

What is October 8th?

The October 8th Interfaith Fast Day for Peace is a coalition of faithful people spanning all the major religions, working for peace and justice.

October 8th, 2007 is Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day. The Fast Day was selected by Rabbi Arthur Wascow of the Shalom Center to recognize that issues of colonialism are still relevant today.

This day also falls in the Islamic Month of Ramadan—when Muslims fast during the day in recognition of the gift of the Qur'an. It also falls closely to the Jewish holiday of Shemini Atzeret when Jews abstain from work to celebrate the goodness of God.

We hope this guide will help you prepare for your participation in this event. We would love to hear your stories and insights from your day of reflection and fasting.

“Shall I not inform you of a better act than fasting, alms, and prayers? Making peace between one another: enmity and malice tear up heavenly rewards by the roots”

-The Prophet, Muhammad

Notes

Thanks to Christian Peacemaking Teams (CPT) and Code Pink for all the hard work in gathering this information. For yummy smoothie recipes for your fast, please visit:

<http://www.troopshomefast.org/article.php?id=1043>

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Safe and Healthy Fasting Tips for October 8, 2007



“Fasting opens a space for something new to come in, or for something new to emerge from inside. Fasting awakens gratitude and compassion.”

-UU Minister Rev. Lilli Nye,
Theodore Parker Church



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What is Fasting?

Fasting is a technique used in prayer or protest. It is performed by refusing your body of food, nutrients or material objects. It is a time for reflection on needs and desires.

Activists such as Mahatma Gandhi, Alice Paul, Cesar Chavez and Dorothy Day have all used fasting and hunger strikes as tactics for social change.

As UU Minister, Rev. Tim Kurtzmark notes, "...[T]he concept behind fasting is not to deprive a guilty person of something good. Rather, the fast is used to create a sacred space within the otherwise full life of a person. So, what is usually filled with food, snacks, cookies, coffee, soda...is suddenly transformed into an open and empty space. Symbolically—and literally—a space is opened up."

Types of Fasting

There are many different types of fasts; it is up to the faster herself to decide which one is appropriate.

Juice Fast-The faster does not take in solid food but will take nutrients through juice or tea. Often recommended for the first time faster.

Water Fast- The faster does not take in any nutrients whatsoever. However, the faster will still drink water.

Total Fast-The faster will not take in any food or water.

Material Fast- The faster will eat and drink but will refuse to use specific products such as petroleum or caffeine. This is an appropriate alternative for people who may not be physically well enough or feel ill-prepared mentally/spiritually for the fast

"Every...religion of any importance appreciates the spiritual value of fasting... For one thing, identification with the starving poor is a meaningless term without the experience behind it...Fasting is merely a prop. But as a prop to a tottering structure is of essential value, so is the prop of fasting of inestimable value for a struggling soul." -M.K. Gandhi

Fasting Safely

For those who have never fasted before, fasting can be a physically and emotionally draining experience. The possibility of finding oneself tired, stressed or just feeling "blah" is high. Although, with the proper preparation, one can also find it extremely satisfying and fulfilling.

Do I need a Doctor?

If you are only participating in the Oct, 8 event and are in generally good health, then no, it is not necessary. However, if you have health concerns or plan on a longer fast, it is recommended.

Preparing For Your Fast-

Fasting requires mental and physical preparation. Start by informing your friends, family and colleagues why you are fasting. Explain to them your preparation and procedures. They may be concerned; however, showing you are prepared will put them at ease and will put you in the right mind frame. For physical preparation, begin to drop calories from your day by reducing the size and numbers of your meals. Consider taking multi-vitamins. Resist having your "last big meal" the night before.

The Day of October 8th-

The Shalom Center recommends all participants wake before dawn and share a simple meal. Code Pink recommends a simple smoothie made with fresh fruit and protein powder. Stay away from dairy products as lactose is difficult to digest. Take a multi-vitamin. Avoid processed sugars and caffeine as they can cause energy swings.

"The Hump"-

Many fasters find the first day or two very difficult. However, we also see evidence of "The Hump" where the faster finds a feeling of euphoria. This can lead to the faster continuing the fast longer than expected and into unhealthy practices. Make yourself a goal of how long your fast will last—No Longer!

Water, Water, Water!

Unless you are fasting from water, remember to keep up your liquid intakes. Most organizations recommend at least two liters a day for a faster. It helps keep you hydrated, flush toxins and make you feel a lot better. If you are drinking store bought juice, consider watering it down as they tend to be high in sugars.

Fasting Groups-

Find a group of people who are planning on fasting as well. You can compare tactics and training techniques. You can encourage each other with growing and healthy practices. But remember, each faster is in charge of her own body and is the only one who can decide how far is far enough.

"Make food a very incidental part of your life by filling your life so full of meaningful things that you'll hardly have time to think about food."

-Peace Pilgrim

What To Do While Fasting-

Avoid strenuous activities. Excess exertion can burn precious calories. However, that does not mean you need to hide in a dark room, there is plenty to do on your day off.

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about why you are fasting.
- Write to your local Congress people and the White House asking for an end to the war. Resources are found at: <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice>
- Keep a journal or log of your experiences while fasting
- Reflect on all the people who you are fasting with—both past and present