

The Why Behind the What: Prayer and Fasting

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- The Why Behind the What

- Are you seeking abundant life in Christ? That is, do you want to be, do, and have everything that God has planned for you? I hope so!!
- That abundant life is on the narrow road! **Matthew 7:13-14**
- Taking the narrow road involves spiritual disciplines! Over the next month we will cover:
 - Prayer and Fasting
 - Sabbath Rest
 - Tithes and Offerings
 - Personal Devotions
- If spiritual disciplines are the way to abundant life in Christ, why do so many believers in Jesus have such trouble staying on track?
 - They know the What, but don't believe in the Why.
 - This leads to a form of What that often never gets the Why.
 - Can you think of an example of that?

- In this series we will endeavor to see the Why behind the What with these spiritual disciplines.

- The “religious” Whys vs the “God thing” Whys.
- Let's get past the Whys like: because I'm supposed to, because Pastor Mike said so, to impress people, to get God to do what I want, etc.
- Instead, let's find the real God things that are there!

- Prayer and Fasting (today's What)

- We are in our October Prayer and Fasting month.

- Why do we do that?

- It's in the Bible. **Ephesians 6:18, Matthew 6:5-18**
- Next level questions: Why is it in the Bible?
 - Why does God make rules? (Answer: Because He likes us and is trying to help!)

- Short answer to why we fast and pray: to stay connected with God.

- Why do you have a phone? Because you are supposed to?
- Prayer Whys:
 - To hear from God for wisdom and direction. **James 1:5**
 - To receive power of the Enemy. **James 4:7**
 - To unleash the blessings of God! **John 14:12-13**
 - What is meant by praying in Jesus name?

○ Fasting Whys:

- Takes it to the next level. Like prayer on steroids!
- Allows you to hear and distinguish the voice of God from different voices.
- Deeply aligns yourself with God. (vs trying to align God with you)

- Praying amiss and other hindrances.

- Sometimes people just don't get it. (**Isaiah 58:1-9**) just half of v9.
 - They didn't want to be aligned with God, but they wanted God's help.
 - Charles Spurgeon, “Find God's will and pray that.”
- Lack of faith.
- Just going through the motions.

- Prayer and fasting are one of the ways we become thermostats not just thermometers. **Matthew 6:9-10**

- Humbly submit to God first. Then pray in accordance with God's will.
- What is something you can pray for that is God's will?

- Find it and put your faith on it! Pray for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done!

- Pray for each other before you finish up!