

Brian Coles

Prayer and fasting

1.14.18

Good Morning! Please open your bibles to 1 Peter 2:5

We are going to be reading from this portion of scripture in just a moment.

We have an exciting week ahead of us as a church, it is a week that we have set aside as a church family for congregational prayer and fasting. It's a week that we are asking each one of you as individuals, as families to dedicate intentional and excessive time to seeking God in prayer. Our elders are calling for a fast. That you would not eat, or if not eating is not an option for you that you would give us a hobby, entertainment to create space for prayer. So why would we do that? Well I'll tell you that in just moment.

First, I need to take you back to that new years resolution vibe:

How many of you are still going strong on your resolutions? How many jumped ship on Jan 2nd, or crashed and burned right there on the 1st?

There is something about new beginning, fresh starts that causes use to evaluate: who we were, who we are and who we want to be, what we have done, what we are doing and what we are going to do, where we have been, where we are and where are we going.

There is something about a new seasons that causes us to examine our priorities, the things we have valued with our time, energy and resources.

And if we do that well, if we are introspective well, if we pray well, if we listen to the spirit of God well. He will deposit something in use that I have found is more valuable to me than anything else on the planet. Vision.

Vision: Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion

Vision determines direction, Vision confirms calling, Vision infuses identity, Vision translates into tasks

As an individual, when I have vision...

Who I am, where I'm going, what I'm called to and how to get it done

As a church, when we have vision...

Who we are, where we are going, what we are called to and how we will get it done

Many times the vision is the same, direction is the same, calling, identity and tasks are the same. We can't be afraid of things being the same. to stand our ground, stay the course, stay true and be unbending. (Paul)

Sometimes there are minor adjustments but not much movement on direction and calling. (David)

Sometimes God calls us to sweeping over hauls in our lives where he drastically moves us from what once was the right way to a new right way. (Moses, Joshua)

Individually and corporally we need to be open to all three of these options, remaining the same for the glory of God, making small adjustments for the glory of God or changing everything for the Glory of God either way we glorify God one is not better than the other. We do it because he has given us Vision.

So the question could be how do you get vision? I think 1 Peter gives us an incredible vision of our direction, our calling our identity and our task

1 Peter 2:5

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1) **God has called us to be spiritual people, who do spiritual things.**

1 Peter 2:5

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ

Living Stones being cut and positioned into spiritual house.

Holy Priesthood, your know ordained to carry out the purposes of God to do the things of God. Called into the ministry

Spiritual Sacrifices, we don't sacrifice animals in a temple any more so that we can be acceptable to God, but through our relationship with Jesus we are acceptable to God and so we offer sacrifices of a different kind. Spiritual ones. I'll list a few.

As we are going through this list, taking inventory, I want to ask you about a few things that Christians do.

Personal prayer and bible study is what Christians do to nurture their relationship with God. To stay connected to his word, to keep his voice familiar.

Why because we are spiritual people who do spiritual things

Tithes and offerings is what the Christian does to manage your finances in a way that honors God, invites his blessing, instructs us in stewardship and fuels the advancement of the Kingdom of God

Why because we are spiritual people who do spiritual things

Serving/ Volunteering is what the Christian does to use your gifting's, to find your purposes, to grow in your calling and talents as well as become rooted in our church community in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Why because we are spiritual people who do spiritual things

Small Groups, Men's and Women's groups, Bible Studies are what Christians do to grow in their faith, to find support in areas of weakness, and find a loving community that God wants you to care for and in some cases for them to care for you also.

Why because we are spiritual people who do spiritual things

Purity Why do I change the channel on my tv when something, lude or vulgar or violent or indecent come on

Why because we are spiritual people who do spiritual things

Speak Life Why is my speech void gossip, slander, complaining, lies

Why because we are spiritual people who do spiritual things

Why would we do these things.

1 Peter 2:5

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Spiritual people doing spiritual things

Are you a spiritual person this morning, do you do spiritual things? Are you being built up into this spiritual house offering spiritual sacrifices?

How do your priorities look?

Peter the writing of this letter knew what it meant to be built up, because we watch in scripture Peter's life crumbling apart. Through Jesus he is changed and transformed. He was once a fisherman and now he is an Apostle. Just a sinful man but now chosen, holy, for God's own possession for his purpose. Peter knew what it meant to be called out of darkness into his light.

And so we take inventory, we examine our priorities, we seek him and ask him to give us Vision.

I'm going to ask you to do something. We as a congregation are going to pray and fast this week. To ask him about our vision, our priorities, his agenda,

Please forgive me for my angle on this cause I know there are a lot of you who look forward to this week it's already on your calendar and your total into it.

I just wondering if there's anyone in the room like me that might take a little bit of motivation, reminding even convincing. Not that you disagree with the whole thing you just not going to participate.

Sometimes I need a little nudge, reminder, spurring to get me to move past the intellectual understanding to actually engaging in something. Tracy loves this about me. The trash need to be taken out, no I get it. IF I can struggle with something as trivial as the trash I'm wonder if there are any who might struggle with something so monumental as a week like this.

