

RENEWING THE MIND

Fasting



SESSION 1: FASTING AND FORMATION

Main Text:

Galatians 5:13-25

Take Home Exercise:

Fast for 12 hours



OPENING EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Spend a moment in prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together, and then lead your group through the below exercise.

Gather together as a community group in a comfortable setting—around a table, on a couch, on a living room floor, etc. Invite someone in your group to pray and invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together.

In a moment, you will spend one or two minutes in silence together. Why silence? In our overcrowded, busy world, silence (even if only for a few minutes) cuts through the noise and allows space to calm your mind and heart before God.

Take a few moments to invite the Holy Spirit to quiet your heart and mind from distractions. Ask God if there is anything he would like to share with you during this time. Spend a few minutes acknowledging and thanking God for his presence and care. Psalm 145:18 reminds us that “The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”

Close this group time of silence with a prayer of gratitude, thanking God for the opportunity to be together.

OPENING DISCUSSION (15 Minutes)

Watch the overview video together and discuss the following questions as a group.

VIDEO #1 - Vision Overview

As a group, spend a few minutes sharing your initial thoughts on fasting, as well as any personal experience with this habit.

What comes to mind for you when you think of fasting? What do you think has shaped your current understanding of fasting?

Is fasting already a part of your apprenticeship to Jesus? What might this look like? If not, what do you suppose has kept you from fasting?

What are your initial thoughts or feelings about practicing fasting together as a church body? What questions or concerns might you have about fasting?

STUDY TOGETHER (20 Minutes)

Lead the study and discussion below for your group. Feel free to read it in its entirety or put it in your own words.

When Jesus urged his sleeping disciples to watch and pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, he reminded them that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). The disciples wanted to stay awake and pray, but the weakness of their flesh overpowered their desire to do so. Jesus’ statement gives us insight not only into why we pray but also into why we fast. Like the disciples, we face the same struggle—our flesh and the Spirit are constantly waging war with each other. Fasting is a way for us to submit to and lean on the Holy Spirit rather than caving into the desires of the flesh or leaning on our own strength. As we read the following text, we will further explore what it means for us, through fasting, to starve the flesh and feast on the Spirit.

But first, watch and briefly discuss the following video on fasting basics and its role in our spiritual formation.

Invite someone to read Galatians 5:13-25 aloud for the group, then watch video #2: “What is fasting?”

VIDEO 2 - What is Fasting?

What is the result, or “fruit,” of gratifying the desires of the flesh? What is the result of walking in step with the Spirit?

How is denying yourself, or “crucifying the flesh,” different from self-denial? Why is this an important distinction for us to remember as we think about the motive or intention of fasting?

Read and spend a few moments discussing the following quote from John Piper’s *A Hunger for God*:

“Our appetites dictate the direction of our lives—whether it be the craving of our stomachs, the passionate desire for possessions or power, or the longings of our spirits for God. But for the Christian, the hunger for anything besides God can be the arch-enemy, while our hunger for God—and him alone—is the only thing that will bring victory.”

What do you think is the difference between appetite and hunger? In what ways have we confused the two?

What ideas does the phrase “hunger for God” evoke for you?

How does fasting help us to redirect or re-orient our desires toward God?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Read through the below exercise, adapted from *Practicing the Way*, that each individual will do before your next gathering. Talk through any questions people may have on what they are to do. Again, it is about practice, not perfection. Give yourselves grace.



1. Identify a day and time to fast as a community.

Set aside a day this upcoming week when you will fast. It is recommended that you fast as a community on the day you typically meet. Doing so will help you stay encouraged and enlivened as you begin to cultivate this habit. We recommend starting with a 12-hour (sun-up to sun-down) fast. For example, if your community group typically meets on Monday evenings, you could begin your fast on Monday morning (6 am) after a light breakfast and break it together at the start of your meeting (6 pm) with a simple potluck. As a group, spend time discussing when/how you might end your fast together.

