**Living Like Jesus – Fasting Habits**

*Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and was your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Matt. 6:16 -18*

*But the days will come and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast inn those days Lk. 5:35*

* **Fasting = to abstain primarily from food for a specific period of time**
* **Fasting is an act of disciplined abstaining – to obediently choose to abstain from food in order to** **focus on prayer & time with God**
* **Fasting can also include abstaining from anything for a time to focus on prayer & time with God**
* **Fasting is not just abstaining from food & drink like a medical fast it is a spiritual act of submission to God & disciplining the flesh**
1. **Fasting habits of Jesus**
2. Jesus fasted for 40 days to begin His public ministry – Lk. 4:1-14
* The Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness to fast & be tempted by Satan

for 40 days 4:1 -2

Jesus resisted Satan’s temptations & returned in the power of the Holy Spirit 4: 3 – 14

1. Jesus regularly practices prayer & fasting
2. Jesus fasting was private, not for show but before God
3. Jesus fasted in order to more clearly understand God’s purposes for His life
4. **The fasting habits of believers**
5. Believers are expected to fast as a spiritual habit – Jesus said, “*when you fast”*
6. *Believers fast for a number of different reasons*
7. to focus on prayer
8. to seek God’s will & direction
9. to lament & grieve before God
10. to repent of sin & return to God
11. to gain strength to overcome the power of sin
12. to humble oneself before God
13. to pray on behalf of others & the work of God through His churches
14. to worship God

*When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. Neh. 1:4*

*Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord Your God and cry out to the Lord Joel 1:14*

*While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them Acts. 13:2*

*When they had appointed elders for them in every church having prayed with fasting them commended them to the Lord in whom they believed Acts 14:23*

***The early church practice fasting twice per week, on Wednesday & Friday generally from 8 am – 3pm***

1. Jesus instructions for fasting – Matt. 6: 16 -18

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1. Do not let others know you are fasting except if it is a church wide fast
2. Do not appear to others sad or gloomy in your time of fast
3. Determine the link of your fast – daily fasts = 8 am – 3pm; 24 hour, multi-day fast
4. Determine what you will fast – food, devices, relationships, work etc.it may be a combination of these
5. Begin the day of fast like every other day with your regular routine
6. Set a schedule for your fast time

If fasting while working – then set three times in the day to pray and seek God

Morning – Noon – Evening

If fasting in secret – work from a set schedule for your fast

**How to fast while going about your daily schedule**

1. Determine the purpose of your fast
2. Begin the day asking God to speak to you as read scripture
3. Pray without stopping throughout the day – focused on your request or need you are seeking from God in the fast
4. Pause at lunch time to read scripture & prayer in place of lunch
5. Pray without stopping throughout the remainder of the day – focused on your request or need you are seeking from God in the fast
6. Break the fast with a commitment to obey what God has said to you in your fast time

**How to spend a day with God – prayer & fasting**

1. Choose select reading from the Psalms, Gospels & Epistles through the day
2. Record what you discover from your readings that you believe the Holy Spirit is saying to you
3. Reflect on other scriptures that come to mind as you are reading the scripture selections
4. Pray with God about what you are discovering from your time with Him in scripture
5. Confess sins that are exposed to you as you spend the day with God
6. Decide what you must do from the time you have spent with God
7. Break the fast with a commitment to obey what God has said to you in your fast time

**I give myself to Thee – Marie Mason**

1 Savior, who died for me,
I give myself to thee;
Thy love, so full, so free,
Claims all my pow'rs.
Be this my purpose high,
To serve thee till I die,
Whether my path shall lie
'Mid thorns or flow'rs.

2 But, Lord, the flesh is weak,
Thy gracious aid I seek;
For thou the word must speak
That makes me strong.
Then let me hear thy voice,
Thou art my only choice;
Oh, bid my heart rejoice;
Be thou my song.

3 Savior, with me abide;
Be ever near my side;
Support, defend, and guide;
I look to thee.
I lay my hand in thine,
And fleeting joys resign,
If I may call thee mine
Eternally.