

Series: We are the Church - DNA of a Growing Church

Sermon #1 - A Growing Church is Committed to Prayer and Fasting

Text: Matthew 6:5-18

Context - In Matthew 6:5-18, part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he instructs his disciples on the proper heart attitude for the spiritual disciplines. He warns against performing prayer and fasting hypocritically for public praise, instead urging sincere, private devotion to God the Father who sees in secret and rewards authentically.

As you pray and fast...

I. _____ a time ("When you pray..." (vs. 6) "When you fast..." (vs. 16))

- A. Christians globally and throughout history have always placed prayer as a priority in the Christian disciplines. In the same context and language where Jesus expects our prayer, he also expects our fasting.
- B. "Jesus did not say 'if you fast,' but 'when you fast.' The assumption is that His followers will fast." (Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*)
- C. "Fasting without prayer is a body without a soul." (Thomas Watson from his book *The Doctrine of Repentance*)

II. _____ discreet (vs. 5-6, 16-17)

- A. "Christ does not condemn public prayer or fasting, but vainglory, when men desire to be thought holy rather than to be holy." (John Calvin, *Commentary on Matthew 6*)
- B. "We must not only pray and fast, but we must pray and fast with a single eye to God... otherwise we lose the comfort and the reward of it." (Matthew Henry *Commentary*)

III. _____ the proper reward (vs. 6, vs. 18)

- A. "That religion which is seen of men has its reward in full; but that which is hidden with God shall be revealed by God." (Charles Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*)
- B. "The favor of God is reward enough to those that seek Him, and those who aim at applause put themselves off with a poor recompense." (Matthew Henry *Commentary*)