



Lent Day 17, March 9, 2012 Yom Kippur Fast

This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. 30 For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. 31 It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. Leviticus 16:29-31

In the Old Testament times, fasting was a requirement as commanded by God. In the verses above from Leviticus, we see God describing a day for the whole nation of Israel to make atonement for their sins. This became the most sacred day of the year for the Israelites. The people confessed their sins before God. During this day they fasted, repented and spent time in self-examination. It was called the Day of Atonement (Yom

Kippur.)

Today in our New Testament times, we are no longer bound by laws but live in grace. Fasting is now a choice that we can make. Over the past few days, we've discussed different ways that you can incorporate fasting into your life. Today I'd like to discuss the Yom Kippur fast. Elmer Towns explains this fast in his book *The Beginner's Guide to Fasting* on page 23. He explains that in the Jewish timetable the day began at sundown and ended the following day at sundown. So, a Yom Kippur fast is carried out in this manner:

1. Start your fast at sundown, so you will skip the evening meal. (If you want to, eat a small snack in the afternoon before you start the fast).
2. Skip breakfast the next morning.
3. Skip lunch.
4. End the fast by eating dinner.

Towns also recommends a few tips for a successful fast.

1. Write down your cause for your fast. Be specific. What is your purpose for the fast? Write down what day and time you will begin the fast and write down when you will end it.
2. Plan your fast. Is this a personal fast, or will you have the support of others fasting at the same time? What will you be drinking? Water? Juice? A protein drink?
3. Journal during your fast. Write down any insights God gives you.

4. Plan times of prayer during your fast. Pray when you would normally eat and during other times of your fast as your schedule allows. Whenever you have hunger pains or think about food, say a prayer.
5. Use a prayer list of things you will be praying for during the fast.

Application: If you have successfully fasted for one meal during the day, you may want to try the Yom Kippur fast. Or, if you've never fasted before, try fasting for one meal using the tips that Townsend shares for the Yom Kippur fast. Townsend says that by being intentional and specific with your planning, you are more apt to have a successful fast.

Prayer: Lord,

Show each one of us how you would have us implement the discipline of fasting in our lives. Some of us may be able to fast from certain foods, while still eating others. Some of us may be called to fast from activities or hobbies. Some may be ready for a one meal fast, others for a Yom Kippur fast, and some of us may be ready for a longer fast. Help us to listen to what you are asking of us and then give us the strength to follow through. In Jesus' name. Amen.