

# Hopewell's 40 Day Fast—"A Solemn Assembly"

(February 26—April 6, 2007)

Throughout history God has used the Solemn Assembly as a means to bring revival. Of the twelve periods of renewal recorded in the Old Testament every one was preceded by the calling of a Solemn Assembly. The followers of Jesus gathered for what could be called a Solemn Assembly for several days before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost. In America, historical documents verify that before every major national revival, emphasis was placed upon fast days and solemn assemblies.

Solemn Assemblies were called during times of spiritual crisis, usually a crisis precipitated by the righteous judgment of God upon the sins of the people. It was an emergency action—a desperate plea to withhold further judgment. The words of the prophet Joel demonstrate this kind of urgency: *"Consecrate a fast, proclaim a Solemn Assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God and cry out to the Lord...Blow a trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble"* (Joel 1:14, 2:1a).

God's call to Solemn Assembly is probably summarized best in the classic passage found in 2 Chronicles 7:14: *"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

*The following four kinds of fasts*, taken from Dr. Rex Russell's book *What the Bible Says About Healthy Living* (Regal Books, 1996; see Appendix 1), are good guidelines for you to follow or modify as God directs.

1. The ***normal fast*** is going without food for a definite period during which you ingest only liquids (water and/or or juice). The duration can be 1 day, 3 days, 1 week, 1 month or 40 days. Extreme care should be taken with longer fasts, which should only be attempted after medical advice from your physician.
2. The ***absolute fast*** allows no food or water at all, and should be short. Moses fasted for 40 days; but this would kill anyone without supernatural intervention, and should never be attempted today. Be sure to test the spirit that tries to talk you into a 40-day fast, even if it includes liquids.
3. The ***partial fast*** is one that omits certain foods or is on a schedule that includes limited eating. It may consist of omitting one meal a day. Eating only fresh vegetables for several days is also a good partial fast. John Wesley ate only bread (whole grain) and water for many days. Elijah practiced partial fasts at least twice. John the Baptist and Daniel with his three friends are other examples of those who participated in partial fasts. People who have hypoglycemia or other diseases might consider this kind of fast.

4. A *rotational fast* consists of eating or omitting certain families of foods for designated periods. For example, grains may be eaten only every fourth day. The various food families are rotated so that some food is available each day.

**Warning: DO NOT go on an extended fast without consulting with your physician!**