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Talk About

Prayer

Philippians 4:6,7 - *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

1. Do you think prayer is an important part of our Christian faith? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think some people find prayer difficult to do?
3. What are some things that might help a Christ follower improve their prayer life?
4. How do you think your life would change if you prayed more?

Fasting

Matthew 4:4 - *“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

1. Fasting seems to be so out of touch with modern day living because it’s so counter cultural. In what ways is fasting counter American culture?
2. Do you think most Christians are familiar with and practice fasting? Why or why not?
3. What are the obstacles that hinder Christ followers from engaging in fasting?
4. How would your life be different if you engaged in biblical fasting occasionally?

PATHWAYS

“Prayer and Fasting”

Pathways review:

Pathways is a discipleship initiative that will help Christ followers do three things:

1. Assess where we are spiritually
2. Guide us in practicing spiritual disciplines that will help us to grow
3. Help us measure our progress

We believe “If we walk the Pathways, we’ll become the virtues.”

What does the Bible say about Prayer?

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” Matthew 6:5-8 (ESV)

1. Jesus expects us to pray.
2. Pray with a pure heart.
3. Keep it simple.

“Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Matthew 6:9-13 (ESV)

Prayer in Pathways

In Pathways, prayer is defined as “regularly talking with God and interceding for ourselves and others.”

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6,7 (NIV)

Four areas you can work on praying in Pathways:

1. Personal quiet time.
2. Praying for others.
3. Pray with your family.
4. Pray out loud.

What does the Bible say about Fasting?

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:16-18 (ESV)

1. Jesus expects us to fast.
2. Fast with a pure heart.
 - Moses fasted 40 days before receiving the 10 Commandments (Deuteronomy 9:9-18)
 - David fasted for his son with Bathsheba (after it was prophesied that the boy would die). (2 Samuel 12:15-20)
 - The Ninevites fasted in repentance at the prophecy of Jonah in Jonah 3.

Fasting in Pathways

In Pathways, fasting is defined as “sacrificing food (primarily) or common things (secondarily) to focus on God.”

“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

What does Fasting look like today?

1. Abstaining from food or some other common thing for a determined period of time.
2. Focusing on the increase of God, not the decrease in food (or other thing)
3. Resisting legalistic fasting.