

Silver Creek Fellowship NOTES

December 31

FASTING

Matthew 6:5-18 (NIV)

Prayer

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' 14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Fasting

16 When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

TYPES OF FASTS:

Complete Fast.

Selective Fast.

Partial Fast.

Soul Fast.

WHY DO WE FAST?

1. We fast to express our delight in God's goodness.

Psalm 63:1 (NIV) *"You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land."*

Zechariah 8:19 (NIV) *"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.'"*

2. We fast to confess our need for God's grace.

Joel 1:14 (NIV) *"Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."*

Joel 2:12-14 (NIV) Rend Your Heart *“Even now,” declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God.”*

Joel 2:19 (NIV) *“The Lord replied to them: ‘I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully;’”*

3. We fast to seek and submit to God’s will.

Ezra 8:21-23 (NIV) *“There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, ‘The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.’ So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.”*

Ezra 8:31 (NIV) *“On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way.”*

4. We fast to anticipate the return of God’s Son.

Matthew 9:14-15 (NIV) Jesus Questioned About Fasting *“Then John’s disciples came and asked him, ‘How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?’ Jesus answered, ‘How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.’”*

HOW DO WE FAST?

Focus on God.

Abstain.

Substitute with prayer and study.

Taste and see that God is good.

Psalm 34:8 (NIV)

*“Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.»*

Psalm 34:9-10 (NIV)

*“Fear the Lord, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.»*