

eating



Food in the Bible

Many of the foods mentioned in the Bible are common in Mediterranean areas today.

- **Bread** — Bread was the main staple food made from various grains (wheat and barley), olive oil and yeast. Manna was eaten in the desert.
- **Fruit** — Apples, dates, figs, grapes, melons, pomegranates, olives, dried fruits.
- **Vegetables** — Beans, lentils, leeks, cucumbers, onions.
- **Meat and animal products** — Meat (beef, lamb or goat) was only eaten on special occasions. Fish was available near the sea or inland water. Birds (eg quail) and certain insects (eg locusts) were eaten and there is passing mention of cheese and eggs.
- **Seasoning** — Salt, herbs and spices were used to add flavour to food.
- **Delicacies** — Honey, almonds and pistachio nuts.
- **Drinks** — Water, wine, vinegar, milk, beer.

● Food - a gift from God

* Genesis 1:29

Who gave food to humans? _____

What kind of food did Adam and Eve eat?

* Genesis 9:1-4

What other food did God give to Noah after the flood? _____

What restriction was there?

* Psalm 104:14-15

Who makes our food? _____

What three staple foods are mentioned?

• _____ • _____ • _____

* Luke 9:17 * Luke 22:19 * Luke 24:30

What two things did Jesus do before he ate bread?

• _____ • _____

What *three* ways can we pray about food?

Matt 6:11 _____

Ps 147:7-9 _____

1 Tim 4:3-5 _____



Do you acknowledge God as the provider of your food and do you regularly thank him for it?

● Meals

Eating meals together has always been a sign of friendship and fellowship. Meals, feasts and banquets also accompanied the making of covenants and other special occasions. What were these occasions?

Gen 26:28-31 _____ Judg 14:10 _____
 Gen 40:20 _____ Est 2:17-18 _____
 Ex 12:1-11 _____ Luke 5:27-32 _____
 Ex 23:14-17 _____ Luke 15:23-24 _____
 Lev 7:11-21 _____ Luke 22:14-23 _____

Eating together is an important part of normal family life.

● Hospitality

- * **1 Peter 4:9** How should we offer hospitality? _____
- * **Luke 14:2-14** Whom should we invite to meals? _____
- * **Hebrews 13:2** Whom else should we invite? _____
- * **Proverbs 15:17** What should you do if you don't have much food? _____

Heartsearch

Do you consider it important to eat together with your family/household?

How do you rate your hospitality?

- very hospitable hospitable
 rarely entertain guests never entertain guests

Dr Tony's medical guide to fasting!

• Is fasting safe?

Fasting is generally safe provided fluid intake is continued (1-2 litres per day). It is not recommended for pre-school children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with diabetes — if in doubt consult your doctor.

• How does my body respond?

Your brain prefers to use glucose as a source of energy but your body supplies of this type of sugar run out after a few hours. Glucose is then manufactured from body protein, which is taken from muscles.

After a few days, less protein is sacrificed and fat becomes the main fuel. Unfortunately glucose cannot



be made from fat so instead your brain has to rely on substances called "ketone bodies" which are produced in large quantities in the liver when fat is broken down. Only small amounts of ketone bodies are used up at a time and so they build up in the blood, causing it to become more acidic. Acetone may evaporate into the breath giving it a characteristic smell. These changes in body chemistry can be offset by the taking of drinks which contain sugar, eg sweet tea or coffee.

• Breaking a fast

To break a long fast, take small carbohydrate snacks at first which, when digested, give the body some sugars which stimulate a change in the level of hormones which have been controlling the adaptations. The perfectionist may wish at this stage to top up on the water-soluble vitamins B and C which are present in fruit and vegetables.

● **Fasting** * Matthew 6:16-18

Jesus considered fasting to be a normal part of the life of his disciples.

How did he say we should fast? _____

Fasting in the Bible is not just a spiritual exercise for personal discipline but is linked with specific urgent matters. People fasted from 1 day to 40 days! Why did these people fast?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Deut 9:9-10 _____ | Est 4:12-16 _____ |
| Judg 20:26-28 _____ | Ps 35:13-14 _____ |
| 1 Sam 31:11-13 _____ | Dan 9:1-4 _____ |
| 1 Kings 19:3-18 _____ | Jonah 3:1-10 _____ |
| 1 Kings 21:20-29 _____ | Matt 4:1-4 _____ |
| 2 Chron 20:1-4 _____ | Luke 2:36-38 _____ |
| Ezra 8:21-23 _____ | Acts 13:1-3 _____ |



- Have you ever fasted? Yes No
- Are there things for which you might fast? Yes No
- Would you like to see fasting as part of your life? Yes No
- (Read Isaiah 58:1-9.)

