

Remnant Life Church
July 7, 2012

Fasting: You Want Me To What?!?
Isaiah 58:6-10

- Tuning out certain Sunday messages
- How do we let someone know that we are really serious about something?
 - Tone or volume of our voice
 - The words that we use
 - Posture
 - Prolonged eye contact
 - Facial expression
- You can be very serious, intense, sincere, filled with conviction and yet still be very wrong
 - **“short-sightedness”**
- Is there a way that we can let God know how serious we are about something in our lives?

"Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." Andrew Murray (19th century South African scholar and preacher)

1. What is a fast and where do we find it in the Bible?
 - a. Fasting is a voluntary withdrawing from food and/or liquid for a specific period of time.
 - b. The first mention – Ex. 34:28 – Moses on Mt. Sinai
 - c. 27 times the Bible speaks of fasting in both the OT and NT
2. How long should a fast be?
 - a. A fast – when to begin and when to end is led by the Holy Spirit
 - b. Nowhere in the Bible are we commanded to fast but it is taught as a part of the Christian's life
 - i. *When you fast...* – **Matt 6:16**
 - ii. Jesus expected His disciples to fast
 - c. Fasts in the Bible give us guidelines
 - i. 40 day fast only 3 times
 1. *Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the*

tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 34:28

- a. Did it a second time on behalf of Israel and their sins before God – **Duet. 9:18**
 2. Elijah when he was running to Horab and hiding from Jezebel (**I Kings 19:8**)
 3. Jesus was in the desert for 40 days without food and water to be tempted before He began His ministry (**Matt. 4**)
 4. These fasts were supernatural in nature
 - ii. Common time periods are:
 1. One day –
 - a. The Israelites were warring among themselves (**Judges 20:26**)
 - b. David fasted at the news of Saul's death until evening – (**I Samuel 1:12**)
 2. Three days –
 - a. Paul fasted after his encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road. – (**Acts 9:9**)
 - b. Esther fasted before going to the king – (**Esther 4:16**)
 3. Fourteen days – Paul fasted while on a sinking ship at sea (**Acts 27:33**)
 4. Twenty one days – Daniel fasted after having received a vision from God – (**Daniel 10**)
3. Types of fasts
- a. Absolute fast
 - i. No fast should be without water for any length of time
 - ii. This should not be the first fast you attempt
 - b. Normal fast – no food only liquids throughout the length of time
 - c. Partial fast – also known as a Daniel fast
 - i. Daniel 1 they would only eat fruits and vegetables avoiding the rich food of the palace
 - ii. Elijah did this on a couple of occasions
 - iii. You may also fast a meal or certain meals for a period of time
4. Reasons for fasting
- a. Denying the physical (eating) to focus on the spiritual (prayer)
 - b. **Fasting without prayer is only a glorified weight-loss program**
 - c. **Isaiah 58:6-10**
 - i. *Loose the chains - v6*

1. Freedom from addictions – smoking, drinking, pornography, immorality, etc...
- ii. *Untie/Break the cords of the yoke – v6*
 1. Seeking God to solve an issue in your life
 2. Finances; relationship; job
 3. Releasing the yoke of stress; worry; anxiety...
- iii. *Set the oppressed free –v6*
 1. Salvation for a loved one or friend
 2. Spiritual condition of the lost
 3. Revival
- iv. *Intercede on the behalf of someone else and their need – v7*
 1. **Read** Minnesota account
- v. *Supernatural insight for decision-making – v8*
 1. God’s light will shine into our lives
 2. Impacts every area of our lives
- vi. *Supernatural healing (ourselves and others) – v8*
- vii. *Combatting satan and dealing with evil – v8*
 1. We need the power of God to be our “rear guard” for specific circumstances
 2. **Matt. 17:14-21 – READ**
 - o KJV states only by prayer and fastin

5. What fasting is not

- a. A tool to manipulate God – Isaiah 58:1-5
 - i. The children of Israel would often fast in order to appease God for their sins
 - ii. God rebukes them through the prophet that they are being hypocritical
 - iii. Fasting is about changing our circumstances and us, not trying to get God to change!
 1. Fasting purges the flesh
 2. Fasting with known sin in our lives is pointless.
- b. An attempt to impress others
 - i. This brings the focus on yourself – pride
 - ii. *When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. - Matt. 6:16*
 - iii. Jesus goes on to say that no one should know you are fasting by the way you look or act
- c. Legalistic bondage born out of obligation rather than sacrifice
 - i. It is not a command but a choice

- ii. *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. - Gal. 5:1*
 - iii. Not only are we not commanded but we must not think less of others who do not
- 6. None of this has any meaning if not done with prayer
 - a. The time you would spend eating spend it in prayer
 - b. If you are in a partial fast then designate extended times of prayer during your season of fasting
 - c. All of the biblical examples of fasting were accompanied by prayer
 - d. Fasting creates the environment for change to come, prayer ignites the fire that will radically change your life
 - e. Is my heart ready to make that commitment?

How serious are you prepared to get in seeking God for answers, change, and victory in your life?

Call to RLC

- *Time of fasting and prayer*
- *Wednesday – July 10*
 - *Determine the best type of fast*
 - *Certain things you normally eat or drink that you will give up*
 - *Meal or meals*
 - *Day*
- *Why fast?*
 - *Something you know needs to change in your life*
 - *For a situation or someone that God lays on your heart*
 - *Direction for this church*
 - *New home – where and when*
 - *Those who God will be leading to come in the future*
 - *Wisdom for the leadership*
- *Watch and see what God will do!*