Introduction: What do you do when you don’t know what to do?

The rhythm of 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, 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.

Matthew 6:16-18 (NIV)

What is fasting?

Fasting is the act of ______________ your soul before God by ______________ from something.

“More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the thing that controls us.”

- Richard Foster
5 areas in which to practice the rhythm of fasting:

1. Major ___________________ or ___________________.  
   Nehemiah 1:4

2. Facing intense ___________________.  
   Esther 4:16

3. Preparing for ___________________.  
   Acts 13:3; 14:23

4. A physical expression of _______________ or _______________.
   - Sin – confession and repentance  
     1 Samuel 7:6  
     Nehemiah 9:1-2
   - Circumstances – Crying out for God’s will and deliverance.  
     Daniel 10  
     Nehemiah 1:4

5. In times of great _______________.  
   Ezra 8:21-23  
   1 Samuel 7:6
4 steps to be engaged in the rhythm of fasting:

1. Prepare yourself _________________.

2. Set-aside a specific _____________ and _________________.

3. Be attentive to _________________.

4. Be aware of the _________________ attacks.

Who should not fast from food?

- People who are physically too thin or emaciated.
- Those who are prone to anorexia, bulimia, or other eating disorders.
- Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- People who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases, or who have heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart or other important organs.
- Individuals who take insulin for diabetes, or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing.
Discussion Questions:

1. What is fasting and when should you do it?

2. Ryan discussed 5 areas in which to consider fasting (page 2). Is God calling you to fast in any of these areas?

3. What new insight did you gain concerning fasting? How could this help your perspective in your current situation?

4. Are you exercising the sacred rhythm of fasting? If not, what hinders you? What steps could you take to incorporate this rhythm?