

THE PRACTICE OF FASTING

Servant Teams are encouraged to participate the first Thursday of each month in a time of prayer and fasting. This opportunity and privilege may be extended to the *entire Leaders Council*. As you present this to your Leaders Council it is important to discuss the purpose of fasting, what it is and what it isn't.

Fasting is not a way to influence, impress, or manipulate God. Fasting does not prove anything to God. He knows our heart better than we do. (see Jn. 2:25; Hebrews 4:13; Ps.33:15). Nor is fasting or a hunger strike designed to persuade God to release what He has, up to now, withheld. Instead, fasting is a way to let go of what binds you to this physical world – food – in order to receive your sustenance from the spiritual world.

When you fast, you determine that for a period of time you will deny your physical cravings to focus on your spiritual cravings. You allow your spiritual hunger to become stronger and more focused, and you feed your spirit with the same enthusiasm with which you would feed your physical body. Spiritual hunger takes priority over physical hunger.

“Fasting loosens the ties which bind us to this world of material things and our surroundings that we may concentrate all our spiritual powers upon the unseen and eternal.” ~Ole Hallesby.

Fasting is not a last-ditch effort to get through to God. Instead, it sharpens your spiritual senses so that God can get through to you. It will sensitize you to the things of the spiritual realm so that you will be more aware of God's presence and his present-tense voice. (*The One Year Praying the Promises of God*, Jennifer Kennedy Dean)

A resource by Bill Bright can be found on the following website:

<http://www.cru.org/training-and-growth/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting/index.htm>

A handout is available on the CBS website:

<https://membership.communitybiblestudy.org/Repository/root/Documents/STManual/Adult%20Ministry%20Forms/All%20Forms/CBS%20DAY%20OF%20FASTING%20AND%20PRAYER.pdf>

If you have never fasted before, start small. If you don't make it through this first fast, don't be discouraged – try again. Remember God knows your heart.

- Prepare a handout listing areas of prayer for *your class* if you are including your leadership in this day of fasting and prayer (i.e. Core Groups to be strengthened and class members steadfast in lesson preparation and attendance, all come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, seeds planted in the children's hearts will grow and bear fruit, hedge of protection around CBS leadership and class so the enemy would have no entry.)
- Follow up and share how God met you/encouraged you/showed you new truths during your fast.