2. Plan in advance for your fast, leaving room in your day to commune with God.

Avoid overfilling your schedule on the day you choose to fast, allowing for more space to simply commune with God. Consider how you may need to adjust your schedule that day (ex., lunch meetings, workouts, plans with family and friends, etc.). Before you fast, spend some time in prayer. Ask God how he might be inviting and leading you to fast (when, how long, etc.). Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you and, in your times of prayer, to bring to mind particular people, cares, personal areas for growth, scripture verses, etc.

3. Turn your heart to God and ask him to help you starve your flesh and feast on the Spirit.

When you'd typically be grocery shopping, cooking, eating, or cleaning, give yourself to prayer. As you go about your day—your morning commute, caregiving, email, errands—enjoy God's company and attempt to open your heart to him through the day by simply praying the following: "Lord, turn my affections to you. Help me to truly live by the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit today." In the times you set aside in your day for prayer, or when you experience hunger pangs, consider praying Galatians 5:22-25:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

Reflect on your fast with the Lord.

Break your fast, ideally with your community group, with a small meal. After your fast, spend some time reflecting on your day with the Lord. Consider journaling about the following prompts:

1. What was this experience like for you?
2. What was encouraging to you? Where did you feel resistance?
3. How did God meet you in your fast?

Additional practical tips for fasting:

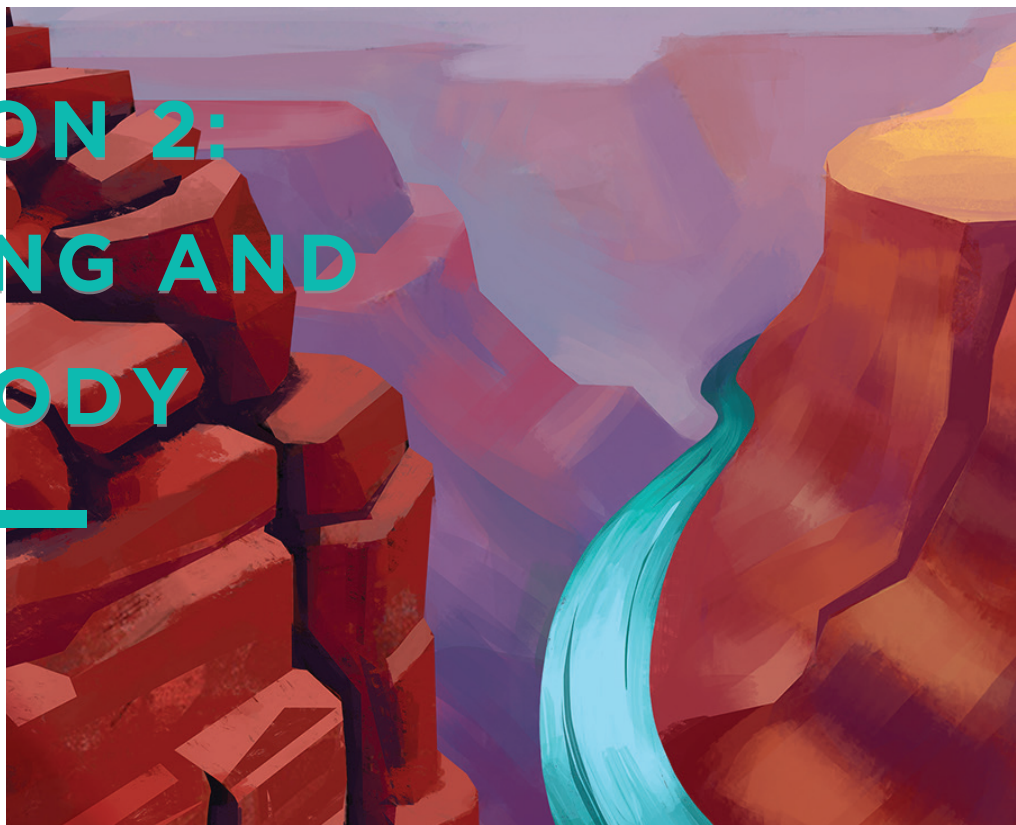
- Be sure to consult a doctor before fasting if you have an eating disorder, are pregnant, have a medical condition, or are under 18.
- Start where you are, not where you think you should be. Feel free to modify this as needed (ex. fasting from one meal or doing a juice/liquid fast).
- Stay hydrated during your fast. Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Choose one scripture verse or characteristic of God to meditate on throughout the day as a reminder that the pursuit of God is the primary aim of fasting.

