

Fasting

SIMPLY SAID

The practice of fasting is the act of abstaining from food to connect our bodies with our pursuit of God.

WHY DO WE ABSTAIN FROM FOOD TO CONNECT WITH GOD?

This bold claim summarizes our culture's theme: “nobody tells me what to do.” It matches our cultural identity of independence from everyone and everything. Dependence and control under someone or something are seen as weakness. However, Jesus communicates the opposite message of this. “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Jesus is not only our teacher and savior, but he is also our king and provider. Fasting is the physical confession of our need for, our dependence on, and our submission to Christ. As we fast, we seek:

Presence - Fasting connects our bodies with our beliefs. As we abstain from food, we offer our whole selves to God and seek more awareness of his presence.

Purity - “Their end is destruction, their god is their *belly*, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things” (Philippians 3:19). The practice of fasting guides us to be led less by the desires of our flesh and more by the desires of the Spirit.

Power - Fasting is a physical confession that we are dependent on the power, presence, love, control, etc. of God. We run to God with our prayers while fasting as a physical display that we trust in his power and provision over our own.

Perspective - As we await the return of Jesus, we live in a world still corrupt with sin, injustice, and poverty. When we fast, we physically stand with those who are in need and are led to act out justice.

WHAT FASTING TEACHES US ABOUT OUR BODY?

We are not just persons who have bodies; we are bodies. We can imagine that our body is just a shell of who we actually are; however, we have been and always will be embodied beings created by God. Much of our Christian spirituality focuses on the mind. We need practices that take the content of our beliefs and incorporate our whole selves. Fasting, through our stomach, teaches us how to worship God with our whole body. This leads us to the reminder that Jesus calls us to follow him with our entire lives.

HOW DO WE EMBRACE THIS PRACTICE?

Fast from Food - When we abstain from food our hunger reminds us of our need. We set times to abstain intentionally to lead us to prayer, awareness, and dependence. You can go to our *fasting packet* for more information.

Fast from Media - Our media devices and platforms create an abundance of distraction. The amount of time they demand take us away from sitting in the presence of God. These devices also make us feel “like God” by giving us a false sense of omnipotence (*all in control*), omnipresence (*all present in all places*), and omniscience (*all knowing*). We abstain from these devices as a confession of need and an act of setting our attention on God.

A REMINDER

Fasting does not earn more favor from God. We are saved by grace, sustained by grace, and sanctified by grace. We cannot earn more favor from God. God blesses fasting, not because we earn from him, but because we rely and depend on him.