I want to spend the rest of our time together talking about Pray and Fasting and what this week may potentially look like for you. Then I'm going to ask you to do something.

2) Prayer in an invitation, to have a conversation with the creator of the universe.

Prayer is talking to God, alone, in my head or quietly, in a prayer language, or maybe out loud at a meal or in front of others. Sometimes Christian get together just to pray. Talking to God asking for things and expecting him to respond. Praying for wisdom and expecting wisdom, praying for freedom and expecting freedom, praying for provision and expecting provision, praying for healing and exception healing. Praying talking, seeking and expecting a response a reply.

there is a God who loves you, who hears you who cares for you and that God, that all powerful all knowing God is as accessible as your next breath of prayer.

David said it this way...

Psalm 40

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. ² He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him.

Some of you this is your testimony, I cry out to God and he heard me.

When you pray you are opening up the lines of communication with an actual resource, someone who actually knows the answer, who can actually fix the problem

You can go to a friend and ask for advice and they can do their best and they might be right or wrong. Or you can go to the one who created advice and ask him what you should do.

You can go to people you know and trust and ask for wisdom and they can do their best they might be right or wrong or you can pray to the God of all wisdom and see what he has to say

You can ask people what you should do with your future or a situation and hope they are right or you could ask the one who created you.

When you pray you are opening up the lines of communication with an actual resource, someone who actually knows the answer, who can actually fix the problem, who can provide vision

Lets look to Jesus teaching on prayer and as we do I want you to think about his coming week and what this might look like for you.

Matthew 6:6 ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:5-14

⁹“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

My personal translation

Dad, you are so much higher than me. Your perspective is so much greater than mine. I know in every way you are perfect. I'm asking you to be the ruler of my life. You are in charge. I want to walk in the plan that you have for my life. Please give me the things that I need today and forgive me for the things that I have done wrong. Help me to forgive the people who have wronged me. Keep me far away from the things that pull me away from my relationship with you.

Some of you may need a specific task to make this week easier I would ask you to set aside 20 minutes

- Your personal needs
- Members of your family/ Friends by name
- Church leadership
- Pray for the lost
- Ask for clear vision

Will you join us?

2 Chronicles 7:14

¹⁴if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

- 3) Fasting is an invitation to humbly position your-self to hear more clearly the voice of our Father.

Fasting is a recorded all throughout the scripture as a practice the people of God used regularly in various context.

Trouble

Fasting was done in times of trouble, when nations would raise up against Israel the people would fast and call out to the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

Repentance

Fasting was used in time of repentance, when the people were rebuked by a prophet or God himself their response would be to repent in sadness and they would fast as an expression of their remorse. (1 Samuel 7:3-6)

Assignment

The bible teaches that while they were praying and fasting the holy spirit spoke clearly about assigning Paul and Barnaba's to the ministry. (Act 13:2)

Spiritual Breakthrough

Jesus taught that there are certain spiritual breakthroughs can only be accomplished through prayer a fasting. (Mark 9:29)

It's not a hunger strike where we bend Gods arm into listening, its self-imposed discipline, self-imposed humbling, it's a reality check of our frailty, its mastering the flesh, boot camp for self control. After saying not to food for two or three days, there is no temptation that can break your mind.

We don't find a specific scripture commanding us to fast but we do see the disciples fasting in several places in scripture and Jesus gives instructions on how to fast on the sermon on the mountain.

Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting

¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Fasting generally revolves around food but not just food and not necessary elimination all the food from your diet.

Daniel fast: Daniel 1:12 Juice Fast Meat only fast

I Cor. 7:5 married couples would abstain from intimacy for a time to devote themselves to pray.

Media fast,

Pass over eat bitter herbs, festival of booths/ or tabernacles

4) **We fast because God honors fasting as an expression of our humility and sincerity**

I'm sure some of you have never fasted before. So I wanted to talk through what its like.

In preparation for this message I was fasting from Monday to Thursday, I had juice, water, coffee

I wanted to fast so I could remember what is was like, this is what I experienced.

Hungry, habit of eating, popping things in my mouth without thinking, interruption of family time.

Cold, headaches, lower energy, cloudy thinking, emotional,

The desire to eat reminds me of my desire to sin. Fasting can reveal other Gods in your life as you seek comfort you'll be draw to them. Angry, impatient, rude, mean, harsh, sarcastic you're not talking that way because you're hungry, you're talking that way because you're that way.

Bible talk as about fasting food the time that you used to eat you would set aside to pray 20 or 30 minutes for lunch, maybe as much as and hour for dinner. Devoted to prayer. Seeking God, through reading the bible worship.

The bible also talks about fasting in other ways

Can we do this? Noe seriously

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

We are Celebrating Gods work through us.

This week we have some ways you can engage EHOP (tues.), NIGHT OF WORSHIP(Fri), Soaking Prayer (sat)09-

Time of prayer and blessing