CLOSE IN PRAYER (5 Minutes)

Close your time by reading and reflecting on the following prayer (adapted from “Knowing Jesus”). Then take some time to share any prayer requests/updates and pray for each other’s upcoming week.

“Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us a regenerated spirit and the power to live our lives in spirit and truth. We pray that day by day, we may freely walk by means of the Spirit and submit to your leading and guiding. Help us, as we fast this week, to truly hunger for you. Help us to listen to your voice, submit to your will, and be obedient to your correction so that we will not succumb to the desires of the flesh but, rather, walk in the newness of life. In Jesus’ name, we pray, amen.”

SESSION 2: FASTING AND THE BODY



Main Text:

Matthew 4:1-4
Matthe 6:16-18

Take Home Exercise:

Fast for 12 hours

OPENING EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Spend a moment in prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together, and then lead your group through the below exercise.

In a moment, you will spend one or two minutes in silence together. As you spend time in silence, consider using a breath prayer. Breath prayer is a simple way to use your body's natural process to engage your mind and heart on the Word of God. These quiet and reflective "prayers of the heart" help to overcome distractions during prayer, allowing you to more easily commune with God. Breath prayer is a simple way to do what Paul said in Colossians 3, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly..."

Below are a few breath prayers you might choose from:

Romans 12:1

Inhale - I offer my body to You
Exhale - as a living sacrifice.

Psalm 46:1

Inhale - You are our refuge
Exhale - and our strength.

Psalm 23

Inhale - I will not be afraid
Exhale - for You are with me.

John 15

Inhale - True Vine and Gardener
Exhale - I abide in You.

OPENING DISCUSSION (10-15 Minutes)

Spend some time together debriefing the take-home exercise from your last gathering.

In the last gathering, you were encouraged to fast as a community for 12 hours, with the focus of starving the flesh and feasting on the Spirit. Reflect on your most recent experience with fasting, and review any journal entries you may have written during that time. Giving yourselves immense grace, share with the group how this went.

How was this experience for you? Was there anything particularly encouraging, challenging, or surprising to you? Is there anything you want to adjust/change or keep in mind for this next week?

How did God meet you in your fast?

STUDY TOGETHER (20 Minutes)

Lead the study and discussion below for your group. Feel free to read it in its entirety or put it in your own words.

Spend some time as a group briefly re-visiting the following texts from the second week's sermon. As you read through each of the passages, make some observations about the intent, posture, and frequency of fasting.

Select two people from your group to each read one of the following scriptures:

Matthew 4:1-4

Matthew 6:16-18

The scene in chapter four occurs right after Jesus is baptized and before he begins his public ministry. Why might that be significant? What is the significance of the devil testing Jesus after he had been fasting?

What does Jesus' response in verse four reveal about the "why" and the "how" of fasting?

Later, in chapter six, Jesus is teaching on fasting. What assumption does Jesus make about fasting in this passage?

What does this passage reveal about what our motive and posture in fasting should be?

It is important for us to remember that this passage is not stating that fasting is solely a private discipline or that we cannot talk about it in community. There are many examples of corporate fasting in scripture (1 Samuel 7:5-6, Esther 4, Joel 1:14, Acts 13:1-3) where the people of God sought the Lord, repented of sin, brought their burdens to him, asked for guidance, and waited expectantly for him. The passage in Matthew 6:16-18 warns against fasting for the recognition or applause of others.

Why might it be helpful for us to fast together in community? What are some ways that we might encourage one another as we fast?

As we begin to consider more of the "how" of fasting, it is important that we understand the role of the body in our spiritual formation. Watch this brief overview of the sermon from the second week, and walk through the following discussion together.

