

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. ¹⁷But 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.

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?