

In the Secret Places: Fasting
Matthew 6:16–18

Opening Discussion:

1. Describe your thoughts about and experience with fasting.
2. Why is fasting so rare in western Christianity?
3. What are the benefits of fasting?
4. Is it ok to tell others that you're fasting?

Fasting with right motives should be a _____ and _____ part of our
walk with Jesus.

Explore the Passage

1. When you _____ . . .

Biblical examples of fasting:

- Moses fasted for two 40 day periods (Exodus 34:28, Deut. 9:9, 10:10)
- Hannah fasted when she was asking God for a child (1 Sam. 1:1-20)
- The king of Nineveh called for a fast when he learned the Lord was going to judge the city (Jonah 3:7-8)
- Jehoshaphat called for a fast when armies threatened Judah (2 Chron. 20:3)
- Ezra led the people to fast before they departed for the return journey to Israel (Ezra 8:21–23)
- Nehemiah fasted and prayed when he heard the condition of Jerusalem (Neh. 1:4)
- Esther called the people to fast before she approached the emperor (Esth. 4:16)
- Daniel fasted partially for 21 days during a time of mourning (Dan. 10:2-3)
- Anna fasted on a regular basis as part of her ministry at the temple (Luke 3:37)
- Jesus fasted for 40 days when He was tempted in the wilderness (Matt. 4:2)
- The disciples of John the Baptist fasted regularly (Matt. 9:14)
- Paul fasted for three days after his conversion (Acts 9:9)
- The leaders at Antioch were fasting when Paul and Barnabas were called to missionary work (Acts 13:1-3)
- Paul and Barnabas fasted as they appointed elders in new churches (Acts 14:23)

“All eminently pious persons have been more or less addicted to this mode of spiritual culture.” Charles Hodge

2. Do not be like the _____ .

“Do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”
Matthew 23:3

3. Do not _____ to be seen by others.

Reminder: This is an issue of _____ , not _____ .

4. You Father will _____ you.

Fasting, like prayer, does not earn the _____ and _____ of God, but it does move
the _____ and _____ of God.

Fill in the Blank Answers:

Opening Discussion

Fasting with right motives should be a regular and rewarding part of our walk with Jesus.

Explore the Passage

1. fast
2. hypocrites
3. fast, motives, actions
4. reward

Fasting, like prayer, does not earn the grace and favor of God, but it does move the hand and heart of God.