VIDEO 3 - Fasting And The Body?

Our working definition of fasting is "abstaining from food for a predetermined period of time for the purpose of offering our whole self to God." What distinguishes this type of fasting from intermittent fasting, dieting to lose weight, or other health-related fasts?

Briefly review the four inherited positions of the body from Scot McKnight's book, Fasting. Which of these four views might you personally hold or resonate with?

1. The body as a monster to be conquered (ascetic body view)
2. The body as a celebrity to be glorified (narcissistic body view)
3. The body as a cornucopia to be filled (hedonic body view)
4. The body as a wallflower to be ignored (neo-gnostic body view)

Kevin suggested that we adopt an alternative position—the Christian view of the body as an organic unity (Mind, Body, Spirit, Strength, Soul). In what ways is this view of the body distinct



from the others?

How does God view our bodies (Hint: Psalm 139:13-14, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:1-2)? How might we need to challenge and re-align the way we currently view and treat our bodies?

Are there any fears or concerns you might have about fasting? How might we as a group care for and encourage one another as we fast?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Read through the below exercise, adapted from Practicing the Way, that each individual will do before your next gathering. Talk through any questions people may have on what they are to do. Again, it is about practice, not perfection. Give yourselves grace.

1. Identify a day and time to fast as a community.

Set aside a day this upcoming week when you will fast for 12 hours. It is recommended that you fast as a community on the day you typically meet. Doing so will help you stay encouraged and enlivened as you begin to cultivate this habit.

2. Plan for your fast, leaving room in your day to commune with God.

Avoid overfilling your schedule on the day you choose to fast, allowing for more space to simply commune with God. Consider how you may need to adjust your schedule that day (ex., lunch meetings, workouts, plans with family and friends, etc.). Spend some time in prayer. Ask God how he might be inviting and leading you to fast (when, how long, etc.).

3. Offer yourself to the Lord as you fast.

When you'd typically be grocery shopping, cooking, eating, or cleaning, give yourself to prayer. As you go about your day—your morning commute, caregiving, email, errands—enjoy God's company and attempt to open your heart to him through the day. In the times you set aside in your day for prayer, or when you experience hunger pangs, consider praying through Romans 12:1-2.

4. Reflect on your fast with the Lord.

After your fast, spend some time reflecting on your day with the Lord. Consider journaling with the following prompts:

What was this experience like? Where did you feel resistance? How did God meet you in your fast? How might God be prompting you to realign your view of your body with his Word?

Additional practical tips for fasting:

- Be sure to consult a doctor before fasting if you have an eating disorder, are pregnant, have a medical condition, or are under 18.
- Start where you are, not where you think you should be. Feel free to modify this as needed (ex. fasting from one meal or doing a juice/liquid fast).
- Stay hydrated during your fast. Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Choose one scripture verse or characteristic of God to meditate on throughout the day as a reminder that the pursuit of God is the primary aim of fasting.

CLOSE IN PRAYER (5 Minutes)

Close your time by reading and reflecting on the following prayer (written by Alyssa Wollard) together. Then take some time to share any prayer requests/updates and pray for each other's upcoming week.

Lord, please forgive us for craving food more than you. Forgive us for craving anything more than you. Lord, redirect our hunger. Be our God. Open our eyes to the benefits of fasting. Open our hearts to you like never before. Give us the desire to turn to you with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our strength. May we no longer live by bread alone but by every word that comes from your mouth, Oh LORD. Teach us to fast so we might hold fast to you, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

SESSION 3: FASTING TO OFFER OURSELVES TO GOD

Main Text:

Romans 8:5-13

Take Home Exercise:

Fast for 12 hours



OPENING EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Spend a moment in prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together, and then lead your group through the below exercise.

Invite someone in your group to pray and invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together. Spend one or two minutes in silence. By intentionally creating space for silence, free from distraction and noise, we position ourselves to hear from him.

As another option, consider using the Prayer of Examen to reflect back on your day, or even the past week, with the Lord. If your group would like to use the Prayer of Examen, you can find a guide from our series on Attentiveness to God below.

