

Week of Prayer and Fasting 2020

Debunking the Hyper-Spiritual -> Time to understand and prepare.

Fasting - setting aside a period of time for physical deprivation, for the purposes of seeking God, repenting of sin, and finding renewed clarity from the Holy Spirit.

- It moves us to understanding of our frailty.
- It helps us understand our glorious ruin.
- It nudges us to admit our weaknesses.
- It is a tangible practice of hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

The most basic rationale for fasting is to glorify God.

In Luke 2, Simeon takes Jesus in his arms and ponders the works and glory of God (vs. 28-32). In addition he blesses Mary and Joseph saying,

vs. 34 “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

All of this is observed by the prophetess, Anna. Anna was a widow who had spent approx. 68 years at the temple.

vs. 37-38 She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

It gives us perspective of the things that are out of control in our lives.

Psalm 69

vs. 1, Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.

vs. 10, When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.

Reproach - to find fault with.

Excuses to not prepare and participate

- Ignorance - biblically and practically
- Misconceptions and confusion - too legalistic, only for religious zealots, at the very least has to be for the super holy.
- We are soft, content, and fickle in our disciplines - the world constantly bombards us with the opportunity to satisfy every appetite. After all, you deserve it.

- We are busy - we are part of the hamster wheel, not knowing how we will ever have time to get off.

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

Question: How can our lives be organized in such a way as to participate in God's will the same way we participate in the purchasing, preparing, and consuming of food?

Caution: It is so easy to make this all about me. Don't allow hypocrisy and pride to slip into this holy season.

Colossians 2:16-17 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Practical Preparation

Slow and steady

Caffeine

Purpose - we have put that in front of you

Community - lean into one another

Don't be a fasting martyr - There are no rules!!

There are real medical reasons to not fast.

Fasting allows us to take the pains of hunger and focus them into the fight against sin, crying out for healing in our world, pleading for the salvation of others, and longing for Jesus' return.

Question: Will you humble yourself and become vulnerable with God, yourself, and the community of Second Mile?