

GOD'S WORK IS DONE BY PRAYER AND FASTING

Fasting in the Old Testament:

- Isaiah 58—an acceptable fast to the Lord
- Esther 4:16—Mordecai (a type of Jesus) shares in the people's suffering
- 2 Kingdoms (Samuel) 12:16—David fasts for God's mercy
- Ezra 8:23—Ezra proclaims a fast
- Zechariah 7—True fasting
- Nehemiah 1:4 ff—fasting and prayer are linked in scripture
- Psalm 34 (35):13—fasting induces humility
- Daniel 6:16—even the pagan king fasts for his friend Daniel
- Joel 2:12—God's call for repentance with fasting, mourning and wailing.

Fasting in the New Testament:

- Matthew 4:1-11 cf. Mark 1:12-13, Lk. 4:1-13—Christ fasted 40 days to overcome temptation.
- Christ frequently went off to a “lonely place” to pray and fast, esp. before any important task
- Matthew 6:16-18 - He teaches us how to fast
- Matthew 15:10-20 - A perfect fast
- Luke 2:36-38 - The Prophetess Anna, a life of fasting
- Luke 1:15 and Matthew 3:1-4 - The Example of John the Baptist
- Acts 13:1-3 - The Apostles fasted
- Acts 14:21-23 - Before accepting a Sacrament

He does not tell us to fast. He assumes we fast because that is what He and the Church always did.

Prayer, fasting, watching, and all other Christian acts, however good they may be, do not alone constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as the indispensable means of reaching this aim. The true aim of our Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit of God.

--St. Seraphim of Sarov, “Conversations with N. A. Motovilov.”