[Prayer of Examen Guide](#)

Close this time in silence by thanking God for being with you in every moment.

OPENING DISCUSSION (10-15 Minutes)

Spend some time together debriefing the take-home exercise from your last gathering.

In the last gathering, you were encouraged to fast as a community for 12 hours, focusing on offering yourself to God. Reflect back on your most recent experience with fasting, and review any journal entries you may have written during that time. Giving yourselves immense grace, share with the group how this went.

How did fasting go this week? What was encouraging? Where did you face resistance?

Is there anything you might need to modify or keep in mind as you fast this week? Where might you need to extend more grace to yourself?

STUDY TOGETHER (20 Minutes)

Lead the study and discussion below for your group. Feel free to read it in its entirety or put it in

your own words.

This week, we are exploring the first two primary motivations for fasting (to offer ourselves to God and grow in holiness). Rather than fasting to get what we want or to simply get something from God, we fast as a way of freely giving ourselves to him. Fasting is an embodied practice. It is a way for us to reintegrate our mind into our body, and in doing so, we offer God the whole of who we are.

As we fast in partnership with the Holy Spirit, we begin to tame our appetites for things other than God, and in turn, we cultivate a deeper hunger for holiness. Rather than surrendering to feelings of powerlessness from being constantly controlled by our desires for gossip, consumerism, power, drink, or sex, we lean on and feast on the Holy Spirit. When we fast, we invite and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal what is in our hearts and begin to re-order our desires toward God.

Watch and discuss this brief overview of the sermon together.

VIDEO 4 - Fasting To Offer Ourselves To God

Have someone in your group read Romans 7:15-24.

What we dwell on shapes the way we live our lives and also shapes our very character and behavior. Throughout the book of Romans, Paul writes about the importance of renewing our minds and bringing our thoughts into alignment with the truth of God’s Word. The discipline of fasting sharpens our focus on the Spirit by leveraging our body’s response to hunger, turning our hunger pangs into opportunities to return our minds to the Spirit. In Romans 8, Paul describes the struggle we face between living by the flesh and the Spirit.

Have someone in your group read Romans 8:5-13.

As you read through the passage, take note of the contrast between living by the flesh and living by the Spirit. Write down words associated with each in the columns below, paying particular attention to any actions or results that Paul talks about.

Living By The Flesh	Living By The Spirit

Review the two columns above as a group. What key patterns or points stand out when comparing these two mindsets (or two ways of living)?

Re-read verses 5-7. How have you personally experienced “life and peace” when you have submitted to God’s Word and his Spirit? On the other hand, how have you personally experienced hostility toward God (the result of a mind governed by the flesh) in your own life? What examples come to mind?

What does it mean to set our minds on what the Spirit desires? (Hint: Colossians 3:1-4 and Philippians 4:8). What practical ways can we intentionally rely on the Spirit's guidance and strength in our daily lives?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Read through the below exercise, adapted from *Practicing the Way*, that each individual will do before your next gathering. Talk through any questions people may have on what they are to do. Again, it is about practice, not perfection. Give yourselves grace.

1. Identify a day and time to fast as a community.

Set aside a day this upcoming week when you will fast. It is recommended that you fast as a community on the day you typically meet. Doing so will help you stay encouraged and enlivened as you begin to cultivate this habit. We recommend starting with a 12-hour (sun-up to sun-down) fast.

2. Plan in advance for your fast, leaving room in your day to commune with God.

Avoid overfilling your schedule on the day you choose to fast, allowing for more space to simply commune with God. Consider how you may need to adjust your schedule that day (e.g., lunch meetings, workouts, plans with family and friends, etc.).

3. As you offer yourself to the Lord in fasting, invite him to reveal the areas of your life where he may be calling you to grow in holiness.

Consider making Psalm 139:23-24 your prayer as you begin and end your fast.
"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

As you fast today, ask Jesus to turn your affections to him. Invite him to reveal the areas in your flesh that may need to be "starved" (habits, patterns, or areas where the power of the flesh needs to be broken so that you might feed on the Holy Spirit) and spend some time praying into those.

