



Small Group Notes

Text:

Matthew 6:16-18

Title:

Abiding through fasting

Further scriptures:

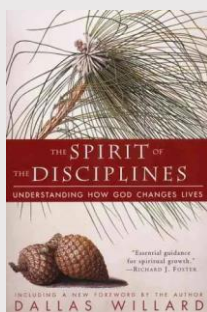
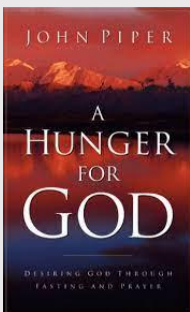
Matthew 10:14-17

Luke 4:1-13

Isaiah 58

Daniel 10:2-3

Esther 4:16



Last Sunday we looked at the practice of fasting in learning to abide. We looked at what fasting is and how putting limits on our bodies can help us to grow spiritually.

Reflect

1. What most impacted you from the passage or from the preach?
2. What do you understand to be the purpose of fasting? What do you make of what Jesus says about fasting in Matthew 6:16-18?
3. What has your experience been of fasting? What are the benefits of fasting? If you have never done it, why do you think this is?
4. Spend some time looking at Isaiah 58. What does this passage tell us about the fasting that God desires?

Respond

1. How do you feel about adopting fasting as a regular spiritual discipline? Does it feel realistic or reachable? If not, why not?
2. 'Fasting teaches our bodies to not always get what it desires.' What does this mean and why is it important?
3. 'Fasting reveals the things that control us.' How do you think fasting does that? What is an area of your life that you would love to get more freedom in?

Practice

1. Share your experiences of fasting this week. How did you find it? What was hard? What was a blessing? Has doing it changed your attitude to it at all?
2. If you haven't fasted at all yet this week, decide on a type of fast you think is appropriate for your stage of discipleship, and commit to doing it.
3. Spend some time praying through Psalm 23 as per the Practice Sheet. Take 5-10 mins on each verse, praying in response and listening to the Holy Spirit.

Further reading

Here a few great books if you want to dig a little deeper:

A hunger for God, *Desiring God through fasting and prayer, John Piper*

The spirit of the disciplines, *Dallas Willard*

Fasting: The Ancient Practices, *Scot McKnight*