CHURCH OF PRAYER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

DOCTRINAL STUDIES – FOUNDATIONAL TEACHING

LESSON 8: PRAYER AND FASTING

**CLASS NOTES**

**SUMMARY:**

**Prayer** means a reverent petition made to God, a god or another object of worship;[[1]](#footnote-1) an act of communication with God, a god or another object of worship, such as in devotion, confession, praise or thanksgiving.[[2]](#footnote-2) In Hebrew prayer is **tephillah,** which means intercession, supplication, by implication, a hymn.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In **Luke 11 verses 1-4**, we find the model prayer which was given to the disciples in response to the request for Jesus to teach them how to pray. If we take the time to delve into this prayer, we will discover that this is an all- encompassing prayer covering all the issues of life.

Jesus not only taught the disciples how to pray, He Himself was a man of prayer. In the book of John, we find three prayers that Jesus offers to His Father:

1. Prayer for Himself **(John 17:1-5)**
2. Prayer for His Disciples **(John 17:6-19)**
3. Prayer for All Believers **(John 17:20-26)**

Jesus communed (prayed) with His Father on all occasions: Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed **(Luke 5:16)**; Jesus arose early before daylight and prayed **(Mark 1:35)**; Jesus engaged in all night of prayer **(Luke 6:12);** Jesus prayed alone **(Luke 9:18);** Jesus prayed with His disciples **(Luke 9:28).** His most memorable prayer was the one He prayed in Gethsemane where He prayed, “Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” **(Luke 22:42**).

***Fasting***is “primarily the act of willingly abstaining from some or all [food](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food), [drink](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drink), or both, for a period of time.”[[4]](#footnote-4) In Hebrew fasting is ***tsom,***which means a day of fasting; a time set aside to mourn or pray with no provision for one’s normal food needs.[[5]](#footnote-5)

There are 3 types of fasting:

1. **Normal** involves abstaining from food, solid or liquid, but not water. (Luke 4:2)
2. **Partial** involves abstaining from certain kinds of foods. (Daniel 1:8, 16)
3. **Absolute** involves no food, solids, nor liquids and no water. (Esther 4:16)

There are 2 kinds of fast:

1. Corporate Fast is when a church or group calls a fast for a common purpose.
2. Personal Fast is when an individual calls a fast for a specific purpose or need.

Whether our time of fasting is corporate or personal, we must fast with prayer and with purpose; otherwise, we are merely dieting (only able to get fleshly results).

“Combining fasting with prayer can result in a spiritual atomic bomb that pulls down spiritual strongholds and releases the power of God in your life and the life of your church, its pastor(s), its leaders, and its members.”[[6]](#footnote-6) **(Read Matthew 17:18-21)**

**Our need for Fasting**

1. It is a Biblical way to truly humble oneself in the sight of God (Matthew 6:16-18; 1 Kings 21:27-29).
2. It brings revelation by the Holy Spirit of a person’s true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and change. (2 Samuel 12:1-23; Luke 18:9-14)
3. It is a crucial means for personal revival because it brings the inner workings of the Holy Spirit into play in a most unusual, powerful way. (1 Kings 19:8-12)
4. It helps us better understand the Word of God by making it more meaningful, vital, and practical. (Daniel 9:1-3; Nehemiah 9:1-3)
5. It transforms prayer into a richer and more personal experience. (1 Samuel 1:1-18)
6. It can result in dynamic personal revival- being filled with the Spirit and regaining a strong sense of spiritual determination. (Esther 4:1-15; Luke 4:1-15)
7. It can restore the loss of one’s first love for the Lord. (Luke 5:34-35; Joel 2:12)[[7]](#footnote-7)

**MEMORY VERSE: Joel 2:12**

“Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

**SCRIPTURES:**

**Read Psalm 69:10-13:** David says He “chastened” his soul with fasting. As you humble yourself and seek the Lord, He hears your prayers and answers them when your heart is toward Him.

