

The Power of Fasting

What is fasting?

Session Overview

This session introduces fasting as a long standing (but still relevant) Christian practice meant to deepen our attentiveness to God—not a diet trend, not an outdated extreme, and not a spiritual performance. It frames fasting as “embodied prayer”: a tangible response to what God is already doing, creating space to listen, seek, and align our will with His.

Rather than presenting fasting as a requirement or a badge of maturity, the session emphasises invitation and posture. The central idea is that fasting redirects dependence—helping us experience (not just know) that while food sustains the body, God sustains the soul. When practiced with humility and sincerity, fasting forms a heart that is ready to hear and obey when God speaks.

Key Scriptures

- **Judges 20:26** – In a moment of crisis, God’s people humble themselves and seek His guidance through fasting.
- **Joel 2:12** – Fasting is linked with repentance and returning to God when sin and distance have crept in.
- **Matthew 4:4** – Jesus clarifies what truly sustains us: God’s Word, not bread alone.
- **Matthew 6:16–18** – Jesus addresses the heart posture of fasting: not performance, but sincerity before the Father.
- **Acts 13:2–3** – The early church fasts and worships, and the Holy Spirit gives clear direction that leads to obedient action.

Key Take-Aways

- Fasting is embodied prayer: a practical response that helps us become more attentive to God.
- The purpose of fasting is focus—not food. It redirects attention and dependence back to the Lord.
- Fasting is an invitation, not an obligation; it is voluntary and not a way to earn God’s love or approval.
- The power of fasting is in the posture it forms: humility, listening, and readiness to obey when God speaks.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Before today, what was your view on fasting?**
 - Follow-up: Where do you think those assumptions came from—church background, culture, personal experience, or lack of exposure?
- 2. What stood out to you most from the idea that fasting is “focus, not food”?**
 - Follow-up: What might fasting be helping you notice about what you rely on or turn to for comfort?
- 3. If fasting isn’t about twisting God’s arm, but responding to what He’s already doing. What does that change for you?**
 - Follow-up: Can you think of a “significant moment” in your life right now where you need clarity, surrender, or renewed attentiveness?
- 4. Jesus warns against fasting as performance (Matthew 6:16–18). What are modern-day “performance fasting” temptations?**
 - Follow-up: What does a more authentic, private, God-focused posture look like in your context?
- 5. Acts 13 shows leaders fasting, worshiping, and then responding in obedience. What does this teach us about decision-making as disciples?**
 - Follow-up: Where might you be tempted to “rush ahead” instead of slowing down to listen?
- 6. If fasting is “making space for a supernatural God,” what would be a wise, small, and appropriate first step for you?**
 - Follow-up: What would you remove (food or another comfort/distraction), and what would you intentionally add in its place (prayer, Scripture, worship, silence)?

Tips for this Discussion

- **Normalise the range in the room:** fasting can feel intimidating, unfamiliar, or misused—make space for honest reactions.
- **Keep returning to motive and posture;** the “why” matters more than the “how long.”
- **Avoid comparison;** fasting is not spiritual currency, and different people will take different steps.
- If health or history makes food fasting unwise for someone, affirm alternative forms of “setting something aside” to seek God.
- **Hold hope at the centre:** the aim isn’t pressure or perfection, but creating space to meet with God and respond to Him.