



Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites

By Lynne M. Baab

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"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God." Matthew 5:6 *The Message* We live in hungry times. Ours is a consumer culture, predisposed to quickly fill the cravings of body and mind. The idea of fasting--the voluntary denial of something for a specific time, for a spiritual purpose--sets us immediately on edge. But Lynne Baab makes the case that *anyone* can fast. Fasting is an expression of freedom. Free from the patterns and habits that mark everyday life, from time to time we can move beyond our appetites into meaningful encounter with God. In *Fasting* you'll discover an ancient Christian practice that extends beyond giving up food to any regular activity in our contemporary lives. You'll see how taking a break from eating--or driving, or checking e-mail, or watching television--opens us up to discover new things about ourselves and God and the world around us. You'll see that while not everyone should forgo food, anyone can step out of routine to feed the soul. In a time of great spiritual hunger, God invites us all to a feast: fellowship with the Creator of the universe, where all our truest needs are identified and attended to.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. This slender volume packs a surprising amount of content, with Baab (*Sabbath Keeping*) offering both spiritual guidance and factual information to those Christians who want to undertake, or deepen, a fast. One refreshing aspect of the book is its broad understanding of what constitutes a fast, which can range from a full abstinence from food and water to a more limited avoidance of one or more types of foods for a set period of time. Beyond that, however, Baab considers other kinds of fasts that Christians can undertake: refraining from shopping, elaborate clothing, jewelry, television or anything that they have made into an idol. Fasting, she says, calls Christians into closer communion with God by creating time for spiritual discernment, adding greater urgency to prayer and encouraging solidarity with the poor. Baab traces the practice of fasting through the Bible and the Christian church, with an ecumenical openness that embraces Orthodox and Catholic practices as well as her own Protestant traditions. One particularly welcome chapter explores the idea of fasting in community, introducing practices like the round-robin fast and fasting with one or two partners. This excellent resource will help novice Christians dip into the ancient practice of fasting and more seasoned practitioners become more creative and intentional in its observance. (Jan.)

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Review

Not a long or difficult read and extremely practical, *Fasting* will challenge you to rethink your view of this spiritual discipline. (Natalie Klein, Young Ladies Christian Fellowship, January 29, 2008)

Integrating scholarly research with shared and personal anecdotes, Baab makes a persuasive case for the development of a concept of definitely Christian fasting that is biblically based and historically informed. (Congregations, Summer 2007)

Baab introduces readers to an inviting and challenging spiritual discipline that is about freedom and produces joyful spiritual growth. (Libraries Alive, June 2007)

This book is an excellent resource to learn about how to fast. It provides details, motivation and encouragement to pursue a spiritual fast, draw close to God, and share intimate moments with Him. I recommend it. (Gail Welborn, The Northwest Book Reviewer, March 2007)

Baab, along with personal stories from many others, truly gives us "an invitation to freedom." . . . A wealth of helpful information, backed with godly encouragement, leaves the reader desiring to include some sort of fasting in their daily walk with God. Recommended. (Rosalee Stent, The Lamplighter, May 2007)

"This slender volume packs a surprising amount of content. . . . [W]ill help novice Christians dip in . . . and more seasoned practitioners become more creative and intentional." (Publishers Weekly, starred review)

"America is a culture obsessed with freedom and rights, so why do so many find themselves in bondage? Jesus came to set us free from sin and death--but how can we live in the freedom he secured for us? Lynne Baab's wonderful book reminds us that Christians throughout history have used fasting as a path to freedom--for it enables God to speak in fresh ways and fills us anew with his Spirit. In a style we've come to expect from Baab, her book is intellectually stimulating, spiritually enriching, historically and biblically informative, and practical. *Fasting* leaves the reader feeling not *I ought to do this* but *I want to do this!*"

(Rebecca Pippert, author of *Out of the Saltshaker*)

"Combining biblical and historical data with the experiences of modern-day people, Lynne Baab offers insights into the purposes, motivations, expectations and results of fasting. In this lovely book discover how fasting from food, or shopping, or reading, or TV, can lead you into a deeper encounter with Jesus! Reclaim this spiritual practice--it may be one of the best gifts you give yourself." (Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, author of *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*)

"As someone who has struggled with slavery to my appetites and desires, and who seeks a life free of them, *Fasting* was a life-giving breath of fresh air. It is easy in this world of fast food, fast living and fast spirituality to forget that we are holistic creations who need to cease from our striving and spend some time fasting from the things that keep us enslaved. Lynne Baab has created a book that can help us explore our appetites, discover the history behind 'the fast,' and learn how to abstain and seek God." (Renee Altson, author of *Stumbling Toward Faith*)

"Lynne Baab takes a very insightful and helpful look at the often neglected spiritual practice of fasting. Her suggestions about fasting other than from food are particularly relevant for our culture today. As a physician I also appreciated her practical and helpful tips on how to fast from food. This is an important book for anyone wanting to become more intimate with God." (Christine Sine, M.D., executive director, Mustard Seed Associates)

About the Author

Lynne M. Baab is the author of multiple books and Bible studies. A Presbyterian minister, she completed a Ph.D. in communication at the University of Washington in 2007 and moved with her husband to Dunedin, New Zealand, where she is a lecturer in pastoral theology at the University of Otago. Lynne is the author of eight books, including *A Renewed Spirituality*, *Sabbath Keeping*, *Fasting*, *Sabbath*, *Personality Type in Congregations*, *Embracing Midlife*, *Beating Burnout in Congregations*, *Reaching Out in a Networked World: Expressing Your Congregation's Heart and Soul* and *Friending*. She is also the author of three LifeGuide Bible Studies.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Karl Harms:

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Sandra Passmore:

Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites can be one of your basic books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to put every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites but doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into completely new stage of crucial considering.

Katie Duffy:

In this period globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for you is Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites this e-book consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. That book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The words styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some research when he makes this book. Here is why this book acceptable all of you.

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