

21 Days of Fasting and Prayer!

“Starting the New Year Renewed”

Text: Matthew 6:5–18

Topics: Prayer, Fasting, Spiritual Disciplines

Big Idea of the Message: Jesus treats prayer and fasting as normal practices of discipleship.

Application Point: Practice fasting from something this week, intentionally filling the emptiness with the presence of God.

As we embrace 2022 how do we experience Renewal in such a way that we live out each day confident we are living on purpose for Him? - I believe it begins with daily becoming totally abandoned to Him!

God longs and desires to be the apple of our eye He desires to lead us guide us in direct us yet we must be willing to submit ourselves wholly and completely to him in every area of our lives.

If you follow Jesus, then you pray.

If you follow Jesus, then you will fast.

1. Jesus Treats Prayer as a Normal Practice for the Believer! (5-15)

First he states that prayer is an act of humility, not an act we should do to be seen by others (vv. 5–6).

Having a lot to say or being wordy isn't the point either (vv. 7–8), so Jesus gives us a model: the Lord's Prayer (6:9–13).

- **The pattern of praise, intercession, and request helps believers understand the nature and purpose of their personal prayers in their relationship with their Father.**

2. Jesus Treats Fasting as Normal Practice for the Believer! (16-18)

It seems difficult for us to think of this idea of fasting, yet as we look through history we see some of the greatest people of God were people who fasted and prayed unto the Lord.

Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, Anna, Paul, Jesus Christ, all practice the ancient tradition and spiritual discipline of fasting.

Fasting & other forms of the word are found 78 times in Scripture.

In order to be successful in fasting one must couple this discipline with the other disciplines especially that of praying.

(I) Fasting includes a Pursuit of the Heart to know God!

(II) Fasting Produces transformation in our lives!

(III) Fasting includes a Promise from God!

(IV) Fasting requires a Practical Plan!

Guidelines for fasting: (Shelley Merrill - fresh ideas for discipleship and nurture 66-67)

- a. Reach a personal conviction on the subject the right care for biblical study.

- e. Make sure you are medically able to fast before attempting it.
- f. Enter with a positive faith that God will reward those who fast with the right motives.
- g. Begin with short fasts and gradually move toward larger periods of time.
- h. Be prepared for some dizziness, headache, or nausea in the early going.
- i. Make sure prayer time with Scripture reading and singing or devotional reading.
- j. Keep checking your motives during the fast.
- k. Break a prolonged fast gradually with meals that are light and easy to digest.