

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of January 22-28, 2022

“INVITATION TO FAST”

GETTING STARTED

To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

What food(s) are difficult for you to imagine going without? Why?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read **MATTHEW 6:16-18**.

1. What do you think or feel when you hear the word “fasting”? Is your response positive or negative? Have you ever fasted from anything in the past? If so, what did you learn from the experience that you can take with you in your next fasting experience?
2. In Matthew 6:1, Jesus talks about “acts of righteousness,” which he would later refer to giving alms, prayer and fasting. Why do you think Jesus dealt with these? Three times, Jesus says we are to do these acts in “secret” (Matthew 6:3,5,16). What’s the big deal about doing it in secret? Should we take this literally?
3. In all three acts of righteousness, Jesus also talks about rewards. Is it right for us to be motivated by rewards? What does it mean for us to seek for reward from the Father instead of men?
4. Read Matthew 9:14-15. Did Jesus expect his disciples to fast after he was gone? It is said that fasting brings us closer to God. Could this be one of the reasons Jesus said his disciples would fast after he would no longer be with them? What are other reasons?
5. Read Isaiah 58:3-10, Zechariah 7:5. In Isaiah, the Jews were fasting, but God was not answering their requests. Why not? What kind of fast does God want? Is fasting a way to get God to answer our prayers? Will fasting solve our problems?
6. What are your plans for the upcoming prayer & fasting week? Of the fast options, which are you making a commitment to do during the five days? Aside from the actual physical fast, how do you intend to be more attuned to God’s presence? What will be your prayer focus?

7. NEXT STEPS

Our reward is God himself. We will encounter him and hear his voice. He will refresh us. He will renew our strength.

- I will seek God through prayer and fasting.
- I will have the right motive in fasting.
- I will remember that the greatest reward is God himself.

Don’t forget to:

- Go through the devotionals every day this week.
- Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God’s Word.

CLOSING THE SESSION.

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray for personal and corporate breakthrough during the prayer and fasting.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers, that you will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends, and loved ones.
- Pray for protection, provision, healing and comfort for everyone who’s going through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE.

January 23	2 Chronicles 20:3-4
January 24	Matthew 6:16-18
January 25	Psalms 77:10-20
January 26	Isaiah 58:3-10
January 26	Romans 8:13-14
January 27	John 7:37-39
January 28	Psalms 119:161-168