

October 3-4, 2009

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One Step at a Time

- *Crawl*: Eat breakfast, fast instead of eating lunch (but keep drinking water or juice), eat dinner.
- *Walk*: Eat dinner (no late-night snacks!). Fast the following breakfast and lunch (keep drinking). Eat dinner that night.
- *Run*: Fast either lunch or lunch and dinner for 2 or 3 consecutive days.

Medical Precautions

- Fasting isn't dieting. If you have tendencies toward an eating disorder, please get help (*Linda Strain, Counselor: 570.341.8383 ext 24*). Do not use fasting as a cover-up for a very serious issue.
- If you have a medical condition, please consult your physician before fasting.

Scripture Reading

- Matthew 6:16-18
- Joel 2:12-17
- Isaiah 58
- Psalm 77
- 1 Samuel 1:1-20
- Judges 19-20
- Acts 13

Further Study

- *Fasting* by Scot McKnight
- *A Hunger for God* by John Piper
- *The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard

Web Resources

- visit <http://parkerhill.wordpress.com> to find follow-up questions for you and your small group.
- Check out www.parkerhill.org/volunteerism/go-local for suggestions on how you can help the poor and oppressed.

Too Much of a Good Thing

Fasting is a way to _____ – with our whole body – to the _____ moments in life.

Some Sacred Moments

2 Samuel 1

_____ ¹¹ Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. ¹² They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

Leviticus 23

_____ ²⁶ The LORD said to Moses, ²⁷ "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. ²⁸ Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹ Anyone who does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people. ³⁰ I will destroy from among his people anyone who does any work on that day. ³¹ You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. ³² It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your Sabbath."

SUFFERING,

Isaiah 58

¹ Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins. ² For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. ³ 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. ⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. ⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, ¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

**LONGING FOR
SOMETHING THAT
IS ALSO
FOR**

Acts 13

Judges 19-20

1 Samuel 1

At the very core of fasting is empathy with the divine or participation in God's perception of a sacred moment. When someone dies, God is grieved; when someone sins, particularly egregiously, God is grieved; when a nation is threatened, God is grieved. We could provide more examples. The point is this: fasting identifies with God's perspective and grief in a sacred moment. Ultimately, then, fasting is being with God and on God's side in the midst of life's sacred moments.

- Scot McKnight