

PRAYER AND FASTING

Matthew 6:5-18

MESSAGE RECAP

In this week's message, we explore Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount, focusing specifically on the practices of prayer and fasting. Jesus will emphasize the importance of authenticity in one's faith rather than merely performing religious acts. For many, the "Lord's Prayer" is well known, but often not used the way Jesus intended it. Secondly, we often hear about fasting but very few people practice it. Jesus believed the practice of prayer and fasting would be essential to our spiritual formation. So, let's explore it deeper.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How are you...really?
2. After listening to the message, what specifically stood out about prayer and fasting?
3. Authentic Prayer: Read Matthew 6:5-8
 - a. Compare and contrast performance prayers with personal prayers. Why is private prayer important according to Jesus?
 - b. What are some challenges you face in creating a private and sincere prayer routine?
4. The Lord's Prayer: Read Matthew 6:9-15
 - a. What elements of the Lord's prayer stand out to you? How can they shape your personal prayer life?
 - b. Why would Jesus specifically clarify his expectations on forgiveness in Matthew 6:14-15?
5. Understanding Fasting: Read Matthew 6:16-18
 - a. What does it mean to fast for spiritual purposes? How is this different from other types of fasting (e.g., intermittent fasting)?
 - b. Reflect on different reasons for fasting found in scripture (e.g., Moses in Exodus 34:28, Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:1; Ester in Ester 4:16).
 - c. What practical steps can you take to begin fasting? (Choose a Friend, purpose, day, and commit to prayer.)

End your group time in prayer. It's still okay to pray out loud. (Acts 4:24ff)