

## “A Call To Corporate Fasting”

Sunday, January 22, 2017

Dr Janet Cook, Senior Pastor

© 2017 Prayers Ministries, Inc., dba River of Life Community Church

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures are from the NKJV Bible.

Fasting is abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.

### **Four Reasons for Fasting**

1. Jesus fasted. He is the pattern.

Luke 4:1-2 “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.”

Luke 4:14-15 “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”

- Jesus had to deal with the devil before He could go forth into His ministry.

John 14:12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

- To do the works that Jesus did, we must start where He started.

2. Jesus expected His disciples to fast.

Matthew 6:16 “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

- Fasting is on a level with giving and praying—“when” not “if”

Mark 2:18-20 “The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, ‘Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?’

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.’”

- Fasting is a mark of true disciples until the Bridegroom’s return.

3. The early church fasted (particularly in making decisions about leadership).

Acts 13:1-4a “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit...”

- For sending out apostles

Acts 14:23 “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

- For ordaining elders

4. God’s people have fasted from Moses onward.

Leviticus 16:29-30 “This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls,

and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

- An essential part of the Day of Atonement

Acts 27:9 “Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because **the Fast** was already over, Paul advised them...”

- Identified in the New Testament as “The Fast”

We generally learn the benefit of what God requires us to do by doing it.

### **Four Things That Fasting Does**

1. Fasting is a way to humble ourselves.

Example of David: “But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I afflicted my soul with fasting; And my prayer returned into mine own bosom” Psalm 35:13 (ASV).

Example of Ezra: Ezra 8:21-23 “Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, ‘The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him.’ So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.”

- Natural vs supernatural: key to supernatural is afflicting our souls through fasting
- Fasting is the appointed way to suppress the rebellious, self-assertive “ego” (biblical “soul”).

## 2. Fasting purifies our faith.

Esther 4:15 “Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: ‘Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!’”

- When theology and emotion are used up, all we have left is faith.

## 3. Fasting brings insight into the spiritual realm.

2 Corinthians 4:14-18 Temporal vs. eternal: “...knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

- Practice fasting with right motives.

2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

## 4. Fasting makes a way for the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

- It takes the Holy Spirit to make our prayers effective.

Galatians 5:17 “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”

- The “spirit” and the “flesh” are in opposition to each other.

It is important to invite/invoke the Holy Spirit.

Fasting helps us to depend on the Holy Spirit.

2 Chronicles 7:14 “if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

God asks His people to:

- Humble themselves (fasting)
- Pray
- Seek God’s face
- Turn from wicked ways

On this basis, God will:

- Hear from heaven
- Forgive their sin
- Heal their land

© 1982 — Derek Prince Ministries–International