

# FASTING FOR THE PURPOSES OF GOD

Matthew 6:16-18

# The Spiritual Disciplines

- The spiritual disciplines – are spiritual tools God has given us for the purpose of becoming more like Jesus Christ, for growing in our faith and our love for God. 1 Tim 4:7b; Gal 6:7-8 (NASB)
- R. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*
- D. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

# What is a Biblical Fast?

1. Voluntary abstinence of \_\_\_\_\_ for a spiritual purpose.

- Example: Luke 4:2
- One of 3 disciplines
- Genuine spiritual change. Isaiah 58

2. What it is not:

- Means to obligate God
- Means to impress others (or God) of my spirituality. Matt 6:16, Luke 18:12, Pharisees

# I Need A Reason To Fast!

## 1. Old Testament:

- Moses, 40 days
- Esther, saved Jews from Xerxes
- Nehemiah, rebuilt walls

## 2. New Testament:

- Jesus. Matt 4, 6:16, 9:15, 17:21, Luke 4

## 3. Early church: Acts 13:2-3, 14:23

## 4. Pragmatic – good for you

# Some Spiritual Purposes of Fasting

1. To master the flesh. Gen 4:4, Gal 5:16f
  - Overeating, Lust, Habit. Luke 4:4
2. To grow in Christ and Christ likeness.
3. Seek God's guidance, help, deliverance in a major decision or situation.
4. That God's will be done. Matt 6:9

# Next Steps

Called to congregational fast for rest of January:

1. That every person of Bethany Church will spend daily time with God.
2. From Tuesday supper to Wednesday supper
3. Report on Sunday how many days of time with the Lord were spent