● **Gluttony** * Ecclesiastes 6:7 * Philippians 3:19

How can over-indulgence in food be a form of idolatry?

* **Proverbs 25:16** Over-eating is a lack of self-control which can be symptomatic of a similar lack in other areas of life. Gluttony is often included with other serious sins.

● **Alcohol** * Proverbs 20:1

* Proverbs 23:19-21, 29-35

* Proverbs 31:4-7 * Isaiah 28:7-8

What dangers are mentioned here?

Addictions

The Bible's comments on alcohol can be extended to the use of other addictive substances (including drugs and tobacco). Here are some reasons why Christians avoid addiction.

- You waste money and God's resources.
- You can damage your body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- You can damage your mind and emotions.
- Being drunk, high or stoned prevents you from functioning correctly or serving God and your behaviour may be degrading.
- You can cause physical and emotional damage and sorrow to other people by your behaviour.
- It can lead to sin in other areas of life.
- You may engage in illegal activities.
- Much time can be wasted in finding substances.
- It is a very self-centred activity.
- You are in bondage to a substance or a habit.

* 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 * Galatians 5:19-21 * Luke 21:34-36

What will happen to drunkards? _____

● **Illegal substances** * Genesis 3:1-19

What did Eve hope to gain from the fruit? _____

What was the result of eating the fruit?



Have you any addictions? Who can help you overcome them (Matt 4:1-4, Heb 4:14-16)?

eating

extra thought and discussion

• **Clean and unclean food**

The Old Testament laws about clean and unclean animals make good medical sense. They mainly advise against eating carnivores high in the food chain and disease-carrying animals (Lev 11:1-47, Deut 14:3-21). These laws are relaxed for Gentile Christians (Acts 10:9-16, Acts 15:19-21).

• **Vegetarianism**

Eating of meat is acceptable in the Bible. Animals were used for sacrifice and animal products were used widely. There is no need to be vegetarian but you may choose to be so. We should avoid judging each other on these personal preferences (Dan 1:11-16, Rom 14:1-23, 1 Tim 4:3-5).

• **Abstention from alcohol**

Fermented drinks were consumed in Bible times but there are warnings about drunkenness. Drinking in moderation is permissible. Some people were called by God to abstain, others chose to do so. We should not judge (Lev 10:9, Num 6:1-4, Deut 29:6, Judges 13:2-5, Ezek 44:21, Dan 1:8-16, Jer 35:1-19, Luke 1:13-17, Rom 14:21).

• **Eating disorders**

Some modern eating disorders can be driven by a desire to change body mass and shape to become more attractive or acceptable in a society dominated by images presented in advertising and the media. Those with *anorexia nervosa* have an unrealistic view of their own weight, believing that they are overweight when they are not. Self-starvation can lead to other complications. Those with *bulimia nervosa*, obsessed with their body mass and lacking in self-control, engage in cycles of binge eating and induced vomiting and purging. Solutions to these disorders can be found in rejecting popular views of acceptable shape, and adopting a good self-image

and a realistic target for body mass.

• **Dr Tony's guide to weight watching**

Doctors often use the Body Mass Index (BMI). Your BMI is your weight in kilograms divided by your height in metres squared.

Serious low — Seriously undernourished (BMI=15).

OK low — Good weight for light-frame person, below this is underweight (BMI=20).

OK high — Good weight for heavy-frame person, above this is overweight (BMI=25).

Serious high — Anything above this is considered to be seriously overweight (BMI=31).



height	Serious low kg	OK low kg	OK high kg	Serious high kg
142	30	40	51	63
147	33	43	54	67
152	35	46	58	72
157	37	50	62	77
163	40	53	66	82
168	42	56	70	87
173	45	60	75	92
178	47	63	79	98
183	50	67	84	104
188	53	71	88	110
193	56	75	93	116
ft,in	st,lb	st,lb	st,lb	st,lb
4,8	4,11	6,5	7,14	9,12
4,10	5,2	6,12	8,8	10,8
5,0	5,7	7,4	9,2	11,5
5,2	5,12	7,11	9,11	12,1
5,4	6,3	8,5	10,6	12,13
5,6	6,9	8,12	11,1	13,10
5,8	7,1	9,6	11,10	14,8
5,10	7,7	9,13	12,6	15,6
6,0	7,13	10,7	13,2	16,5
6,2	8,5	11,2	13,13	17,3
6,4	8,11	11,10	14,9	18,3