

Hungering to Fast.

There have been a couple of times in the last two years when we looked with some detail into fasting. These lessons can be found as the sermons for March 24, 2019 and May 16, 2021. Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* and Dallas Willard's *The Spirit of the Disciplines* can also serve as resources for learning about spiritual fasting.

Fasting is one of the easiest spiritual disciplines to put into action!

- It is excuse free, except for health reasons. No one can say, "I don't have time not to eat."
- It in most cases improves our physical well being in addition to our spiritual well being.
- You can do it anywhere, at any time.
- You don't need special quiet or a special place.
- It is very unlikely that you will be interrupted except by tempting offers of culinary delights.

There are great reasons to take fasting seriously, as seriously as we would prayer, financial giving, Bible study, Christian service, or fellowshiping with others in the body. We can find in fasting:

- That we are better able to hear God
- A strengthened presence of the Spirit
- Strength to resist temptation
- Strength for ministry
- Clarity of spiritual thinking

- Insight into what is going on around us in the world and in people's lives
- Ways to handle a life situation and call for God's intervention
- Better understanding of Scripture
- Ways in which we might better serve
- A group fast would bring us together
- There would be alignment as we all focus on a better thing than food and filling our stomachs
- We would get God's attention with our seriousness
- Relying on God to get us through hunger rather than buying food to satisfy
- We would be giving up something we love (food), which means sacrifice, and in this we will be blessed.
- It fulfills the idea of taking up our crosses and denying ourselves
- We would have fellowship in fasting rather than food fellowship
- It would allow us a concentrated time to pray for the church and its leadership, so. . .
- Fasting leads to the filling of leaders with God's Spirit who is accessed through fasting.

Tips for how to begin fasting.

- Start slow. Work into it. Make sure you drink water. Some say that a true fast will include fasting from water, but there seems no reason to truly put our health at risk by not drinking water.
- Plan for fasting. Make it a part of your regular routine. Start with one half day a week or every two weeks. Same

day; same time. Then progress to one day a week or whatever you feel called to.

- When you think about hunger, turn to prayer and reflection.
- Make sure you invite the Spirit to be present.
- Often sinfulness does not come upon us suddenly; fight temptation by choosing to fast.
- Watch for those special times when communal fasting is called for. Our church needs to plan more communal fasts; plan to participate.
- Don't be afraid to initiate it with others and ask them to fast, too.
- What we need to do is follow through.