4. Reflect back on your fast with the Lord.

Break your fast, ideally with your community group, with a small meal. After your fast, spend some time reflecting on your day with the Lord. Consider journaling about the following prompts:

1. How was your fast? What was encouraging? Where did you experience resistance?
2. What tendencies or character traits (i.e., irritability, anger, fear) may have come to the surface as you fasted?
3. Did this time of fasting reveal any dependencies (i.e., food, affirmation)?
4. Are there any areas of your life you may be holding back from the Lord? How might you offer this to him now in confession, repentance, and prayer?



CLOSE IN PRAYER (5 Minutes)

Close your time together by reading and reflecting on the following prayer adapted from Knowing Jesus. Then, take some time to share any prayer requests/updates and pray for each other's upcoming week.

Dear Heavenly Father, you are a holy God, and we desire to be holy too—set apart unto You and living our lives in a manner that is worthy of you and pleasing to you. Search our hearts, we pray, and if there is any cherished sin lurking within, we ask that you would search it out and destroy it, for we know that only the ones that have clean hands and pure hearts may stand in your presence. Purify our hearts, cleanse our inner thoughts, and examine the very motives behind our acts and attitudes, for we desire to live in holiness of heart. If there is anything that is displeasing to you in our lives, we ask that in Your grace you would root it out, so that we may live in godly holiness all the days of our lives, clothed in Christ's righteousness, separated unto you and walking in godly love. This we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

SESSION 4: FASTING FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Main Text:

Isaiah 58:1-9

Take Home Exercise:

Fast for 12 hours



OPENING EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Spend a moment in prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together, and then lead your group through the following exercise, adapted from the Spiritual Disciplines Handbook.

Invite someone in your group to pray and invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together. Spend one or two minutes in silence together. By intentionally creating space for silence, free from distraction and noise, we position ourselves to hear from him.

As another option, consider using the practice of centering prayer, a traditional form of prayer that couples scripture meditation with prayer. The goal of centering prayer is not to clear our mind of all thoughts but rather to become aware of our thoughts and freely release them into God's loving hands.

1. Sit comfortably in a position that allows you to stay alert and attentive.
2. Read **Psalm 146** aloud together.
3. Choose one word or phrase from the text that grabs your attention and expresses your desire for God. This word could reflect a desire of your heart (e.g., love, grace, peace, safety), or it might be a name, characteristic, or title of God (e.g., Great Shepherd, Counselor, Healer, Defender). Silently reflect on this word, allowing it to draw your attention to God and his presence.
4. Allow yourself to settle into the silence. It is not unusual for the first few moments to be filled with noisy thoughts. Release these thoughts to God, and return your attention to him by repeating the word that stood out to you from the text. Take time to be with Jesus, and be still. There is no need to "do" or accomplish anything.
5. As you near the end of this time, offer yourself and your love to God. You might offer a simple phrase to God like "I am yours." Don't rush out of this time of silence with God. Allow yourself to be still and wait in his presence.

OPENING DISCUSSION (10-15 Minutes)

Spend some time together debriefing the take-home exercise from your last gathering.

In the last gathering, you were encouraged to fast as a community for 12 hours, with the focus of offering yourself to the Lord and growing in holiness. Reflect back on your most recent experience with fasting, and review any journal entries you may have written during that time. Giving yourselves immense grace, share with the group how this went.

How did your fast go this week? Was there anything particularly encouraging, challenging, or surprising to you? How are you feeling three weeks into this new habit?

In *Celebration of Disciplines*, Richard Foster writes that “more than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us...we cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but fasting brings these things to the surface.” Has fasting brought to the surface any particular habits, patterns, or attachments in your own life?

STUDY TOGETHER (20 Minutes)

Lead the study and discussion below for your group. Feel free to read it in its entirety or put it in your own words.

