

FASTING AND PRAYER

JANUARY 5, 2022

MATTHEW 6:16-18

Fasting is one of three disciplines taught by Jesus (giving and praying).

1. Reasons:

- A. It's biblical.
- B. Helps restore or strengthen our intimacy with God.
- C. A way to humble ourselves. **PSALMS 69:10 (ESV), 35:13**
- D. Helps us to hear God more clearly, and be more sensitive.
- E. Enables the Spirit to reveal our true spiritual condition.
- F. Can revive us and help us influence others.

2. There are multiple ways to fast, all of which can transform us spiritually.

- A. The Jewish fast. The major fast is from sunset to night fall (25 hours). The minor fast is from sunrise to sunset. Both require no eating or drinking for the entire fast.
- B. Regular fast: abstain from all food and drink, except water.
- C. Partial fast: abstaining from a particular type of food or drink, or from one meal each day.
- D. Absolute fast: abstaining from all food or drink.
- E. Supernatural fast: God ordained and sustained (**DEUTERONOMY 9:9**).

3. Begin with self. **PSALMS 66:16-20**

- A. David understood how frail he was. We're no different.
- B. If we want God to hear us, we must first deal with ourselves and be honest before God. Cleansing begins with self.
- C. How? Remember **2 CHRONICLES 7:14**.
 - Sins of commission – the obvious (things done wrong).
 - Sins of omission – the less obvious (right actions we haven't taken).
 - 1. Putting things above our relationship with God.
 - 2. Not loving, forgiving or living as Jesus.
 - 3. Not praying, reading or witnessing as we should.
 - 4. Not giving to support God's work.

4. The motive.

- A. To glorify God, not to have an emotional experience.
- B. Demonstrate a seeking spirit and humble heart.
- C. To allow God to shape and mold our lives.
- D. Spiritual cleansing.