

## True Fasting

### Scripture Reading — Isaiah 58:1-10

*“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?” — Isaiah 58:6*

In some Christian communities, fasting is not emphasized. In others, especially during Lent (the season leading up to Easter), fasting is a way of remembering the suffering of our Lord.

In ancient Israel, fasting included wearing robes of sackcloth, bowing one’s head in mourning, beating one’s breast, and lying on a bed of ashes. All of this was meant to be a sign of humbling oneself and repenting of sin.

But, said God in the days of Isaiah the prophet, all he saw was a hypocritical show. Instead of really repenting of their sin, the Israelites went right on oppressing their workers, fighting among themselves, ignoring people who needed food and shelter and clothing.

What can a Christian do to engage in true fasting without just going through the motions?

I know one family who keeps a coffee can on the counter and puts all its spare change into it for the poor. A wealthier family might build a small house on their property to offer temporary shelter to a homeless person. One of the central ideas of fasting is to reduce our own consumption so that we may have enough to share with people who are in need.

What can you do to show God’s love to someone in need today?

### Prayer

*Lord, we are blessed. Help us to use less of our wealth on ourselves, and more on people who really need it. In Jesus’ name, we ask for the will to love others as you do. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Humility](#), [Generosity](#), [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Isaiah](#), [Fasting](#)

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