

Fasting & Praying To Know & See Christ

Luke 2:36-38

Fasting is refraining from something (usually food) for a spiritual reason.

Fasting keeps us sensitive & dependent upon His Spirit & leading.

Fasting is a way of continually refreshing our spiritual life and strength.

Matthew 6:16-18 Page #962

Matthew 9:14-15 Page #966

Acts 13:1-3 Page #1103

- I. Fasting assists those longing for Christ's return to know and see Him better right now. Luke 2:25, 38

- II. Fasting prepares the heart for Christ's return.

Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. Hebrews 9:28 (NASB)

In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Tim. 4:8 (NASB)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13 (NASB)

- III. Fasting drives us to Christ to meet the longings that only Christ can fulfill.

1) Healing of hurts

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that her warfare is ended, and her iniquity is pardoned.

Isaiah 40:1–2

2) Removal of defeating habits

"All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything"

1 Corinthians 6:12

3) Release of worries/fears

"Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!"

Luke 12:24 (NASB)

3) Promotes deeper communion

O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Psalm 34:8 (NASB)

4) Gives clarity in decision making

For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me.

Psalm 31:3 (NASB)

5) Develops the willingness to share Christ

For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

2 Tim. 2:10 (NASB)

6) Produces greater dependence on Him & not others

How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? John 5:44

7) Promotes perseverance

And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

FASTING

Choose one of the following types of fasting that you would commit to participate.

- _____ 1. **One meal of fasting per week.**
- _____ 2. **One day a week of fasting from food.**
- _____ 3. **One day of fasting from food per month**
- _____ 4. **One meal of fasting each day for one month.**
- _____ 5. **The "Daniel" fast-** refrain from certain foods or items (sweets, meats, caffeine, TV, computer, cell phone etc..) for a day or more.

The purpose of our fast is:

- 1. Personally grow in our relationship with God.
- 2. Corporately pray for guidance/empowerment for MCC.
- 3. See God work powerfully in & through us for salvation.

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you fast put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:16-18

***Please consider consulting a doctor before you fast for more than one meal a day or if you have specific health questions.**

Questions for this week:

I. For Starters:

1. What do you think of when you hear the term "fasting"?
2. Do you have any concerns or thoughts about fasting?
3. How might a regular or weekly fast assist you in your spiritual walk?

II. Overview of Scripture

Read the following Scriptures and write out what you learn about fasting. (Read to get the context of each Scripture as needed)

Psalms 35:13

Psalms 69:10

Isaiah 58:3

Jeremiah 14:12

Zachariah 7:5

Matthew 9:15

Joel 1:14

Joel 2:12

Matthew 17:14-21

Examples Of Fasting:

Moses Exodus 34:28

Daniel 10:3

Israel 1 Samuel 7:6

Elijah 1 Kings 19:8

Paul Acts 9:9

Ezra Acts 10:6

Leaders Acts 13:2-3

Paul/Barnabas Acts 14:23

Our Lord Luke 4:1-2

What did you learn about fasting?

What type of fasting are you considering and why?