A Call To Corporate Fasting
4093

Fasting is abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.

I. Four Reasons For Fasting
   A. Jesus fasted. He is the pattern.
      1. Luke 4:1–2, 14—Why did Jesus have to fast? He had to deal with the devil
         before He could go forth into His ministry.
      2. John 14:12—To do the works that Jesus did, we must start where He started
   B. Jesus expected His disciples to fast
      1. Matt. 6:16—Fasting is on a level with giving and praying—“when” not “if”
      2. Mark 2:18–20—Fasting a mark of true disciples until the Bridegroom’s return
   C. The early church fasted (particularly in making decisions about leadership)
      1. Acts 13:1–4—For sending out apostles
   D. God’s people have fasted from Moses onwards
      1. Lev. 16:29–30—An essential part of the Day of Atonement
         a. The Jewish people have observed the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) by
            fasting more than 3000 years, and still do today.
         b. We generally learn the benefit of what God requires us to do by doing it

II. Four Things That Fasting Does
   A. Way to humble ourselves
      1. Ps. 35:13—Example of David
      2. Ezra 8:21–23—Example of Ezra
         a. Natural vs. supernatural: key to supernatural is afflicting our souls through
            fasting.
         b. Fasting is the appointed way to suppress the rebellious, self-assertive
            “ego” (biblical “soul”).
   B. Fasting purifies our faith
      Esther 4:15—When theology and emotion are used up, all we have left is faith
   C. Brings insight into spiritual realm
      1. 2 Cor. 4:17–18—Temporal vs. eternal
      2. Practice fasting with right motives (Is. 58, 2 Cor. 5:7)
   D. Makes a way for the Holy Spirit
      1. Eph. 3:20—it takes the Holy Spirit to make our prayers effective
      2. Gal. 5:17—The “spirit” and the “flesh” are in opposition to each other
      3. It is important to invite/invite the Holy Spirit
      4. Fasting helps us to depend on the Holy Spirit
         a. Program of Joel:
            (1) Joel 1:6–7, 10–12—Desolation
            (2) Joel 2:12, 15–17—Restoration initiated by corporate fasting
         b. 2 Chron. 7:14
            (1) God asks His people to:
               (a) Humble themselves (fasting)
(b) Pray  
(c) Seek God’s face  
(d) Turn from wicked ways  

(2) On this basis, God will:  
(a) Hear from heaven  
(b) Forgive their sin  
(c) Heal their land

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