



Before the Throne Part 4: Why Do Christians Fast?

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER (Optional):

- What is the hungriest you have ever been?
- How do you typically respond when you are hungry? Why?

BREAKING THE ICE:

- Why do you think Jesus wants fasting to become one of the rhythms of our walk with God?

GO TO THE SOURCE: Matthew 9:14-15 (ESV)

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

FASTING: ABSTAINING OF A PHYSICAL GOOD FOR SOMETHING SPIRITUALLY GREAT

Read Matthew 9:14-17 and answer the following questions:

1. What caused the disciples of John the Baptist and the religious elite to approach Jesus concerning the fasting habits of His disciples? Why did Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?
2. What is fasting? How is fasting different in the Old Testament in contrast with Christian fasting?
3. What were the fasting habits of the Pharisees and the disciples of John?
4. Read Matthew 8:12; Matthew 9:15. How does Jesus' wedding illustration relate to Jesus' disciples not having to fast?
5. Review Matthew 9:16-17. What is Jesus trying to say with the wineskins illustration?

FASTING SHOULD BE A REGULAR PART OF YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

6. If in Matthew 9:15 Jesus is the bridegroom and He has been taken away, what does that tell us about fasting?
7. What is the connection between fasting and prayer?
8. In what circumstances do we see fasting illustrated throughout scripture?
(OPTIONAL QUESTION)
9. Given what we have reviewed today, should fasting be a regular part of our Christian life? If so, how can one get started?

MAKE IT COUNT

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

10. What is our natural tendency when we fast, and how is that different from the way Jesus tells us to fast?
11. How might you prepare your heart and mind so that you may have the right attitude before God and others when you fast?
12. What is standing in the way of your relationship with God? What is holding you back from living and loving like Jesus?

PRAYER

- Thank God for giving us tools like prayer, Bible study, and fasting, with which we can grow in our relationship with Him.
- Ask God to help you carefully consider your motives for engaging in spiritual disciplines.
- Pray that your group members would grow to treasure Christ supremely and God might use the discipline of fasting to deepen their affections for Christ.