

Fasting - 3.3.19

1. Why do we need to consider it?

- Though not so common to speak about there are so many examples throughout the bible from Moses to David to Daniel to Paul, and including Jesus himself
- Could provide spiritual breakthrough, personally and corporately
- Jesus indicated it should be on our radar - not if, but when = Matt 6:16, and Matt 9:15

2. What is fasting?

- Inextricably about empowering Prayer - fasting without prayer is just going without food.
- Prayer is the means by which God unleashes blessing and change in this age. He appears to have tied himself to prayer - we don't know why, though we might guess.
- While fasting usually means doing without food for a period, it could mean doing without other good things God has provided: TV, phone, sleep, speaking, social media, hobby, entertainment, something else?

3. Some Biblical illustrations

- 2 Chron 20: 3-4 - Jehosaphat enquires of the Lord facing difficult circumstances
- Ezra 8:21-23 - Ezra shows abiding faith with commitment, demonstrated by fasting
- Acts 13:2 Worship and fasting go together leading to clarity of understanding God's will and confirming the way ahead, as a preparation for effective action (see also Acts 14:23)

4. Practical stuff

- Do not fast if you are unwell or have a medical condition e.g. Diabetes, eating disorder - 'fast' in a non-food way
- Not an endurance test. Keep it sensible. Don't do it without plenty of Liquids - don't go beyond 3 days if not experienced in these matters and tell someone if you do. e.g. 40 days is a 'supernatural' fast only to be undertaken under His direct instruction. Do not put your God to the test by creating a challenge for him in keeping you alive!
- The enemy may use this time to make things more difficult for you. Limit your activity. Take time to rest. Don't give the devil a foothold at this time.
- Watch for the temptation to self-righteousness - keep quiet, don't boast, don't ask others what they're doing in this respect, don't judge. Matt 16:6-8
- Be patient - you may not 'feel' any different or the situation may not instantly change
- Be expectant - do believe something will happen, Father rewards faith - Hebrews 11:6.

5. Conclusion

- Make a decision today whether and how you will fast in respect of our day of prayer
- Consider fasting in some way, prior to the day and/or on the day. No more than 3 days
- Maybe use a day in the week prior to prepare yourself: open your heart, forgive others, put right anything the Holy Spirit brings to your attention.
- Plan for it, let relevant people know e.g. whoever prepares food of you or does shopping, those you may normally eat with.
- Use the prompting it gives and time it creates to actually pray and listen. Try something different: pray in tongues if you do; begin to if you don't; meditate on a scripture piece; picture people, situations, or vistas in your mind and listen to what the Spirit is saying.
- Write things down as you do these things and share them.
- Be expectant that our God who sees what is done in secret will reward those who are being aligned with his good, perfect and pleasing will.
- Then be prepared to do this again at another time and for another reason