

MATTHEW 6:16-18: “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

THREE DANGERS TO BE AVOIDED

DANGER #1: Fasting for the _____ of others
(Matthew 6:16-18).

DANGER #2: Fasting without _____ the faith
(Isaiah 58:1-5).

DANGER #3: Fasting to _____ God.

REASONS FOR FASTING

REASON #1: To show God our _____ & _____
heart (*Ezra 9:5; 10:6; Neh.9:1; 1 Sam.7:6; Jer.14:12; 36; Dan.9:3; Joel 1:14; 2:12,15; Jonah 3:5ff*).

REASON #2: To plead with God for His divine
_____ in our lives (2 Sam.12:16, 21-23; 2
Chron.20:3; Ezra 8:21-23; Neh.1:4; Esther 4:3,15-16;
Psalm 35:13; Dan.6:18).

REASON #3: To plead with God for His help in making
_____ (Acts 13:1; 14:23).

REASON #4: To share your food with the _____
(Isaiah 58:6-11).

REASON #5: To _____ your spiritual life.

“More than any other Discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. David writes, ‘I humbled my soul with fasting’ (Ps.69:10). Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear – if they are within us, they will surface during fasting. At first we will rationalize that our anger is due to our hunger; then we will realize that we are angry because the spirit of anger is within us. We can rejoice in this knowledge because we know that healing is available through the power of Christ.” **Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 55.**

“In fasting, we abstain in some significant way from food and possibly drink as well. This discipline teaches us a lot about ourselves very quickly. It will certainly prove humiliating to us, as it reveals to us how much our peace depends upon the pleasures of eating. It may also bring to mind how we are using food pleasure to assuage the discomforts caused in our bodies by faithless and unwise living and attitudes – lack of self-worth, meaningless work, purposeless existence, or lack of rest or exercise. If nothing else, though, it will certainly demonstrate how powerful and clever our body is in getting its own way against our strongest resolves.” **Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 166.**

TIPS ON FASTING

TIP #1: Start with a _____ fast, then try a _____ fast.

TIP #2: _____ Your Fast.

TIP #3: Drink Plenty of _____.

TIP #4: Devote mealtimes to the _____ & _____.

TIP #5: Break fast with a _____ meal.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Will you be hungry for God this week by devoting one day to fasting for Him?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pray for One Another

1. Now that we are eight weeks into the DEEPER series it's a good time to review where we have come so far. Can you recall the messages? Spend some time talking about the series and how it has impacted you personally.
2. What did you learn from this Sunday's message?
3. Did you have a chance to fast this week? If so, will you share with us your experience? What did you learn about God, yourself and others? What was your '*spiritual perspective*' before, during and after the fast?
4. How does the title of this Sunday's message, '*Hungry for God*,' have two meanings? How does fasting make us 'hungry for God'?
5. What are the reasons for fasting that were given in this message? As a group look up several of the texts that are provided and try to gain a better understanding of WHY we fast.
6. What area of your life do you need to 'fast and pray' for? Do you have any 'hopeless' situations?
7. What do we need to be 'fasting and praying' for here at SMC? Does SMC have any 'hopeless' situations?
8. What are some other types of 'fasting' that you could participate in as a follower of Jesus?

PRAYER...

Series: DEEPER

Today's Message: "*Hungry For God*"
11.07.10 / Pastor Cory Anderson / SMC

INTRODUCTION:

WHAT IS FASTING?

"Fasting means an abstinence from food for the sake of certain special purposes such as prayer or meditation or the seeking of God for some peculiar reason or under some exceptional circumstance. **D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 314.**

"Biblical fasting always centers on spiritual purposes" **Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 49.**

"The weakness of our hunger for God is not because he is unsavory, but because we keep ourselves stuffed with "other things." Perhaps, then, the denial of our stomach's appetite for food might express, or even increase, our soul's appetite for God." **John Piper, *A Hunger for God*, 10.**

JESUS ASSUMED WE WOULD FAST

MATTHEW 9:14-17: "Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵ Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; ***then they will fast.*** ¹⁶ "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. ¹⁷ Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."