

Brandon Phillips / General

The King and His Glory / Fasting; Worship / Matthew 6:16–18

In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus gives three exhortations regarding fasting.

Pre-sermon Comments

At Grace Bible Church, we exist to:

- **Exalt God in everything we do!**

[2 Corinthians 5:9](#) (LSB) ⁹ Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

- **We exalt Him by expositing His Word!**

[2 Timothy 4:1–2](#) (LSB) ¹ I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and teaching.

- **We exalt Him by equipping the saints!**

[Colossians 1:28](#) (LSB) ²⁸ Him we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

- **We exalt Him by evangelizing the lost!**

[Matthew 28:19–20](#) (LSB) ¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Discussion Questions

Pastor Brandon mentions that Grace Bible Church strives to "exalt God in everything" we do. What does it mean for us, as individuals and a church community, to exalt God in every aspect of our lives?

Read [2 Corinthians 5:9](#). How does this verse guide our ambitions and priorities in life?

How can we practically pursue a life that is "pleasing to Him" both in private and within our church?

Grace Bible Church focuses on expository preaching, going verse-by-verse through Scripture. Why do you think this method is emphasized over other preaching styles?

Read [2 Timothy 4:1-2](#). What responsibilities does this passage place on those who teach God's Word?

What are the benefits and challenges of sitting under verse-by-verse expository preaching? How has this type of teaching impacted your spiritual growth?

[Colossians 1:28](#) highlights the importance of equipping believers for maturity in Christ. What does it look like to be "complete in Christ" in our day-to-day walk?

How is the church instrumental in equipping believers to reach this level of maturity?

The church exists to proclaim the gospel to the lost, with the hope that others may come to saving faith in Christ. In what ways can we actively engage in evangelism, both as individuals and as a church?

Pastor Brandon shared a personal story about deciding to attend church regularly. How has church attendance (or lack of it) impacted your spiritual life and growth? How can we cultivate a deeper commitment to gathering with God's people?

In a world with "no perfect churches," what are practical ways we can focus on glorifying God rather than seeking perfection in a church setting? How can we better serve and support our local church, despite its imperfections?

Introduction to our Text

Discussion Questions

What are your current thoughts on the practice of fasting? Is it something you feel is emphasized or neglected in the modern church?

In the story, how did William Tennent Jr.'s unexpected sermon impact the congregation, and what does this reveal about the importance of the heart's intention in fasting and prayer?

Pastor Brandon mentions that fasting may be one of the most misunderstood practices in the church. Why do you think fasting has become less emphasized in some Christian traditions?

Tennent warned against participating in fasting just to follow "customary practice" or please church leaders. How can we evaluate our own motives when engaging in spiritual disciplines like fasting or prayer?

In what ways can we ensure that our spiritual practices are done with genuine humility and sincerity before God?

Sermon Text

[Matthew 6:14-18](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. ¹⁶ “Now whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ¹⁷ “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Context and Review

[Matthew 5:3](#) (LSB) ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[Matthew 5:11–12](#) (LSB) ¹¹ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

[Matthew 5:13–14](#) (LSB) ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

[Matthew 5:20](#) (LSB) ²⁰ “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Section Outline

In [Matthew 6:1](#), Jesus introduces three illustrative warnings depicting the grave danger of self-aggrandizing righteousness (or religiosity).

He warns all His disciples (including us) to beware of:

- Self-Centered Donations ([Matt 6:2-4](#)) [past sermon]
- Self-Centered Devotions ([Matt 6:5-15](#)) [past sermon]
- **Self-Centered Deprivation ([Matt 6:16-18](#)) [Today’s Sermon]**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: If we analyse the religious life of a man we find that it can be divided into three sections and three sections only: the way I do my almsgiving, the nature of my prayer life and contact with God, and the way in which I should mortify the flesh.

Discussion Questions

Why is it important to recognize that no self-centered righteousness can meet God's perfect standard? How does this understanding lead us to rely on Christ's righteousness instead of our own?

Jesus warns against self-centered donations, devotions, and deprivation ([Matt 6:1-18](#)). How can we guard ourselves from engaging in these acts for self-promotion rather than worship of God?

What is the connection between your giving, praying, and fasting and the object of your worship? How do these elements of your spiritual life reveal what or who you truly worship?

Jesus reiterates the importance of forgiving others

[Matthew 6:14-15](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

[Matthew 6:12](#) (LSB) ¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

[Hebrews 12:14-15](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord, ¹⁵ seeing to it that no one falls short of the grace of God; that no ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSES TROUBLE, and by it many be defiled;

Discussion Questions

According to [Matthew 6:14-15](#), why is it essential for believers to forgive others?

Pastor Brandon mentions that withholding forgiveness impedes our relationship with God. How have you seen this play out in your own life or in the lives of others?

