

## **Why Pray With Fasting? Matthew 6:16-18**

### **What does Jesus assume about believers? (vv.16,17)**

He assumes that all believers will fast and pray. "When you fast..." (Not "if.")

### **What is the wrong way to fast? (v.16)**

The wrong way is to fast for the purpose of having people notice your fasting.

### **What is the right way to fast? (vv.17-18)**

The right way is to have God mercifully notice — have God graciously reward.

### **What is the purpose of fasting? (v.18)**

The purpose is to be rewarded by God.

The reward is not health or wealth — it's God Himself — His presence and power.

The reward is not earned or deserved — it's all from God's mercy through the Cross.

### **So what is the point of adding fasting to prayer?**

God has mercifully chosen to have our prayers move Him to do what He's purposed to do.

And God has mercifully chosen to have prayer with fasting move Him even more.

- Fasting humbles our hearts.
- Fasting helps us pray.
- Fasting helps us express how much we need God.

### **How do we go about praying with fasting?**

See <http://t.co/HDsWyivM>

### **When should we pray with fasting?**

When God leads us to pray and fast.  
When we face an urgent need.

### **What does this mean for us?**

Develop a rhythm of prayer and fasting.

Start small.

God will graciously reward you.



## **HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING**

*(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)*

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

What has been your experience with fasting — the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Do you agree that Jesus assumes his followers will fast? Why or why not?

Why do you think many believers do not fast?

Are you comfortable saying that we should fast in order to be graciously rewarded by God? Why or why not?

Do you agree that God has graciously chosen to give prayer 100 megawatts of power with Him — and that prayer with fasting might have 120 more? Why or why not?

What did the Holy Spirit do in your heart through this passage?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

**Question from two weeks ago** — How can Jesus teach that there will be varying degrees of reward in heaven (Mat 25:14-30) — but at the same time teach that what everyone receives is equal (Mat 20:1-16)?

These parables focus on different topics.

The parable of the workers (Mat 20) compares people who get saved early in life with those who get saved right before death — each will be equally saved. The thief on the Cross was only saved for a short period of time — but will enjoy salvation for eternity as much as a saint who followed and served Christ for a lifetime.

The parable of the talents (Mat 25) teaches that our efforts in this life can increase the joy we will have in Jesus Christ forever — those who are more earnest in following Christ will have more joy than those less earnest.

I'd sum it up like this — every believer equally receives salvation — but their experience of that salvation will vary depending on their earnestness in this life.



**SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012