

# PRAYER & FASTING

By Karen Braun

*"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ... Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I" (Isaiah 58:6, 8-9 NIV).*

According to God's Word, He leads, directs and blesses our prayers, but He has also given us weapons to use that increase their effectiveness in advancing His Kingdom. Using these "power tools" in prayer is not an option on our end. It is a response of obedience to His teachings. These are the power tools of fasting, praying God's Word, prayer-walking and prayer-journaling.

Bill Bright said it perfectly:

*I believe the power of fasting as it relates to prayer is the spiritual atomic bomb that our Lord has given us to destroy the strongholds of evil and usher in a great revival and spiritual harvest around the world ... Fasting is a biblical approach that results in spiritual renewal, guidance, healing, resolution of problems and special grace for handling difficult situations. It strengthens our resolve to trust and believe in Him.*

Fasting is not intended to make you suffer. It is a choice to abstain voluntarily from food, drink, sleep, or others things and involve your body in prayer. It is an exercise in humility. By fasting we humble ourselves before God to hear Him clearly. It intensifies our ability to hear and know God's will and manifest God's power whether for individual or corporate reasons.

Fasting facilitates and enables us to pray more specifically and strategically, and invites the Holy Spirit to "stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land" (see 2 Chronicles 7:14). When we respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting to fast, the results are powerful because God Himself is calling us on a special assignment. For followers of Christ it is appropriate to incorporate regular times of prayer and fasting because there are always needs to be met.

**BREAKTHROUGH**  
PRAYER MINISTRY

## BIBLICAL REASONS FOR FASTING

Fasting is mentioned in 30 books of the Bible. In Old Testament times God's people often fasted and prayed in times of crises. The early Church also fasted regularly, especially at times when they had to make key decisions.

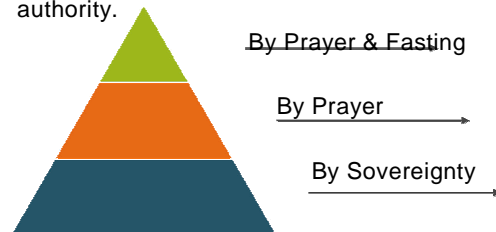
**Fasting is a means of attaining God's perfect and complete will.**

Matthew 17:14-21 tells the story of a desperate father who brought his demonized son to Jesus' disciples for deliverance, but they couldn't do anything to help.

When the disciples were alone with Jesus, they inquired why they couldn't throw the demon out. I love how *The Message* relates Jesus' answer:

*"'Because you're not yet taking God seriously,' said Jesus. 'The simple truth is that if you had a mere kernel of faith, a poppy seed, say, you would tell this mountain, 'Move!' and it would move. There is nothing you wouldn't be able to tackle.'" The NKJ says, "... this kind (demon) does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*

The disciples had unbelief in their hearts that hindered their ability to exercise God's authority.



Fasting demonstrates our willingness to take God and ourselves seriously. This triangle represents God's will. Some of His will, such as the rising of the sun, occurs regardless of prayer (God's Sovereignty), but so much of God's will, especially His work in the lives of people, occurs only as people intercede and pray. We learn from Matthew that Jesus also taught that what seems impossible can actually take place when people voluntarily fast and pray. We can attain God's complete will when we demonstrate faith and willingness to take God and ourselves seriously through prayer and fasting.