Life Group Notes

Lord, teach us to pray

6. Prayer and Fasting

These notes are designed to be used in Life Groups alongside the Sunday teaching at Wavertree. You might want to begin the time by sharing what stood out from Jenny's talk on the 18th October.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God —this is your true and proper worship."

Rom 12:1

INTRO: 10 minutes

Do you have any funny stories around food and over eating?
Or any powerful stories of fasting and seeing breakthrough?

Jenny suggested that fasting is a way of engaging your whole being - body, mind, and spirit - in prayer. In particular she identified 3 benefits of fasting:

To offer ourselves fully to God
To engage in spiritual warfare
To develop deeper compassion

DISCUSSION: 15 - 20 minutes

- Have you ever encountered God in a deeper way through a physical practice (walking, kneeling, silence, serving, fasting, etc.)?
- Which of these three reasons is most appealing to you right now?
- Do you notice any resistance to the idea of fasting - can you explain what and why?
- What are the biggest distractions competing for your attention at the moment?
- Why do you think fasting often appears in moments of intense prayer in the Bible?
- How frequently do you engage with compassion issues? Do you think fasting would help deepen your engagement? Why or why not?

Fasting and prayer go together. Like two wings of a bird, together they take flight. You can pray without fasting, and you can fast without praying, but when you combine the two, there's a noticeable amplification of our prayer before God.
This comes as no surprise, since fasting is a kind of praying with our bodies. When the requests of our hearts are coupled with the yearnings of our bodies, our prayers are purified of their dross and presented like precious metal before the Father, for Him to do as He will.
John Mark Comer

The challenge of the mesage was not simply "Will you fast?" but "What are you willing to contend for in prayer?"

DISCUSSION: 10 minutes

- What concerns in our world, nation, community or families weigh most heavily on you?
- Do you think Christians today have lost something of the urgency seen in biblical intercession?
- What would it mean to pray with greater expectation and perseverance?

PERSONAL REFLECTION: 10 minutes

Spend some time writing down:

- One person you are praying will come to know Jesus.
- One situation where you need God's breakthrough.
- One area of society, the Church or the world that God has placed on your heart.

PRAYER : 15 minutes

Take some time right now to pray for the people or issues you identifed when reflecting

"Lord Jesus, awaken us where we have become comfortable or distracted. Teach us to seek You with our whole hearts, minds and bodies. Show us what You are calling us to contend for in prayer, and give us the courage to respond. Amen."

Practical activity for this week

The activity for this week is to find a time to fast. Remember choose a time, length and style of fast that works for you "Fast as you can, not as you can't".

As a group, consider:

- Could we set aside a day or meal this month to fast and pray together?
- What specific person, issue or situation will we commit to interceding for?
- How can we encourage one another in developing a sustainable rhythm of prayer and fasting?