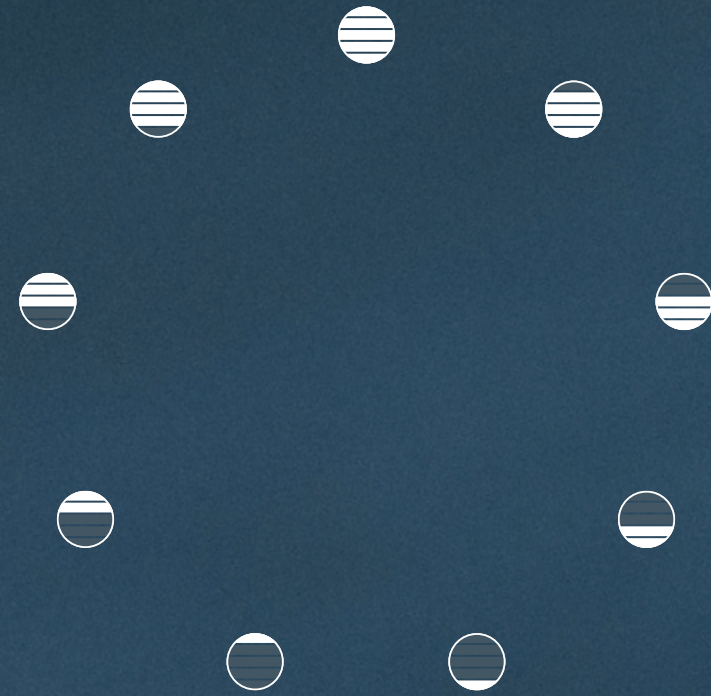




The Fasting Practice

Practicing the Way of Jesus





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Why fast?

1. To offer ourselves to Jesus
2. To grow in holiness
3. To amplify our prayers
4. To stand with the poor

How does fasting amplify our prayers?

Fasting helps us want to pray.

“If we don’t feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great.”

- John Piper

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”

- Psalm 42:1-2

“I believe Jesus’ words that those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” will be filled. I also believe that most of us will never hunger and thirst for righteousness because we have been trained to feast on the junk food of our age. I wonder if it is even possible to truly hunger for Jesus if our souls are currently stuffed with far lesser things.”

- Dave Clayton

Fasting helps us want to pray.

- It helps us get in touch with our hunger for God.

Fasting helps us as we pray.

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us listen to God well.

“Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”

- Acts 13:1-3

“You will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD.

- Jeremiah 29:12-13

“Fasting can have several positive effects on brain health including increased production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF): BDNF is a protein that supports the survival of existing neurons and encourages the growth of new neurons and synapses. Fasting can increase BDNF levels, which may lead to improved cognitive function, learning and memory.”

- Baylor Scott and White Health

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us listen to God well.

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us listen to God well.
 - Aiding and amplifying prayers for discernment

“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.”

- Ezra 8:23

“Whenever men are to pray to God concerning any great matter, it would be expedient to appoint fasting along with prayer. Their sole purpose in this kind of fasting is to render themselves more eager and unencumbered for prayer...with a full stomach, our mind is not so lifted up to God.”

- John Calvin

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us listen to God well.
 - Aiding and amplifying prayers for discernment

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us communicate with God well.

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us communicate with God well.
- Aiding and amplifying:
 - Prayers of repentance

“The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present a food offering to the Lord. Do not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God.”

- Leviticus 23:26-28

“The Israelites were told to make their life uncomfortable for an entire day, in order to bring their entire person into harmony with the gravity of sin, and the need to turn from sin toward God. Fasting is empathy with the Divine or participation in God's perception of sin.”

- Scot McKnight

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us communicate with God well.
- Aiding and amplifying:
 - Prayers of repentance
 - Prayers of lament

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept.
For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed
before the God of heaven.”

- Nehemiah 1:4

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Fasting helps us communicate with God well.
- Aiding and amplifying:
 - Prayers of repentance
 - Prayers of lament
 - Prayers of dependence

“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

- Esther 4:16

Fasting helps us want to pray.

- Awakening and stoking our hunger for God

Fasting helps us as we pray.

- Helping us listen to God well
 - Aiding and amplifying prayers for discernment
- Helping us communicate with God well
 - Aiding and amplifying prayers of repentance, prayers of lament, and prayers of dependence

This Week's Practice Invitation:

Fast until sundown one day this week, giving more attention to prayer.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- Hebrews 4:14-16

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.