

LIVING THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN LIFE: PT 5  
“Fasting, Feasting, and Stewardship”

**From the Liturgy of St. Basil**

“Yea, O our God, cause also that none of us may be guilty of these thy dread and heavenly mysteries or infirm in soul or in body through an unworthy partaking; but enable us, even unto our last breath, worthily to receive a portion of thy holy things.”

- Prayer at the Litany before the Lord’s Prayer

**From the Fathers**

“Without fasting no one was ever able to achieve any of these virtues or any others, for fasting is the beginning and foundation of every spiritual activity.”

-Symeon the New Theologian, *Discourses* 11.3

“Almsgiving heals the soul's incensive power; fasting withers sensual desire; prayer purifies the intellect and prepares it for contemplation of created beings. For the Lord has given us commandments which correspond to the powers of the soul.”

- St. Maximos the Confessor, *First Century on Love* 79

**Memory Verse**

“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.”

- Ezra 8:23 (NIV)

**Fasting**

What is Fasting in the Orthodox Tradition?

Types of Fasting

- Total Fasts
- Fasting by Restricting Diet
- Fasting *from* Eucharist
- Fasting from Marital Relations

When We Fast

- Total Fasts
  - When Preparing for Eucharist
    - For Morning Liturgy—no food or drink after Midnight
    - For Evening Liturgy—no food or drink after a lighter lunch
  - Holy Friday
  - In some traditions (particularly monasteries)
    - Other Solemn Commemorations (e.g., Beheading of John the Baptist in some traditions)
    - First Days of Lent
    - Some or all of Holy Week
  - Exception: when necessary to take medication
- Fasting by Restriction
  - Wednesdays and Fridays
  - Fasting Seasons
    - Nativity Fast - Nov. 15 through Dec. 24
    - Great Lent (plus week before and after)
    - Apostles’ Fast
    - Dormition Fast - Aug. 1 through Aug. 14

### How to Fast

1. Pray always!
2. Follow Parish Wall Calendar
3. Talk to your spouse and family about what you can do
4. Talk to parish priest about concerns dietary or otherwise
5. Enjoy the “Allowances,” e.g., Fish and Wine
6. Don’t complain or be grumpy about what you are giving up

### Why Fasting is Important

#### Times when Fasting is Prohibited

- Between Christmas and Theophany
- 40 Days After Pascha
- After Pentecost
- Week after Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee

### **Feasting**

#### Feasting is NOT

- Gluttony
- Relief from something awful
- Reward for a job well done

#### Tips for healthy Feasting

- Avoid snacking between meals
- Don’t resume eating or drinking things you didn’t miss!
- Slow down after eating half your plate—you may not be as hungry as you thought
- Alcohol is dangerous

Feasting IS about celebrating the work of Christ and the new life given us

### **Stewardship**

#### Stewardship IS

- Giving money
- Giving time
- Giving talent

#### Stewardship is NOT

- Giving only one type of offering
- Tit for tat—done in hopes of receiving MORE money
- Given with conditions
- Selector of persons or classes

#### How to Practice Stewardship faithfully

- Regularly support the parish financially according to your means
- Give to special collections and / or orthodox charities (e.g., OCMC or IOCC)
- Join at least one ministry in the parish (offering of time)
- Tell the clergy some ways that you can help the parish or community at large

### **For Further Reading**

Hopko, Thomas. *The Orthodox Faith, Vol IV: Spirituality*. Crestwood, NY, 2016.