

PRAYER & FASTING

Matthew 6:1-6 & Matthew 6:16-18

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What is the current state of your prayer life? What is good about it? What would you like to improve? How do you define the purpose of prayer?
- Based on your existing knowledge, describe the discipline of fasting. How does thinking about it makes you feel?

Prayer is a common practice among Christians of all backgrounds; whether actively engaged in the practice or not, the majority of Christians are familiar with it. In contrast, the practice of fasting is much less common and an individual's familiarity is likely dependent upon their background. Both of these practices can contribute to a disciplined spiritual life. Yet, whether common or not, individuals tend to have questions about the reality of what both prayer and fasting looks like in practice.

Reflection

Recall your earlier reflection on the current state of your prayer life and existing knowledge of fasting...

- Are there questions, concerns, or fears that keep you from incorporating the practice of fasting in your spiritual life?
- During the Groundwork conversation, Sue commented that sometimes people fast when they need to make an important decision. Are there any decisions or major events in your life that might benefit from the intentional time with God that fasting provides?
- If there were things you wanted to improve about your prayer life ask: What obstacles prevent me from maintaining a dedicated prayer life? Which obstacles are within my control and can be changed? What is one change I'm willing to incorporate this week to intentionally make space for prayer?
- How does modeling the practice of prayer for children, grandchildren, and believers new to faith look different than the public prayers described in Matthew 6:5?

Related Passages

- **Matthew 7:7-12**
Prayer
- **Matthew 26:36-46**
Prayer
- **Philippians 4:4-7**
Prayer

- **Luke 18:9-14**
Fasting
- **Acts 13:2-3**
Fasting
- **Luke 4:1-2**
Fasting
- **Isaiah 58:3-12**
Fasting

Conclusion

Consider this closing thought from Lauren Winner: *“Sure, sometimes it is great when, in prayer, we can express to God just what we feel; but better still when, in the act of praying, our feelings change.”*

Then through prayer and/or fasting, step into the sanctuary and be with the Lord. Listen to him. Share with him the reality of your spiritual life and any truths you discovered during reflection. Ask him to give you the resources to overcome any obstacles or fears you identified that interfere with your prayerful communion with him; or ask him to reveal to you unidentified fears or obstacles. Pray that God would align your will with his.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/prayer-fasting>

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