

## MESSAGE NOTES: What Is Fasting?

SCRIPTURE  [Isaiah 58:3-12](#)

### BENEFITS & REWARDS OF FASTING

### PRACTICAL STEPS FOR FASTING

1. GROW INTO IT

2. PRAY & FAST

3. PARTNER WITH OTHERS

# Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Message: PRAY FIRST – Part 2 – What Is Fasting

Speaker: Shawn Vandop

Date: January 14, 2024




## Connect (30min)

\*For *Connect* and *Prayer*, you may want to break into two groups, or groups of 3-4 people to enhance participation.

### 1. MOVIE MUSTS

- a. What's the last movie that moved you, sticks with you, or is a must see for others?
- b. Would you rather be on screen (cast) or behind the scenes (crew) on your favorite movie set? Any specific role?
- c. If you could take one prop from any movie set, what would it be? (movie & prop)

### 2. WHOLE LIFE

- a.  Read [Mark 12:28-31](#). Using a scale of 1-10 (Poor-Excellent) how are you in the following areas this week?  
> Physical Health      > Mental Health      > Spiritual Health
- b. **4min Focus:** Take 2min to *Bless your Creator* with short prayers of thanksgiving for your mind, body, and spirit. Take another 2min to pray into any needs that were shared.

## Message Discussion (40min)

### 1. PRAY FIRST 2024 – 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting. January 8-28.

- a. Visit [www.mainstreetchurch.ca/prayfirst](http://www.mainstreetchurch.ca/prayfirst) for our prayer & fasting resources and sign up to receive our daily devotionals through the 21 days of *Pray First* (via email).
- b. Are you participating in *Pray First* this month? Do you have any questions or feedback at this point? Would anyone like to share from their experience with God through *Pray First* this past week?
- c. How can we encourage one another through the remaining days of *Pray First*?

### 2. FASTING FOCUS

- a. What do you think of when you hear the word *fasting*? Is your response positive or negative? Share why. How would you describe the difference between *fasting* and a *cleans*e?
- b. Have you ever *fasted* from something, and if so, how was your experience?
- c. Why do you think God includes *fasting* in the *spiritual disciplines* taught and modeled throughout the Bible? What might His purpose be in it and through it?  
Can you think of any famous fasts in the Bible, and their impact? *Something to research during Pray First!*
- d. Do you think *fasting* is essential to your spiritual growth? Explain.  
*Christian fasting is the act of intentionally abstaining from food or a regularly enjoyed good gift from God to focus on a period of spiritual growth or deepening our relationship with God. In the act of fasting, we humbly deny the flesh to focus on and glorify God, become more in tune with His Spirit, and go deeper in our prayer life. Fasting is much more than simply cutting something out for a period of time; it's a sacrifice of servant living for God and for others. It's to stretch us to enrich our dependence on the Lord by being in a weak state before Him.*  
– [Nadia Thomas](#)

### 3. RITUAL vs RELATIONSHIP ☐☐ Read [Isaiah 58:3-12](#)

- a. What jumps out at you from this passage of Scripture regarding *fasting*?  
What do you learn about God? What do you learn about people? What do you learn about *fasting*?
- b. How is *fasting* personal and public in its practice, power, and impact?
- c. Is there a part of you that resists the practice/discipline of *fasting*, or doesn't see value in it?
- d. What are some of the benefits & blessings of *fasting* according to verses [8-12](#)? For you and your community...

### 4. PRACTICAL FASTING

Shawn shared a few practical steps to consider when fasting.

**Which of the following would be helpful to apply in your life, and why?**

#### a. GROW INTO IT

- i. Start with baby steps. Don't fast from food for all 21 days. Have a progressive and practical plan.  
Instead, pick a meal a day and intentionally use that time to spend with God.  
*Keep it simple, keep it honest, keep it going.*
- ii. What are some obstacles or fears you have regarding fasting?

#### b. PRAY and FAST

- i. The spiritual discipline of fasting is useless without prayer. Fasting without praying leads to misery.  
Do you agree with this statement?
- ii. Prayer while fasting is what helps change the normal patterns of your day.  
How could fasting change the normalcy of your day? Discuss.

#### c. PARTNER WITH OTHERS

- i. Be accountable and encouraged in prayer and fasting with a family member or friend.
- ii. Commit as a group to join together with some or all of the PRAY FIRST events!  
➤ see [www.mainstreetchurch.ca/prayfirst](http://www.mainstreetchurch.ca/prayfirst) for a list of events.
- iii. Commit to participating in our **Prayer Summit** together as a group on **January 28<sup>th</sup>** to celebrate with the church what God has done during this time. 6pm-7:30pm.

## Prayer (20min)

**\*Break into groups of 3-4 people or men/women for sharing and prayer.**

As you close in prayer, ask God to inspire you with the type of fasting He wishes for you and how you can support or encourage your group members. Here are some helpful questions to help you diagnose and decide what fast you can do.

- o What things draw you away, distract you, or cause you to grow numb to Jesus?
- o What things become excuses for not participating in community or serving others?
- o What do you run to when you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired?
- o Where do you have time in your monthly or weekly routine to dedicate to fasting?
- o How can your life group keep you accountable to make space for this practice?

1. In response to Sundays' message and our discussion, how can we pray for you during this season of *Pray First*?
2. Who is one person in your life that you would like us to pray for, and one word or sentence that describes their need?

**>> Pray for one another!**