PREPARATION FOR THE FAST

The Daniel Fast is a unique type of fast because you can actually *eat*, unlike a liquid fast where only water or juices are consumed. But just because you can have food doesn't mean the Daniel Fast is easy.

Fasting, in any form, is difficult because you're doing battle physically and spiritually. However, there are steps you can take to strengthen you for the fight. Following are ways you can prepare your heart, mind, and body for your 21-day Daniel Fast journey.

Spiritual Preparation

1. Pray

Begin praying for your fast even before it begins. Ask the Lord to reveal any unconfessed sin, unforgiveness, or rebellion. When He reveals it to you (and He will), confess your sin quickly and repent. Allow God to get your heart ready for what He wants to do in your life.

2. Read verses on fasting.

Take time to study passages in the Bible that have to do with fasting. It will help you gain insight on people fasted, the ways God responded to their prayers, and what God requires of His people on a fast. Suggested passages are Isaiah 58, 2 Chron. 20:1-4, Ezra 8:21-23, Neh. 1:1-4, Est. 4:15-17, and Matt. 4:1-11).

3. Buy a journal or use a notebook.

Use a journal or notebook for prayer requests, praises, and answers to prayer. Record what the Lord shows you through His Word.

4. Write down prayer requests.

What do you want to see God do during your fast? Take time to identify your primary motivations for fasting. Record your prayer requests in your journal or on a separate piece of paper. Keep the list visible, and pray over those needs throughout your fast. Make sure you include requests for others and not just your own requests.

5. Find a prayer partner.

It's important to have a trusted friend or family member who can be your prayer partner during your fast. Ideally, you should choose someone who is doing the fast with you, but it's certainly not a requirement. The key is to ask someone who will lift you up and keep you accountable.

Physical Preparation

1. Ease into the fast.

Start cutting back on restricted foods about a week before the fast begins. Reduce your intake of caffeine, meat, dairy, sugar, and processed foods. Doing so will help your body adjust to the Daniel Fast and also reduce the severity of any unpleasant side effects. Trust me, the temptation to eat everything you can't have on the fast will be strong, but splurging will only make the transition much more difficult. Also, it's a good idea to increase your water consumption before your fast begins.

2. Plan your meals for the first week.

The key to success with the food portion of the Daniel Fast is proper planning. It will save you time in the long run and help prevent the frustration of trying to decide at the last minute what to eat. Having a plan will also keep you from indulging in foods that don't fall within the Daniel Fast guidelines.

3. Make a grocery list for the first week.

Putting a list together before you go to the grocery store will make your shopping much more efficient. A sample cookbook is included in this packet. Another cookbook resource is the 'Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast'.

4. **Prepare food ahead of time.**
Look at the first week's recipes on your meal plan to find ways you can speed up food preparation and make it more efficient. For example, if you're making Taco Soup for dinner on Sunday, go ahead and prepare the Taco Seasoning on Saturday, so it's ready to go.

5. Cook and freeze meals.
Every time I do the Daniel Fast, I carve out a few hours the weekend before the fast begins and make a few meals, such as Baked Oatmeal, Black Bean Chili Bake, and Tuscan Soup. Then I freeze half of each recipe. That way I have food when I don't have time to cook or need a quick go-to meal. You'll really appreciate this step when you reach the third week of your fast!

Proper preparation is the key to making your fast successful. There are several resources available to help. ***The Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast is a good resource***

When you do your part in getting ready, God will do the rest!