

FASTING AND PRAYING

Matthew 9.14-17

WHAT IS FASTING?

Matthew 9.14-17

Fasting was a practice in the Old Testament that was linked closely with mourning, loss, and repentance. Here, Jesus trying to logically show the Pharisees that there is no need for mourning because He, the bridegroom, is here, so the celebration can be had. That said, there will be a day when the Bridegroom is taken away, and fasting will resume. However, the fasting will become different.

We have tasted the manifestation of Christ's glory, and our fasting is not because we are hungry for something we have not tasted, but because the new wine of Christ's presence is so real and so satisfying. We must have all he promised.

And as much now as possible.

-John Piper

NEW WINE AND NEW CLOTH

**We live on the finished side of the cross,
and so our fasting and prayer does not rest on some blurry hope,
but it stands firmly on a clear Gospel.**

The opposite of faith is cynicism. Cynicism convinces us of what we think is really going on. But it gives us a numbness towards real life, and a numbness towards the power of the Gospel. It destroys intimacy.

James 4.2, 3 // Mark 14.36 // Daniel 3.17, 18

**Like Jesus, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
we are to ask boldly, and surrendering completely.**

HOW TO FAST AND PRAY MORE EFFECTIVELY

**Efficiency, multitasking, and busyness all kill intimacy.
In short, you can't get to know God on the fly.**

-Paul E. Miller, A Praying Life

- Praying out loud keeps you focused
- Getting awake. Take a shower, drink some coffee, play some background music.
- Starting small. Five minutes per day will help develop a dependant appetite.
- Being able to not be interrupted.
- Make sure you "eat" while you fast.
 - Learning to pray the Scriptures. (**2 Corinthians 1.19-22**)
 - Prayer cards or the PrayerMate App

NOTES:

Recommended Resources

A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller

A great book on learning the importance and value of prayer.

The Gospel Transformation Bible

Published by Crossway, this bible is not *so much* a study bible, but a bible with commentary to help you see the bigger picture of Christ and His Gospel in and through all the Scriptures.

ARE YOU NEW HERE?

WELCOME TO LIFE MISSION CHURCH!

We're so glad you joined us today! We'd LOVE for you to **fill out the green Connection Card** on your seat to let us know you were here today. You can drop it in the offering at the end of service or take it to one of our **teammates in a Green Shirt** at the **Connection Booth** outside - we'd love to give you some welcome information.

Feel free to **grab some food or coffee** out in the courtyard and hang out. We hope you'll **join us next Sunday** and consider making us your church family.

SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

If you've ever taken your child to one of our Kids on Mission classes, or enjoyed a cup of coffee after service, chances are there was a **faithful servant** behind each of those examples. By giving your time and talent on Sundays, you're **an essential part** of helping others meet Jesus, and serving is one of the **most fun & rewarding ways we experience community** with our church family! Fill out a connection card or visit the **Connection Booth** to learn about the serving opportunities available today.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

The best way to **get connected** in the church is by joining one of our **Community Groups!** You'll **build friendships**, be encouraged, and take the sermon deeper into your heart every week. **Sign up for a Group** on a **Connection Card** or visit the **Connection Booth**. You won't regret it!

GIVING

Gospel-centered generosity should never be fueled by obligation or guilt; it should be motivated by a heart of thankfulness because of the sacrificial love God has already shown us. If you call Life Mission your Home, you can place your gift in the offering baskets at the end of service, give online at lifemissionchurch.com/blog/give or mail a check to our PO Box. **Thank you so much for your love & support!**

KIDS ON MISSION

Our Kids are incredibly important to us! The Kids on Mission ministry has classrooms for **newborns - 6th grade** & is passionately overseen by **Audra Napolitano**. Please Visit lifemissionchurch.com/blog/kids to read more about the vision and plan we have for our kids, including Pastor Jobey's heart and his walkthrough of our curriculum.

JUNIOR HIGH & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Our Junior High students (**7th & 8th graders**) worship with the adults, and then head to their class for the rest of service. We challenge them to **dig deeper into what they learned on Sunday** throughout the week.

Our **High School students** stay in the adult service because we believe that it is critical for them to not "graduate the faith" when they graduate school. For questions on our student ministries, contact **Casey Barnes** at hbarnes5@yahoo.com or **John Hawthorne** at hawthorne-john@hotmail.com

SAVE.

Jesus was sent to save. We have been saved to be sent. We are sent into our community to share the Good News that Christ came to save us, and we hope to see many who find new life.

EQUIP.

We want to equip those very people in the Word so that they can continue to grow as disciples of Christ. From our preschool to our adults, our passion is to see everyone equipped in the Gospel to live a life of freedom and joy.

SEND.

Lastly, we then want to see those equipped people sent into their community and world. From schools and playgrounds, to families and work places, we want to see people who are spiritual leaders in their life, showing people the truth of Christ's Good News.

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COMMUNITY GROUP HOMEWORK

Read **Matthew 9:14-17**. What stuck out to you in these verses or was most impactful from the message on Sunday? _____

Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that "Fasting, if we conceive of it truly, must not . . . be confined to the question of food and drink; fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose. There are many bodily functions which are right and normal and perfectly legitimate, but which for special peculiar reasons in certain circumstances should be controlled. That is fasting." Do you see fasting as a religious practice or an act of worship? In your own words, explain what is the main point of fasting and why should we do it. _____

Read **Matthew 6:16-18**. How do these verses say we are to fast? _____

Read **Hosea 2:16, 19-20**. Who is the "Bridegroom?" Who is the bride? _____

Re-read **Matthew 9:14**. Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry? _____

Now read **Acts 14:23, 2 Corinthians 6:5, 2 Corinthians 11:27**. Why do disciples of Jesus fast now? _____

In **verse 15** Jesus said, "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." This is the key sentence: "Then they will fast." When is he referring to? What does this say about our ultimate hope? Read **John 16:20**. _____

Read **Acts 13:1-3**. In this quick story, what is happening? In light of Jesus death and triumphant resurrection, what reason did they still have to mourn? _____

For most of us, prayer and fasting goes against the grain of our daily routine. Like Jobey said on Sunday, efficiency, multi-tasking and busyness all kill intimacy. One thing that we definitely know about fasting is that it is always linked with prayer. How is your prayer life? Are you spending quiet time in prayer before The Lord? How has the message on Sunday or this study changed your view of the importance of fasting? _____

Spend some time in prayer, asking that God would give you a heart that is being disciplined and motivated by His grace to plan a day to fast, not as a religious practice but as an act of worship.

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