

Fasting and Feasting

Fasting has long been a part of spiritual growth. In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses describes a type of fast that the Israelites endured for 40 years in the wilderness: *And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*

Over the course of that generation, God withheld certain pleasures from his people in order for them to see that he is far more satisfying than any morsel of food or cup of wine!

When we fast, we do so in order to feast. God forced a sort of fast on the Israelites in order to teach them to feast on the Word of the Lord and rely on his power and provision. Jesus willingly did the same thing in Matthew 4. **Fasting isn't a test of willpower; it is an invitation to feast on something better.**

This January (and longer if you desire), I want to invite you to fast and feast. I don't want you to fast as a test of your will or a religious checkbox, I want you to fast in order to feast on something greater! Here are some ideas. The ones that I have placed first are the ones that I would like all of us to consider doing!

- **Fast** the white bread of the world - social media, inane web browsing, or other mindless habits - in order to **feast** on quality time with the Lord (prayer and the Word).
- **Fast** noise and busyness to **feast** on stillness in prayer. The prayer wheel is a great tool, available in the foyer, if you are new to praying. Pray by yourself and with loved ones.
- **Fast** devotional books or reading plans, podcasts, or 'shot in the arm' Christian content in order to **feast** on the pure Word of God. If you are going to read one book in addition to the Bible, consider reading Spirit Walk by Steve Smith.
- **Fast** regular consumption of spirits (e.g. alcohol) in order to **feast** and be filled with the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18).
- **Fast** one time slot a week of "me" time to invite another family from Revolve into your home and **feast** together on food, the Word, and prayer.
- **Fast** unhealthy foods in order to **feast** on that which has been created by God (and not in a lab!). You will feel better spiritually as you take care of your body more!

I strongly believe that if we, as a church, embraced even half of the things on this list, God would turn our church and county upsidedown.

Believing in faith that God will move, Pastor Bill

PS - Look at the back of this letter for a reading plan and strategy for the next few weeks.

Discover God's Plan for YOU

Each day, read, pray and journal through a time of spiritual discovery and reflection. Please use this handout as a guide for your daily time.

LOOK BACK:

- **What are you thankful for?** Spend time telling God or journaling about it.
- **What are you stressed about?** Spend time telling God or journaling about it.
- **Look back at yesterday's journal entry.** Did you follow through with whatever God put on your heart? Spend time telling God how it went.

LOOK UP:

- **Pray.** Ask God to lead you into his truth as you read the Bible.
- **Read today's Bible passage.**
 - After reading it once, write down any questions you have about the passage and ask God's Spirit to teach you.
- **Read the passage again and then jot down some thoughts on the following questions:**
 - What does this passage teach about God?
 - What does this passage teach about people?

LOOK FORWARD:

- **Pray** and ask God how he wants you to apply what you discovered. What does this mean for your thought life, your beliefs, your actions, etc? Sit in silent reflection and prayer for a few minutes as you think about these things.
- **Write down** what you think God wants you to do in obedience to what the Holy Spirit taught you. Remember, this could be a change of thought, action, belief, or heart.
- **Does God want you to encourage or challenge someone with this passage?** Ask him to put a name or two on your mind and determine when you will reach out to them today.

What should I read?

If you don't know where to begin, consider slowly going through one or more of the following books of the Bible over the course of the next few weeks.

- The Gospel of Mark
- Acts
- Ephesians
- James