

## Prayer & Fasting Series

### Fasting As Relationship With God

We believe that prayer is all about a personal relationship with God.

We have stated that prayer is simply talking to God because of Jesus sacrifice through the Holy Spirit.

Consider this: It is next to impossible to have a strong, growing relationship without proper/good communication. Typically, the better the communication the better the relationship. A soured relationship is typically founded in negative or poor communication. Learning, growing, and changing

Conversations with the God family. We are encouraging you to learn to have deep, heartfelt conversations with Father God.

Last Sunday we discussed ways to communicate with God. We have some handouts if you would like one and they are back near the offering buckets on the wine barrels.

### Prayer: 6 Basic Types and the Differences Between Them

Type of Prayer	Focus	Purpose
Adoration	Expressing love and worship	Praising the qualities and nature of a God without specific requests.
Petition	Requesting needs or guidance	Seeking personal or collective assistance, intervention, or provision from God.
Intercession	Praying for others	Seeking divine blessings, protection, or intervention for the well-being of other individuals.
Thanksgiving	Expressing gratitude	Acknowledging and giving thanks for blessings, answered prayers, or the general goodness in life.
Confession	Acknowledging shortcomings	Seeking forgiveness, guidance, and spiritual cleansing.
Lament	Expressing grief or sorrow	Seeking comfort, solace, and understanding during difficult times.

This is our first Sunday to dive into fasting together so there are some things that we want to mention to help us as we move forward.

**Fasting is not commanded in the scriptures but rather assumed.**

Part of this is due to the Jewish culture. Fasting was well established as a practice within Judaism by the time of Jesus.

Luke 18:12 the Pharisee stated that he fasted twice a week.

For more information see Jewish Virtual Library or Jewish Encyclopedia “Fasting & Fast Days”

**Fasting can be done for many different reasons apart from Christianity.**

**Fasting was a natural part of the life of Christ as well as the early church.** We will be discussing the importance of Biblical fasting in the weeks to come.

**From a Biblical perspective there is a difference between fasting and abstinence.**

By definition, fasting is the act of refraining from eating and sometimes drinking.

By definition, abstinence is not doing or having something that is wanted or enjoyable.

Both fasting and abstinence require self-discipline and self-control to participate.

In our discussion, fasting will refer to primarily food and eating while abstaining can apply to things like social media, certain channels, certain cravings like coffee or ice cream as well as other wanted things that have too much influence.

Matthew 4:1-2 NLT

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. <sup>2</sup> For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.*

Matthew 6:5-6 & 16-18 NLT

<sup>5</sup> *“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

<sup>16</sup> *“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. <sup>18</sup> Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

We have studied the sermon on the mount together.

We have studied Romans 12 together.

We have studied John 14-17 together.

We have studied the first half of the book of Acts together.

All of these intertwine together and help reinforce the focus that we have been presenting which is the difference between human religion (system) versus faith relationship (personal).

I will confess that my heart and mind have been illuminated the past several months as we have pressed in together to understand the depths of God's love and His desire for us to know Him personally.

**Concepts like forgiveness, love, mercy, faith, redemption, grace, and rescue are not just Biblical concepts or theology but they become personal experiences through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Son of God. As we believe and follow Jesus, we have the privilege of having God's Holy Spirit live in us to help us learn the way of truth that creates genuine freedom of spirit, soul, and mind.**

**Prayer is all about personal relationship with God.**

**Fasting is an extension of that growing, passionate desire for closer relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

We are daily learning to love God and love others. That is why we constantly say that we are learning, growing, and changing through the process of "baby steps".

Talking to God from your honest self (conversation with Him) is central to this process of love exchange. It should not be viewed as an obligation but rather an opportunity to engage with the Creator of the Universe.

Fasting becomes an intensifying or amplifying experience to help us focus more keenly on Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is another step to experiencing the depths of God's love and desire for our lives with them.

In Warren Wiersbe's book "Abide", he discusses three levels of obedience.

We obey God because "we have to". (fear)

We obey "out of selfishness". (in order to get something from Him)

We obey "for love". (we want to)

**Love is where we begin to focus on "the Giver" not "the Gift".**

Read portion of page 56 & 57 from Abide, Understanding the secrets of living for Jesus.

This understanding of God's love for us in relationship must be foundational as we seek to understand the power of fasting together.

We believe that prayer and fasting are all about a personal relationship with God.  
Love should be one of the supreme motivating factors of our learning to talk to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to learn the depths of that love.  
Love should be one of the supreme motivating factors of our learning to deny oneself to seek our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to learn the depths of that love.

I hope this creates clarity regarding our motivation for fasting and that it can be a natural extension of our developing prayer life.

**Even opportunities and privileges take self-control and self-discipline in order to have a sustained experience over a prolonged period of time.**

*"Self-denial in the pursuit of purpose generates true pleasure while self-indulgence in the pursuit of pleasure generates true misery."* Orrin Woodward

We have asked you before and I ask you again today.....are you pursuing God like you are desperately dependent on Him for your existence?

Are you choosing to live in relational dependence?  
Are you desperate for a growing closeness?

**I confess to you that I am and our church family is absolutely, unequivocally desperately dependent on Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to lead and provide for His body, His flock, His church.**

Most of us are desperately dependent on something or someone.

**Trust Jesus today and learn to depend on His love and leadership for today and eternity.**

Will you join us on the path of apprenticeship with Yeshua?