failed to destroy the work of the Lord.

On another occasion, the Lord prompted me to pray for someone whose life was in possible danger, and I heard later on that the Lord had saved them from a terrible car accident.

I rely on the grace of God to survive daily. Maintaining this relationship relies on communication, just like any other relationship. And there are times when you need to get away with your loved one; to spend time together away from all other distractions. This is what prayer and fasting is like.

Basil Palmer
(Elder – Joshua Generation Church, South Africa)
We have often thought that we are the wrong people for the job, yet the Lord has chosen to use insignificant people like us to demonstrate His greatness. But things don't just happen – it requires people to live with purpose and on purpose to see those things happen.

We have had the privilege of sharing life with people in different places and seeing the Lord putting lives and churches back together again. I do believe that the prayer and fasting behind the scenes was a great contributing factor to what the Lord did in all those places. There have been many times when we fasted and did not see anything significant happen immediately, but over time things would shift and change and there would be breakthrough.

One vital ingredient in building anything for the Kingdom is making sure that our hearts are connected to what we do and to the people we are doing it with and for! This is where we have seen fasting play a huge role in helping to connect our hearts to the place and people to whom the Lord has called us. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Fasting is an important building block that can build obedience in us, put to death the things within us that may hinder the Lord's plans, and bring/increase anointing in our lives. We can have times of fasting in our lives or we can live a fasted life. I believe the latter is a better way!

Sue McIntosh
(Elder's wife – Joshua Generation Church, South Africa)
We have fasted for areas like:

1. **Salvations**. If the church is not seeing salvations over an extended period of time, it's good to fast and pray, with specific people named in prayer.
2. **Financial breakthrough.** When 7 families in our church had no work, a five-day fast led to all of the families finding work within a month.
3. **Sin, particularly addictions.** The person wanting to be free is denying their body food, showing the self- control necessary to starve the addiction. The Holy Spirit loves to come and empower them to say no.
4. **Demonic strongholds**. It's helpful if the person under demonic influence and the prayer team have all fasted. For the person struggling with demons, this prayer and fasting time is

accompanied by repentance and forgiveness as the Holy Spirit brings things to light. In Malawi, when we go into a new village where witchcraft is the dominant stronghold, it is common for us to have concentrated prayer early in the morning before any meetings. This kind of unbroken territory often requires constant prayer all day. We have noticed a marked difference in the people's response to the preaching if the area is covered by prayer.

5. **Healing.** The battle is often won in private and manifests later in the public place.

Chantelle Goldswain
(Elder's wife – Joshua Generation Church, South Africa)
A few years ago we were in a long financial drought that felt like it was never going to end. One morning I woke up and felt the Lord impressing on my heart to start a 40-day fast. By day 4, it was proving to be a humbling experience. More than ever, I relied on the strength of the Lord. Intimacy with God was a struggle for me, but suddenly I could hear Him more clearly, feel Him more closely, and He even spoke to me in my dreams.

In one of my dreams, I was in a field playing with a huge, beautiful lion. We were rolling around on the grass and I was laughing, full of joy. The next instant, his massive paw landed on my face. I became afraid! So I found some men and told them to build a wall between myself and the lion, to keep him at bay. I remember the lion just standing there, watching what I was doing.

When I woke up, God told me, "Chantelle, this is what you have done to me. You have built up a wall in your heart because of fear. Give it to me, for you can trust me. I will never leave you or forsake you." This was the start of a very long journey of conquering fear. (1 Tim 1:7)

I started out wanting answers about our financial situation, but God went so much deeper – straight to my heart, because this is what I believe concerns Him most of all. He began to show me, through Scripture, dreams and people, that I can trust Him completely! So, brick by brick, He gave me the courage to bring down that wall that I had erected between us.

Today we are in a much better financial place. The Lord has been so good to our family and blessed my husband's photography business. We are now able to bless others and sow generously into the Kingdom! As for fear, it no longer rules my life. Through fasting and praying, I had revelation upon revelation of how much God truly loves me.

I believe the Lord Jesus expects us to fast and pray regularly as Christians. I have been fasting and praying for over 10 years now, and every time I am astounded by God. I have also seen many set free from demonic strongholds, sickness, addictions, etc. after fasting. Fasting and praying are important keys to obtaining freedom from our adversary. Go in expectant and you will come out amazed – and more in love with Him than ever!

Daniel Niemeijer

(Saint – Living Waters, Netherlands)
We have experienced more freedom and happiness through fasting and prayer. I have learned to be more like Jesus, because His light shines on the parts of my life that must change. It's also a time for me to intercede for the government and social things like abortion, euthanasia, prostitution and drugs.

