



Riverstone
BAPTIST CHURCH

Sermon Based Questions

Series: Training For Godliness Pt 3

Sunday 27th September 2026

Fasting: Being Hungry for God

16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others 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

1. Should Christians fast?

When not if

2. Why Fast?

- To recognize that we don't live by bread alone Lk 4:1-4
- To express repentance Joel 2:15, Jonah 3:1-10
- In desperate times for God's intervention Esther 4:16, 2 Chronicles 20:1-4, Ezra 8:21-23
- To seek wisdom & power for mission Acts 13:1-3
- To pursue justice Isaiah 58:5-10
- To express our longing for Christ to return Matthew 9:14-15

3. The practice

- Set a focus or purpose
- Replace eating with prayer and scripture
- Do it to honour God, not to impress Matt 6:16-18
- Beware the monster of self-righteousness 18:9-14

"We fast because we long for God's glory to resound in the church and God's praise to resound among the nations." John Piper

A. Examining the texts.

Discussion Starter: Have you ever participated in a fast for any reason, spiritual, physical or political? What was the experience like?

1. Read Luke 4:1-4. Why was Jesus in the wilderness? What is the significance of the number 40 here? What did he face and how did he respond to the temptation he experienced?
2. Read Joel 2:12-15 & Jonah 3:1-10. How do these passages relate repentance and fasting? How did God respond to the fasting of the people of Ninevah?
3. Read Esther 4:12-17 and Ezra 8:18-23. How was fasting utilized in these cases and why do you think it was called for?
4. Read Acts 13:1-3. What happened here and how was fasting and mission related in this passage?
5. Read Isaiah 58:5-10. How does this passage relate fasting and justice and how is fasting about more than 'personal piety'?
6. Read Matthew 9:14-15. I think one of the implications of this teaching is that the disciples would need to fast once Jesus had ascended- and they would do so to express their longing for his return. Discuss.

B. Meditation & application

7. Whilst all Christians would ascent to the notion that we should read scripture and pray, why do you think that fasting is not always looked upon as something modern Christians should do?
8. Has this message or study prompted you to think about how you could engage this discipline in your Christian life? How might you engage with it?
9. How could the church / your small group, engage fasting as you pursue repentance, justice and missional progress in our community & corporate life?
10. What in your mind are the main traps to be avoided as one participates in a fast?

Heavenly Father; Help us to hunger after you, to repent earnestly, to pursue justice, to express our longing for your return & to seek your mission in Gods world. Give us strength to engage in fasting as you give us strength. In Jesus Name- Amen