

THE FAST

The Fast
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USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

[Jeremiah 29:13, NIV]

You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

[Isaiah 55:6-7, ESV]

⁶ Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD..."

[Joel 2:12, NIV]

"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart with fasting.."

[Matthew 6:2, 6, & 16, NIV]

²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ¹⁶ “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.

[Matthew 9:14-15, NIV]

¹⁴ One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?” ¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

[Galatians 5:17, NIV]

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

[Romans 8:5-7, NLT]

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will.

[Romans 8:12-13, NLT]

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your flesh (sinful nature) urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of your flesh, you will live.

Key Point:

1. Biblical fasting brings spiritual breakthrough

[Isaiah 58:6, NKJV]

This is the kind of fast I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And to break every yoke.”

[Matthew 17:20-21, NKJV]

²⁰ So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹ However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Key Point:

2. Biblical fasting brings direction and strategy for your future

[Ezra 8:21, ESV]

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek Him for the right way for us and our little ones to go.

[Acts 13:2, NLT]

One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.”

[2 Chronicles 20:3-9, NLT]

³ Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. ⁴ So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD’s help. ⁵ Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. ⁶ He prayed, “O LORD, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you! ⁷ O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? ⁸ Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name. ⁹ They said, ‘If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.’

Fasting is what you do when you don’t know what to do! No one who waits on God will be disappointed.

Key Points:

1. Biblical fasting brings spiritual breakthrough
2. Biblical fasting brings direction and strategy for your future

Applications for the Week:

1. One of the ways to position yourself to hear God's voice this New Year is by joining Pursuit month to fast and pray. Visit www.tfh.org and click "Learn More" on Fasting and Prayer.
2. Write down what you are believing God to do during this fast and pray over your list every day.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you typically start off the New Year? Are there any New Year's Resolutions out there?
2. What does it mean to move toward God's direction?
3. Where do people often seek, and hope to find, God? In your sphere of influence, how is that working out for them?
4. How do you understand the statement: "There is a fast for everyone"?
5. What results come from fasting? What are the spiritual benefits? Why is it important?
6. In what areas, are you asking for direction or strategy from God in this season for you or your family?
7. What are you believing God for during this fast? Who is standing with you in prayer?

Group Action:

1. Take time to pray for one another for what you are believing for during Pursuit month.