For the last three years we have fasted once a week. This started after we felt an inner hunger for an increase in fire, dedication and God's presence. I have become focussed on Jesus, and increasingly see how holy He is and my need for a saviour. My pride and self-centeredness is now hightlighted weekly and it shows me who my real God is (not my stomach – Philippians 3:19). Prayer and fasting has a mighty effect on our lives, families and society (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Judah Wezi
(Elder – Crowded House, Namibia)
My mother got saved when my brothers and I were young teens, and there were times she would ask us to fast with her. My brother, Isaac, would always ask me to ask him, 'What's cracking?' to which he would answer in an embarrassing tone, 'Your lips!' and then laugh at me. At that time, I wanted people to know that I was fasting with my mum, with the admiration of others at my cracked lips as my reward. But Jesus shows us that we should not fast as the Pharisees did, so that men would see our suffering, but that when we fast we should still look after ourselves, comb our hair, put oil on our lips and do our best to shine who Jesus is; that what is done in the secret would be rewarded (Matthew 6:16).

I am now on a journey with the Lord in which I crucify my selfishness during fasting and care for others more than myself. I have started to worship differently, to hear God's voice differently, and to exchange my desires for His in those times. Yes, He answers and heals us, but it is even better to fast and pray for His purpose, His Bride and His will to be done in our lives as a Body.

Ruan Slabbert
(Elder – Joshua Generation Church, South Africa)
Fasting played a direct role in a number of significant directional changes in our lives – being part of starting a bible school, leading a church, and relocating to lead a church. These changes took place either during or soon after the time of fasting and prayer. I also experienced healing from a particular skin problem after a time of fasting and prayer.

I've had times of great clarity, revelation and surety during fasts. Other times, I've been confronted with much insecurity and have had thoughts that I'm doing it in my own strength and it therefore doesn't really matter. Or I gave in or stopped prematurely, or I forgot I was fasting and started eating. However, I learned to "get back up", repent where needed, or to take courage and realise that I can't do it in my own strength – the very purpose of it. So instead of wanting this to be a 'perfect' deed I do _for _Him, I accepted it as one of the 'good works'

(Ephesians 2:10) I get to do with Him, which I will hopefully grow in.

I'm always thankful afterwards, and each fast has its own "flavour", which I believe points to a living relationship. These have not only been times where I get to know God better or find an answer, but in slowing down to pray, undefined emotions, expectations and sins can surface and be dealt with. It is amazing how distracting our pace of life and our eating habits can be, resulting in a very shallow spiritual life that appears extremely busy, a.k.a. "fruitful" on the outside but weak on the inside.

Dean Smith-Belton
(Elder – Living Waters, South Africa)
I have found an interesting pattern in my life over the years: the more I pray in the Spirit, the less concerned I am with food. Those times when I have intentionally fasted (for long periods), it has either been as a result of a traumatic situation in my life or a desire for more of God. In both instances, there have not been specific breakthroughs but more of a looking back over the years and seeing the Lord's hand shaping and instilling a deeper hunger in me for intimacy with Him.
In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he said that he prayed in tongues more than the whole church together. I think that there is a deep mystery of walking in the Spirit that the church may have missed. I believe that if we, the church, understood what it is to walk in a lifestyle of prayer and fasting, we would see the power of God break out in our congregations in much greater measure.

Adrian Porter
(Elder – Living Hope, Isle of Man)
We have seen many mountains move and impossible things happen when we take time to pray and fast. My wife and I regularly pray with people for deliverance and have found that prayer and fasting by both parties creates a great atmosphere for miracles.

Jo Du Plessis
(Elder's wife – Eerste Liefde Gemeente, Namibia)
Whenever Charl and I have big decisions to make – whether financial, a move of some sort, or a spiritual decision – we always fast and pray for the time period that we feel the Lord requires of us. God is always so faithful and speaks clearly to us about the way forward, both individually and in unity. Charl also starts each New Year off with a fast from 7 – 10 days to ask the Lord for vision for the year – for us and the congregation we lead in Aranos, Namibia.

Jako Erasmus
(Elder – My Familie Kerk, Namibia)
I have experienced real power in fasting and prayer. 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4). With fasting, we acknowledge our dependency not soley on physical bread, but on God and His word, hence there are times to not

only pray but also to fast.

I have seen in my own life that when I am seeking God, at times I have felt the Holy Spirit specifically lay fasting and prayer on my heart. In these times, God has come through in amazing ways. We fasted and prayed about moving to Keetmanshoop a few years ago and trusted God to reveal His will. We asked God to show us His will and for three specific confirmations – and all three were given. This impacted the trajectory of our lives in moving from South Africa to Namibia.
We have also fasted and prayed for the body of Christ and seen the Lord bring people into freedom from strongholds and addictions.
Prayer and fasting is a critical part of one's spiritual growth in the Lord. It is something God desires from us. '"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." (Joel 2:12)