Pastor Brandon states that forgiving others "triggers" the Lord's forgiveness of us, but this isn't about salvation. What does he mean by this, and how does it relate to our day-to-day relationship with God?

How does refusing to forgive affect our peace and walk with God, according to [Hebrews 12:14-15](#)?

What does Pastor Brandon mean when he asks if a lack of peace could be due to not forgiving others? Can you relate to this in your own life?

How do unforgiveness and bitterness affect not only your spiritual life but also your relationships with others?

"Church hurt" is a term Pastor Brandon mentions as a common experience. How does this sermon help reframe the way we deal with offenses within the church?

How can forgiving those who have hurt us within the church foster unity and peace among believers?

Proposition and Outline

In [Matthew 6:16-18](#), Jesus gives three exhortations regarding fasting. You are/are not to fast -

- When **PROMPTED** by the Holy Spirit ([Matt 6:16a](#))
- By **PUTTING** up a false front ([Matt 6:16b](#))
- By **PLACING** your trust in the Father who sees you ([Matt 6:17-18](#))

[Matthew 6:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “Now whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

What is fasting?

Fasting is simply the deprivation of food for an extended period of time.

Fasting for health

[Hebrews 4:12](#) (LSB) ¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of

both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

[1 Thessalonians 5:23](#) (LSB) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We distinguish them because they are different, but we must not separate them because of their inter-relationship and interaction. There can be no question whatever but that physical bodily states and conditions do have a bearing upon the activity of the mind and of the spirit, so that the element of fasting must be considered in this peculiar relationship of body, mind and spirit. ~ John MacArthur

There is no doubt whatsoever that fasting, purely on the physical and bodily level, is something which is good for one's physical frame as long as it is done properly; and there is no doubt that clarity of mind and brain and understanding does result from it. But we must always be very careful that we do not attribute to the spiritual what can be adequately explained by the physical. ~Martyn Lloyd-Jones

We do harm to the cause of Christ if we claim as miraculous something which can be easily explained on a natural level. The same danger is present in this question of fasting—a confusion between the physical and the spiritual. ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Where the proper use of fasting is not well understood, it easily degenerates into superstition.” ~ John Calvin

The biblical purpose of fasting

Voluntary abstinence from food, as a religious mortification or humiliation; either total or partial abstinence from customary food, with a view to mortify the appetites, or to express grief and affliction on account of some calamity, or to deprecate an expected evil. ~ Webster 1828 Dictionary

The Biblical basis for fasting

OT Examples of Fasting

[Deuteronomy 9:9](#) (LSB) ⁹ “When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which Yahweh had cut with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water.

[1 Samuel 7:5–6](#) (LSB) ⁵ Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to Yahweh for you.” ⁶ And they gathered to Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh and fasted on that day and said there, “We have sinned against Yahweh.” And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah.

[1 Samuel 1:7](#) (LSB) ⁷ And so it would happen year after year, as often as she went up to the house of Yahweh, she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat.

[2 Samuel 12:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ David therefore sought God about the boy; and David fasted and went and spent the night lying on the ground.

[1 Kings 19:8](#) (LSB) ⁸ So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

[Ezra 8:21–23](#) (LSB) ²¹ Then I called for a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a direct journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions. ²² For I was ashamed to ask from the king for a military force and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, “The hand of our God is upon all those who seek Him, for *their* good, but His strength and His anger are against all those who forsake Him.” ²³ So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He was moved by our entreaty.

[Nehemiah 1:3–4](#) (LSB) ³ They said to me, “The remnant there in the province who remain from the captivity are in great calamity and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire.” ⁴ Now it happened that when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

[Daniel 1:8-14](#) (LSB) ⁸ But Daniel set in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. ⁹ Now God granted Daniel lovingkindness and compassion before the commander of the officials, ¹⁰ and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." ¹¹ But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ "Then let our appearance be observed before you and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see." ¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

[Daniel 9:2-3](#) (LSB) ² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, discerned in the books the number of the years *concerning* which the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet for the fulfillment of the laying waste of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years. ³ So I gave my face to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

[Leviticus 16:29](#) (LSB) ²⁹ "And *this* shall be a perpetual statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native or the sojourner who sojourns among you;

[Leviticus 23:27](#) (LSB) ²⁷ "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and bring an offering by fire near to Yahweh.

