

CHRISTIAN FASTING

Ancient Practice inherited from Jewish tradition

Definition: "Voluntary denial of an otherwise normal activity for the sake of an intense spiritual enterprise."

Nature of Fasting: Powerful love-offering to God
Sacrificial
For others
Co-redemptive gift to the world
An assertion of the primacy of the presence and action of God in our lives.

Effects: Reveals those areas of life over which we have little or no control
Empowers us to be transformed
Moves us from slavery to freedom
Gives us solidarity with needy
Has physical value in the care of our bodies (The temple of God's presence)

Dangers: 1. Scoring bargaining points with God
2. Making an idol of fasting
3. Source of personal pride

Fasting needs to be undertaken with the guidance of someone, especially a spiritual director.

Contemporary Modes of Fasting:

1. Food and Drink
2. From People
3. From the Telephone
4. From the Media
5. From Conversation
6. From Advertising
7. From Affluence