

STUDY NOTES

VISION 2018 A SERIES *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “Praying and Fasting Like Jesus” on 1/21/18 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 6:16-18

WHY WE DON'T FAST

Jesus commands his disciples to not act like the hypocrites when they fasted. We also need to look at our reasons why we might fast. A legitimate danger for men and women of faith is to do things God commands for them to do, but not do them because they love God, or want to know God, but to do those things to be praised by men. Another reason why someone might fast is to try to impress God or earn his favor. **Read Isaiah 58:3-5.**

- *How is it possible to commiserate with each other about fasting without looking gloomy like the hypocrites did in this passage?*

WHY DO WE FAST?

There are many reasons why God might call us to fast.

1. To seek clarity in decision making
2. To recognize our weakness
3. To seek justice. **Read Isaiah 58:6-8.**
4. To ask God for the miraculous
5. To answer the call of our community

- *What has been your experience fasting for any of the above reasons?*
- *Why are you feeling called to fast? Or why are you not feeling called to fast?*

WE NEED TO FAST

Jesus fasted right before the start of his earthly ministry. He knew things were going to change and were going to get difficult. All great things that are accomplished are hard. Fasting is difficult, but can lead to great things in our hearts because we realize how much we need God. He is enough for us.

- *Give some examples of times in your life when you accomplished something great even though it was difficult.*
- *How does fasting remind you how much you **need** God?*

OUR FATHER

When Jesus teaches his followers how to pray, he starts by addressing God as “our Father”. Jesus is teaching us that we may approach God with the same form of address that belongs to him—the language of a child. You are a child of God and he loves you. He gave his Son for you. You are as loved by God as Jesus is!

We fast because we ARE the beloved, not to BE loved by God.

- *What are some ways that you are reminded to pray during a fast?*
- *How does fasting show you how much you are loved by God?*
- *Pray with each other for strength.*