NT Examples of Fasting

[Luke 2:36-38](#) (LSB) ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years having lived with *her* husband seven years from *when she was* a virgin, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the

age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ And at that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

[Luke 7:33](#) (LSB) ³³ “For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’

[Matthew 4:1-2](#) (LSB) ¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

[2 Corinthians 6:5](#) (LSB) ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in disturbances, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

[2 Corinthians 6:5](#) (NKJV) ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

[Acts 13:1-3](#) (LSB) ¹ Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

[Acts 14:21-23](#) (LSB) ²¹ And after they had proclaimed the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “Through many afflictions we must enter the kingdom of God.” ²³ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

[Matthew 9:14-15](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?” ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the attendants of the bridegroom mourn as long as the

bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

We fast in response to a difficulty and trial or when we need to make a serious spiritual decision, such as life direction. We fast to create a more intense focus on prayer, which should always accompany biblical fasting. This spiritual focus puts it in a separate category from fasting for other reasons. ~ Brandon Phillips

In every scriptural account genuine fasting is linked with prayer. You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast biblically without praying. Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God ~ John MacArthur

Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, and confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God. ~ Andrew Murray

Discussion Questions

Pastor Brandon mentions that fasting, like giving and prayer, is prone to becoming self-aggrandizing. In what ways can fasting be misused to draw attention to oneself, and how can we avoid this temptation?

Pastor Brandon talks about the close relationship between our physical bodies and the immaterial aspects of our being. How do physical experiences like hunger or illness affect your emotions and spiritual life? Can you share personal experiences where this connection was particularly evident?

Various Old Testament figures like Moses, Samuel, and David fasted during times of distress or repentance. What do these examples teach us about the appropriate reasons and circumstances for fasting in the Bible?

Pastor Brandon emphasizes that biblical fasting is inseparable from prayer. How does fasting enhance or complement your prayer life? Have you ever fasted with a specific spiritual goal in mind, and what was the outcome?

While fasting has physical health benefits, Pastor Brandon makes a distinction between fasting for health and fasting for spiritual purposes. How can we ensure that our fasting remains focused on spiritual growth rather than just physical well-being?

John Calvin warns against fasting degenerating into superstition. What are some potential dangers of attributing spiritual significance to fasting in a way that veers into superstition? How can we maintain a biblical perspective on fasting?

You are to fast when PROMPTED by the Holy Spirit ([Matt 6:16a](#))

[Matthew 6:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “Now whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

You are not to fast by PUTTING on a false face ([Matt 6:16b](#))

[Matthew 6:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “Now whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

The Situation during Jesus’s Day

[Luke 18:12](#) (LSB) ¹² ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’

Those two days also happened to be the major Jewish market days, when cities and towns were crowded with farmers, merchants, and shoppers. They were, therefore, the two days where public fasting would have the largest audiences. ~ John MacArthur

You are to fast by PLACING your trust in the Father who sees you ([Matt 6:17-18](#))

[Matthew 6:17](#) (LSB) ⁷ “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face

[Matthew 6:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Conclusion:

Eight Principles of Fasting derived from our study

1. Genuine fasting is always linked with prayer. You can certainly pray without fasting, but you cannot genuinely fast without prayer.
2. Fasting for health purposes is not necessarily wrong, but it is not the same as biblical fasting.
3. We are not to fast to have a transcendent spiritual experience.
4. We must look to the Old and New Testament saints to understand the pattern of biblical fasting.
5. Genuine fasting must be at the prompting of the Holy Spirit during times of trials and testing.
6. When we fast, we are not to put on a false face. We are not to trumpet it to draw attention to ourselves.
7. When we fast, we are to get up, shave or oil our beards, and shower. In other words, we are to go about our business.
8. When we fast, we are to do so by placing our trust in our Father who is in heaven.

Discussion Questions

How does Jesus's teaching in [Matthew 6:16](#) presuppose that Christians will fast? What implications does this have for our understanding of fasting in the Christian life?

Why do you think Jesus does not command fasting in the same way He commands giving and prayer, yet still expects that His disciples will do it?

Pastor Brandon mentions that fasting should come from the prompting of the Holy Spirit. How have you personally experienced being prompted by the Holy Spirit in your spiritual walk, whether for fasting or other acts of worship?

What are some biblical reasons for fasting, as mentioned in the sermon? How do these reasons help you discern when it might be appropriate to fast?

In [Matthew 6:16](#), Jesus warns against putting on a “gloomy face” while fasting. Why do you think people are tempted to display outward signs of fasting for others to see?

Can you identify times when spiritual practices, like prayer, giving, or fasting, were done more for appearance than for true devotion? How can we guard against this in our own lives?

How does Jesus's exhortation to “anoint your head and wash your face” while fasting help us understand the attitude we should have during fasting?

What does it mean to place your trust in the Father who sees what is done in secret, especially in the context of fasting?

What are some practical ways you can ensure that your fasting (or other spiritual disciplines) remains sincere and pleasing to God, rather than done to impress others?

How does fasting, when done in the right way, strengthen your dependence on God?

