

Prayer & Fasting

Some years back a book was written with the intriguing title *How to Be a Christian without Being Religious*. The book made the important point that Christianity is, at its heart, about a relationship, not a religion. But, of course, Christians also are religious. You can't really be a Christian without being religious and all relationships need nurturing to thrive. Everyone has to live out what they believe somehow; so today on Groundwork we're discussing prayer and fasting, two ways we can nurture our relationship with God on which Jesus Christ himself provides us guidance.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- 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 make you feel?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Prayer & Fasting](#)

READ [Matthew 6:1-6](#), [Matthew 6:16-18](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

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 into 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 for further study

[Matthew 7:7-12](#), [Matthew 26:36-46](#), [Philippians 4:4-7](#), [Luke 18:9-14](#), [Acts 13:2-3](#), [Luke 4:1-2](#), [Isaiah 58:3-12](#)

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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