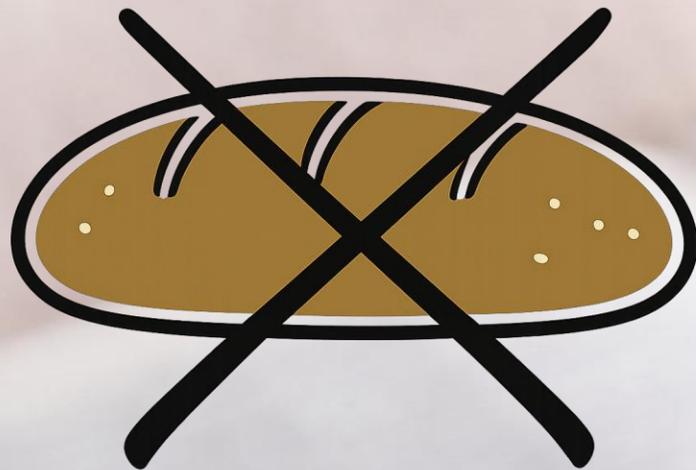


*Called to  
Pray + Fast*



**Matthew 6:16-18**



# Called to Pray + Fast

1. What fasting is.
2. Why God's people fast.
3. How we should approach fasting now.

# What is fasting?

- Voluntarily abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.
- It's not about seeking to earn God's favour but creating space to seek Him with a greater focus.

# Fasting examples in the Bible.

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- Many chose to fast at other times.
- God's people have fasted in every generation.
- Fasting was practiced both alone & together.

# Why God's people fast?

1. To seek God more earnestly in prayer & guidance.

(cf. Ezr 8:23; Neh 1:4; Dan 9:3; Judges 20:26-28; Ac 13:2-3; Ac 14:23)

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Fasting can help us to focus and pay attention to God!

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*There is a biblical precedent for both prayer & fasting as we seek God's wisdom and direction. (cf. Jam 1:5-6; Ac 13:2-3; 14:23)*

# Why God's people fast?

1. To seek God more earnestly in prayer & guidance.
2. To humble themselves before God in grief, repentance, and dependence.

(cf. 1 Sam 7:6; 31:11–13; 2 Sam 1:11–12; 2 Sam 12:16–23; Joel 2:12; Jonah 3:5–8; 1 Kings 21:27–29; Ps 35:13)

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When practiced with the right heart, fasting becomes a physical expression of humility, dependence, and surrender before God.

# Why God's people fast?

1. To seek God more earnestly in prayer & guidance.
2. To humble themselves before God in grief, repentance, and dependence.
3. To seek God's help in times of crisis, temptation, or concern

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Fasting can be one way of saying, *"Lord, I need Your strength, Your help, and Your mercy."*

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4. To worship God and align their hearts with His heart

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Fasting can be a way of worshiping & serving God as it aligns our hearts with His.

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Q: Why don't we fast?



# Q: Why don't we fast?

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- Fasting helps to expose the things that quietly become ultimate in our hearts.



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- Fasting reminds us that while we have a God given appetite for food, we should have an even greater appetite for God.



# Q: Why don't we fast?

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2. We misunderstand the purpose of fasting.



## Q: Why don't we fast?

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- Fasting helps to train our hearts to choose God over our own comfort.



## Q: Why don't we fast?

1. We really like food.
2. We misunderstand the purpose of fasting.

- Fasting helps to break the grip of comfort and convenience upon my life.



# Q: Why don't we fast?

1. We really like food.
2. We misunderstand the purpose of fasting.
3. We are not commanded to fast.



# Q: Why don't we fast?

1. We really like food.
  2. We misunderstand the purpose of fasting.
  3. We are not commanded to fast.
- Yet even so, fasting is still the choice of many Christians today.



**How should we approach fasting now?**

# How should we approach fasting now?

## Matthew 6:16-18 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

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- Don't be like the hypocrites (v16) who fast to be seen by others.
- It's not about the practice (how we do it) but about the pursuit (why we do it).
- **Are we seeking the praise of others or to grow in our relationship with God?**

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<sup>17</sup> But **when you fast**, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

# How should we approach fasting now?

## Matthew 9:14-15 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” <sup>15</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? **The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

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# How should we approach fasting now?

- It's not about the practice (**how we do it**)
- It's about the pursuit (**why we do it**).