In what ways does this teaching on fasting challenge the way you think about other spiritual practices, such as prayer and giving?

The Gospel

God

Created and owns everything

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalms 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

Is Perfectly Holy

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Requires perfect obedience to His Law

[James 2:10](#)—*for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

Man

Has broken God's law

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—*there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin

[Rom. 6:23](#)—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Cannot save himself by his good works

[Titus 3:5](#)—*He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

Christ

Came to earth both as God and sinless man

[Col 2:9](#)—*For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form*

Demonstrated God's love by dying on the cross to pay sin's penalty

[Rom 5:8](#)—*But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Rose from the grave and is alive today

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—*And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*

Sinners

Must repent of all that dishonors God

[Isa 55:7](#)—*Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

[Luke 9:23](#)—*if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior

[Rom 10:9](#)—*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*

Will you repent and believe in Christ?

[Acts 17:30](#)—*therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.*

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

Brandon.Phillips@gracegainesville.org

Additional Quotes

There can be no right fasting apart from a right heart, right living, and a right attitude. ~ John MacArthur

The phrase and whenever you fast supports the understanding that fasting is not commanded. But when it is practiced it is to be regulated according to the principles Jesus gives here. ~ John MacArthur

John Calvin said, “Many for want of knowing its usefulness undervalue its necessity. And some reject it all together as superfluous, while on the other hand, where the proper use of fasting is not well understood, it easily degenerates into superstition.” ~ John Calvin

First, let fasting be done unto the Lord with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven. ~ **John Wesley (Founder of the Methodist Movement)**

Fasting is not approved by God, except for its end; it must be connected with something else, otherwise it is a vain thing. Men by private fastings, prepare themselves for the exercise of prayer, or they mortify their own flesh, or seek a remedy for some hidden vices. ~ **John Calvin (French Reformer)**

There are some people who fast because they expect direct and immediate results from it. In other words they have a kind of mechanical view of fasting; they have what I have sometimes called, for lack of a better illustration, the ‘penny in the slot’ view of it. You put your penny in the slot, then you pull out the drawer, and there you have your result. That is their view of fasting. If you want certain benefits, they say, fast; if you fast you will get the results. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)**

Without a purpose, fasting can be a miserable, self-centred experience. ~ **Donald S. Whitney**

I wonder whether we have ever fasted? I wonder whether it has even occurred to us that we ought to be considering the question of fasting? The fact is, is it

not, that this whole subject seems to have dropped right out of our lives, and right out of our whole Christian thinking. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)**

In every scriptural account genuine fasting is linked with prayer. You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast biblically without praying. Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Prayers belong strictly to the worship of God. Fasting is a subordinate aid, which is pleasing to God no farther than as it aids the earnestness and fervency of prayer. We must hold by this rule, that the duties of men are to be judged according as they are directed to a proper and lawful end. We must hold, also, by this distinction, that *prayers* are a direct worship of God; while *fastings* are a part of worship only on account of their consequences. ~ **John Calvin (French Reformer)**

A biblical definition of fasting is a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes. It is *Christian*, for fasting by a nonChristian obtains no eternal value because the Discipline's motives and purposes are to be God-centered. ~ **Donald S. Whitney**

It is interesting that Luke should describe her life of fasting and prayer as a life of service to God. Usually we think that service involves preaching, or teaching, or reaching out to the poor, the hungry or the imprisoned, all of which, of course, are forms of service and dedication to God. But this singular devotion of prayer and fasting can also be a ministry. ~ **R. C. Sproul**

Fasting is a periodic—and sometimes decisive—declaration that we would rather feast at God's table in the kingdom of heaven than feed on the finest delicacies of this world. ~ **John Piper**

Fasting and prayer are frequently associated with people seeking and preparing themselves for divine communications. ~ **Leland Ryken; James C. Wilhoit; Tremper Longman III; Colin Duriez; Douglas Penney; Daniel G. Reid**

The Bible records no teaching or practice of fasting for practical reasons. Legitimate fasting always had a spiritual purpose and is never presented as having *any* value in and of itself. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Fasting always was connected with mourning for sin and repentance of it. ~ **James Montgomery Boice**

“Fasting” is always a mark of deep spiritual concern, indicating that a person is willing to set aside the normal demands of life in order to concentrate for a time on what God wants. ~ **R. Kent Hughes**

Jesus has many who love his heavenly kingdom, but few who bear his cross. Many want consolation, but few desire adversity. Many are eager to share Jesus’ table, but few will join him in fasting. ~ **Thomas à Kempis**

The *law required fasting only on the Day of Atonement, but Jewish tradition had added many other fasts. Pharisees were said to often fast twice a week, without water (at least in the dry season) ~ **Craig Keener**