

Goldstone Church

Small Group Questions

Matthew 6:16-18

For Starting

- What would you do if your wildest dreams came true?
- Share about the last time to first tasted some new food.
- What is your first reaction to the thought of fasting? e.g. Urgh, Hmmm, Wow!, OK, Freedom, You must be joking!
- What word or phrase stands out when you read this passage?

For Reviewing

- What does Jesus say Christians should *not* do when they fast (v.16)? Who, if any, are excluded from fasting?
- What specific activities does Jesus highlight we should do when we fast (v.17)? Why would Jesus give this instruction?
- When fasting is done well, who should be the only person who sees what is happening (v.18)?
How does this compare with praying (see Matthew 6:6), and giving (see Matthew 6:3)?

For Discussion

- How does Christian fasting differ from a hunger strike and health fasting?
- For a Christian, what is the primary purpose of fasting?
- Is fasting only a cultural expression of Christian faith, or does it apply to all cultures for all times? Why?
- "*Fasting is a private matter between the individual and God*". Do you agree/disagree? Why or why not?
How does this impact our personal and corporate praying today?
- Does fasting from social media have the same spiritual impact as fasting from food?
- How can fasting have a negative effect on our spiritual lives?
How can we overcome these challenges?
- What is Jesus' teaching about fasting saying to us personally?
- You could end by reading together Matthew 6:17-18.

Matthew 6:16-18 (NIVUK)

Fasting

¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18 (The Message)

“When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don’t make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won’t make you a saint. If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn’t require attention-getting devices. He won’t overlook what you are doing; he’ll reward you well.

Matthew 6:16-18 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁶ “And whenever you are fasting, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they put on a sad and dismal face [like actors, discoloring their faces with ashes or dirt] so that their fasting may be seen by men. I assure you and most solemnly say to you, they [already] have their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head [as you normally would to groom your hair] and wash your face ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by people, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees [what is done] in secret will reward you.