

# Rediscovering Prayer and Fasting

## Ezra 8:21-23, 31-32

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Fasting and prayer for spiritual goals or challenges of life  
Ezra 8:21-23, 31-32

- I. It Was a Time of Great Pressure  
Historical Background: Destruction of the Temple and slavery
  
- II. It Was a Time for Godly Purpose  
Goal: returning the exiles to Jerusalem  
Obstacles:
  - demoralized people - 48 years after the sacking of Jerusalem
  - difficult path-900 mile journey on foot
  
- III. It Was a Time to Get a Grip on Prayer
  - A. 8:21 to "fast and humble themselves before God"
  
  - B. Spiritual preparation before the journey

Fasting with prayer is not intended to "get God's attention", rather it is intended to:

- turn our attention to God,
- humble ourselves before God, and
- be more receptive to God.

### Notes on Fasting

Fasting is always:

- connected to prayer: "fast and pray"
- for a purpose:
  - crisis
  - opportunity
  - command of God
  - desire for renewal
- for God's glory not our own

Fasting is often:

- Beneficial to o renew our faith after a time of sin or apathy
- Required for power in spiritual ministry

Fasting is never:

- to be self righteous/for public approval
- to be started or ended suddenly without preparation