



ORTHODOXY



FASTING (ELEMENTARY)

Throughout the year, our Coptic Orthodox Church has many days of Fasting; everyone in our Church should be fasting during these special days. Fasting is when you don't eat certain foods. The Holy Bible gives us many examples of fasting and how important it is for all of us to fast together.

"So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer." (Ezra 8:23)

The People of Nineveh Fasted

After Jonah was saved from the big fish, God told him to go to a place called Nineveh. Jonah obeyed and told all the people that if they don't start obeying God the city will be destroyed. The people believed Jonah, so they all **fasted** and asked God to forgive them. God heard their prayers and saw that they weren't doing bad things anymore and forgave them (Jonah 3:5-10). The people of Nineveh were **saved** by their **prayer** and **fasting**.



Queen Esther & the People Fasted

In the Holy Bible, there is a story about Queen Esther; she had a problem that needed to be solved. She told all the people to fast and pray. "Fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise" (Esther 4:16). Everyone obeyed and fasted with her, she did not fast alone. By their **prayer** and **fasting**, the problem was solved!

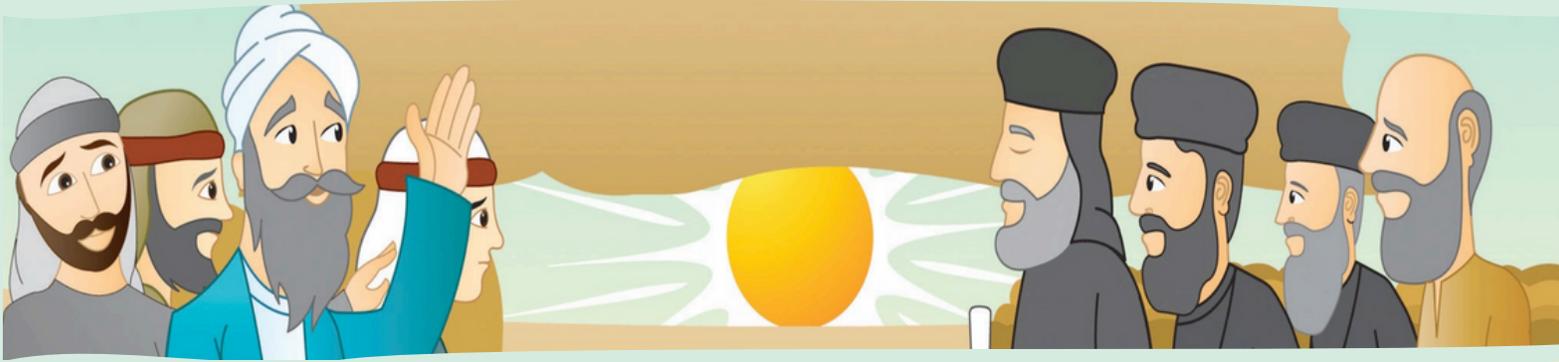


Fasting is something that God commanded us to do and the Ninevites and Queen Esther show us how powerful fasting is.



Every fast in our church has a reason. Did you know that throughout the year our Church fasts every Wednesday and Friday (except for 50 days after the Resurrection Feast)? It was on Wednesday when Judas betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ and on Friday, our Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross. This is why we fast on these days every week.

In the church history also, we know the famous story about the moving of the "Mokkatam Mountain" by fasting & prayer. There once was a ruler who challenged the Pope with the verse in the Bible that by faith, we can move mountains. The Pope asked the whole congregation to fast and pray for three days and the miracle happened, the mountain has moved and the sun rays were seen from underneath.



Other examples of people who fasted are found in the Holy Bible:

- 1-Moses fasted for forty days & forty nights before he received the Commandments from God (Deuteronomy 9)
- 2-Elijah also fasted for forty days & forty nights before he had a revelation from God (I Kings 19)
- 3-Daniel & the 3 Young Youths fasted in the King's Palace (Daniel 2)
- 4-Our Lord Jesus Christ fasted forty days & forty nights to teach us to fast (Matthew 2)

Should fasting be only in secret?

Fasting can be in secret if it's an **individual fast**, meaning the person decided upon the guidance of his/her father of confession to offer a fast before an interview or before making a major decision in life.

There is another kind of fast that can be revealed and be known by everybody which is called **corporal fast** or church fast or **congregational fast**. This kind of fast the believers practice it together. For example, Great Lent, Apostles fast, etc. Congregational fasting is evident and biblical teaching. It demonstrates unity of the members of the Body of Christ.

What foods should we eat and not eat during the fast? Even kids can fast, talk about fasting with Abouna so he can tell you how you should fast.

We should all fast together!