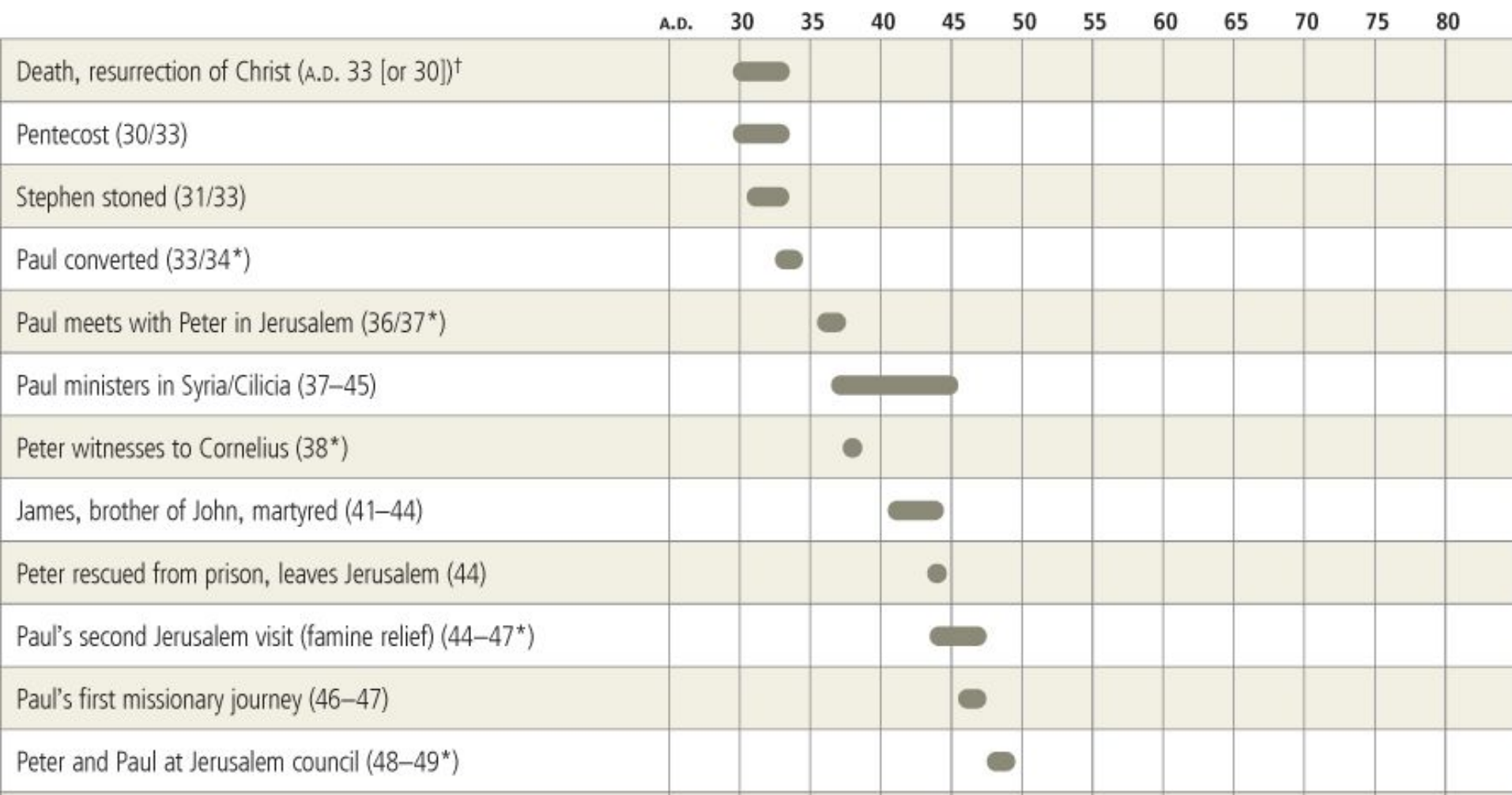


Prayer and fasting

Acts 13:1-3

“For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”

Luke 7:33-34







“There are indications in the New Testament that Christians were specially sensitive to the Spirit’s communications during fasting. On this occasion, the divine message directed the leaders of the church to set Barnabas and Saul apart for a special work to which he had [already] called them. It is perhaps worth noticing that the two men who were to be released for what would nowadays be called missionary service overseas were the two most eminent and gifted leaders in the church.”

Bruce, 245-246

“Christians are not commanded to fast in the NT, though Jesus gives guidance about how to fast in a way that is pleasing to God (Mt. 6:16-18). Some apparently took over the practice from Judaism, ‘partly as self-discipline, partly as a reinforcement to prayer’. In the present context there was probably a commitment to fast as an aid to prayer.”

Peterson, 375

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

Luke 2:36-37

And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.” And Jesus said to them, “Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”

Luke 5:33-35

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people.

Leviticus 23:26-32

And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.”

Leviticus 23:26-32

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Matthew 4:1-2

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

Mark 2:20

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.

Daniel 10:2-3

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

James 1:5

Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

Esther 4:15-16

“Most western Christians do not fast, but, if we were willing to fast more regularly - even for one or two meals - we might be surprised how much more spiritual power and strength we would have in our lives and in our churches.”

Wayne Grudem
Systematic Theology, 391