

## When You Fast . . .

4336

### I. Background For Fasting

- A. When you *pray* . . . (Matt. 6:5–6)
  - 1. Don't pray like the hypocrites
  - 2. Do pray this way: The Lord's Prayer
- B. When you *fast* . . . (Matt. 6:16–17 [compare John 14:12])
  - 1. Do not fast like the hypocrites
  - 2. You are expected to *fast*. Not "*if*," but "*when*" you fast

### II. Purpose: Self-Humbling

- A. It removes pride—the first sin
  - 1. Sit in the lowest place at the table (Luke 14:11)
  - 2. Humble yourself (James 4:10)
  - 3. God resists the proud (1 Pet. 5:5–6)
- B. Pattern of David (Ps. 35:13)
  - 1. He humbled his soul with fasting
  - 2. Soul: arrogant, ego, self-assertive—"I want . . . I think . . . I feel . . ."
- C. Israel on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29–31 [Acts 27:9])
- D. Ezra and the returning exiles (Ezra 8:21–23)

### III. When To Fast

- A. People under God's judgment
  - 1. Elijah vs. Ahab (1 Kings 21:21–22, 25–29)
  - 2. Jonah vs. Nineveh (Jonah 3:4–10)
- B. Averting disaster—Esther and the Jews in Persia (Esther 4:13–17)
- C. Individual fasting in New Testament
  - 1. One way Paul validated his ministry (2 Cor. 6:4–5)
  - 2. In fastings often (2 Cor. 11:23–27 [compare Acts 9:8–9])
- D. Corporate fasting in New Testament
  - 1. Sending out *apostles* (Acts 13:1–4 [compare Acts 14:14])
    - a. To select the two men
    - b. To send the apostles out
  - 2. Appointing *elders* (Acts 14:21–23)
- E. Mercy for a nation in seven steps—four things God requires (2 Chron. 7:14)
  - 1. Humble yourself—by fasting
  - 2. Pray
  - 3. Seek God's face
  - 4. Turn from your wicked ways
  - 5. *Then* God will hear
  - 6. *Then* God will forgive
  - 7. *Then* God will heal your land
- F. Prelude to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit
  - 1. Responsibility of leaders: elders, priests, ministers (Joel 2:15–17)
  - 2. *Afterward*: "I will pour out My Spirit . . ." (Joel 2:25)