

Basic Guidelines for Healthy Spiritual Fasting

- A spiritual fast must be centered on worship, meditation and prayer. It is a wonderful opportunity to take our eyes and energies off foods, media and habits that consume our time as it tends to reveal the things that control us. As John Wesley said: *"First, let fasting be done unto the Lord with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven."*
- Prepare your heart and body for fasting- Learn to walk before you run. If you have never fasted, gradually work up to a total liquid fast for your first try. Begin with partial fasts, 24 hour fasts, 1-3 day fasts or giving up certain foods or habits that seem to consume your time and attention. Fasting is not intended to be a diet but a spiritual discipline that places our heart before God so that He can transform us.
- Choose the type of fast God has called you to and ask the Lord for more of His disciplined grace to follow through on your commitment. (See *A Call to Fast and Pray* handout for types of fasting recommended for the upcoming corporate fast at Hillcrest Covenant Church.)
- Make sure you are in good health before starting a liquid or partial fast. Consult your doctor if you have any health concerns or are in need of a complete physical. In spite of the safety and benefits of fasting there are certain persons who should NEVER fast or only fast under professional medical supervision. For example:
 1. Persons who are physically too thin or emaciated
 2. Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia or other behavioral disorders.
 3. Those who suffer weakness or anemia
 4. Persons who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases, or who have heart diseases.
 5. Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart or who are on multiple medications.
 6. Individuals who take insulin or other medications for diabetes, or suffer from other blood sugar problems such as hypoglycemia.
 7. Women who are pregnant or nursing.
 8. Children under the age of 16 years of age should not follow a liquid fast.