In his book *Invitation to A Journey*, Robert Mulholland defines spiritual formation as “the process of being formed in the image of Christ for the sake of others.” Spiritual habits, like fasting, are means by which we regularly and intentionally open our lives to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. Our desire is not only for personal transformation but also for societal transformation. Last week, we explored the first two of four motivations for fasting—offering ourselves to God and growing in holiness. This week, we will explore the next two motivations for fasting that are more others-oriented—to amplify our prayers and to stand with the poor. Fasting helps us in our prayer life as we intentionally create more space to hear from God (discerning his voice, receiving guidance, direction, or encouragement) and also present our requests to him. As we acknowledge the abundance we often live with and realize the scarcity that others in our very communities experience, we begin to consider how we might respond in service, generosity, and justice.

Watch and discuss this brief overview of the sermon together.

VIDEO 5—Fasting for the Sake of Others

How might fasting for justice enable us to grow in compassion toward others and embody God’s heart and character to the world?

How might fasting be an appropriate response to the pain and injustice we experience in our world? What issues of justice or social concern move you to respond with fasting?

For many of us, we struggle with the problem of food abundance—having too much food to eat. But for most of the world, and more people in our own country than most of us realize, the problem is not abundance but scarcity. Fasting is one way to bridge the gap between the “haves” and “the have-nots.” In Isaiah 58, the prophet speaks to the connection between fasting and justice.

Fasting helps us grow in solidarity with the poor as well as offers a proactive step to alleviate poverty. Historically, on fasting days, Christians would take the food or the money typically spent on food and give it to the poor. This simple practice of giving away money that would have been spent on food has the subtle potential to transform the lives of the poor and our own lives.



Invite someone in your group to read Isaiah 58:1-9 aloud.

Why was the fast described in verses 1-6 displeasing to the Lord? How does Isaiah confront both the posture and the practice of their fasting? How might this be a significant reminder, even a warning, for us today as we fast?

What does this passage teach us about God's desire for justice? How does this encourage you? How does this challenge you?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE (5 Minutes)

Read through the below exercise, adapted from Practicing the Way, that each individual will do before your next gathering. Talk through any questions people may have on what they are to do. Again, it is about practice, not perfection. Give yourselves grace.

1. Identify a day and time to fast as a community.

Set aside a day this upcoming week when you will fast. It is recommended that you fast as a community on the day you typically meet. Doing so will help you stay encouraged and enlivened as you begin to cultivate this habit. We recommend starting with a 12-hour (sun-up to sun-down) fast.

2. Plan in advance for your fast, leaving room in your day to commune with God.

Avoid overfilling your schedule on the day you choose to fast, allowing for more space to simply commune with God. Consider how you may need to adjust your schedule that day (e.g., lunch meetings, workouts, plans with family and friends, etc.).

3. Fast for justice.

Devote this fast as an intentional time to "cry out in prayer" on behalf of those who are suffering and experiencing injustice both here in the Bay Area and across the world. Take some time to also pray for a particular ache (or issue) in the world (poverty, trafficking, racial injustice, etc.). As you do, consider specifically praying for and partnering with one or two of our local and global outreach partners (go to cpc.org/missions for more information).

OPTIONAL EXERCISE: Calculate the money you would have spent on snacks, meals, coffee, La Croix, etc., on the day you are fasting, and give that money to those in need. Perhaps calculate what you'd spend on yourself and give that money to someone in need that you encounter during your day. Or put your money together with your community and give it all to a cause or organization.

4. Reflect back on your fast with the Lord.

Break your fast, ideally with your community group, with a small meal. After your fast, spend some time reflecting on your day with the Lord. Consider journaling about the following prompts:

1. How was your fast? What was encouraging? Where did you face resistance?
2. What particular ache did God place on your heart? How might you continue to pray for and respond to this ache? Who might you invite to join you in this?
3. Is there a particular area in your own life where you might need discernment and guidance from the Lord?
4. What ways may God be prompting you to seek justice and serve in the city where you live?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (5 Minutes)

Close your time by reading and reflecting on the following prayer together. Then, take some time to share any prayer requests/updates and pray for each other's upcoming week.

Almighty God, who created us in your image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.