**Read Psalms 35:13 - 14:** Here, David remembers how he fasted and prayed for his friends, who are now his enemies, when they were sick. Though this was an unfortunate turn of events, the Psalm is still a great reminder that we ought to carry the burdens of our friends by tarrying in prayer and fasting until God lifts the burdens.

**Read Luke 2:36-38:** Herein lies a beautiful portrait of a prophetess and widow named Anna, who lived out her life in the temple of God, dedicated to fasting and praying.

**Read Acts 13:1-3:** If we make ourselves available for God and minister to Him through acts of fasting, praying, and worship, we not only position ourselves to hear instructions from Him concerning our personal lives, but also receive direction for the church.

**Read Revelations 5:8:** We ought not ever think that when we pray to God, our prayers are mere words spoken in thin air that don’t make a difference. Our prayers (sincere petitions prayed with right motives and a repentant heart) are received in heaven where they are described as “golden bowls of incense”.

**Read Philippians 4:6:** Being eager for “something” can tempt us to try and obtain that which we desire through our human efforts; however, Paul warns us not to be anxious but to take all of our requests to God and tell Him our desires and/or needs.

**LIFE APPLICATION:**

Your church just announced they are calling a corporate time of prayer and fasting, you want to participate what do you need to do to prepare yourself for the fast? Explain

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**HOMEWORK**

**MONDAY:**

* Study your memory verse **Joel 2:12**.
* Read **Jonah 3:1 -10** and answer the following:
	+ Why was Jonah sent to Nineveh? (**Jonah 1:2 and Jonah 3:4**)

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* Who actually participated in the fast? (vv5-6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Based on your answer to the previous question, do you believe that only certain people should participate in fasting? Briefly explain your answer.

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* What results did the people of Nineveh hope to get by fasting? (v9)

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* What caused God to relent in his judgment against Nineveh? (v10)

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**TUESDAY:**

* Study your memory verse **Joel 2:12**.
* Read **Deuteronomy 9:1-21** and answer the following:
	+ What kind of fast was Moses on? (v9)

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* What did the Lord give to Moses during his time of fasting? (vv9-10) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* While Moses was fasting and seeking God, what were the children of Israel doing? (v12)

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* What did God say He was going to do to punish the rebellious acts of the children of Israel? (vv13-14)

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* Why didn’t God destroy the children of Israel or Moses’ brother Aaron? (vv18-20)

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**WEDNESDAY:**

* Study your memory verse **Joel 2:12**.
* Read **Matthew 6:16-18** and answer the following:
	+ Using a dictionary, define the word hypocrite. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	+ What is the difference in the physical appearance of the “hypocrite” and “non-hypocrite” when he/she is fasting? (vv16-17)

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* When fasting, who should be at the center of our attention: God or man? (vv16-18) Briefly explain your answer.

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* What outcome is promised to you when you fast in secret? (v18)

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**THURSDAY**

* Study your memory verse **Joel 2:12.**
* Read **Esther 4: 1-16** and answer the following:
* Why was a fast called for the Jews? (Read **Esther 3:8-9**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* In what way did Esther think she could help the Jews through human effort rather than through prayer and fasting? (vv10-12) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How does Mordecai’s words to Esther in verses 13-14 help us to better understand our role in the Kingdom of God to fast and pray for those in need of God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What do you suppose changed Esther’s heart to the point that she was willing to go before the king and if she perished, so be it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**FRIDAY:**

* Study your memory verse **Joel 2:12**.
* Answer the following two questions pertaining to your memory verse.
* How can you use the memory verse Scripture in your daily walk?

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* How can you use the memory verse Scripture to teach others God’s word?

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**SATURDAY:**

* Write your memory verse **Joel 2:12** by memory.

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* Study your notes in preparation for your test tomorrow.
1. Prayer. Thefreedictionary.com [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Spirit-Filled Bible [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary #8605 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Fasting. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasting>. September 15, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Spirit-Filled Bible [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bill Bright. <http://unityinchrist.com/prayer/fasting.htm>. September 15, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)