

Less is More

We want to begin this year by teaching on fasting and challenging you to practice this habit this month. On Jan 13-17, the Hill Country Bible Church staff will dedicate a week to fasting and praying for our church. It is something that we have done for many years now. We shut the church offices down, we don't go to meetings and don't do email. We fast together to realign our hearts with God and we seek God's leadership and direction for our church for the upcoming 12 months.

Fasting is when you intentionally make yourself hungry by not eating for a period of time so that you can focus on your hunger for God. Because when you fast you use those feelings of hunger to focus your mind on hungering to know God more than you hunger for food. That's why Jesus once said:

- ***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled Matthew 5:6***

We know what it feels like to hunger for food. But Jesus says those people who are really blessed are those who hunger after the things of God more than food.

As you start this new year you might feel like, ***"I just haven't really felt a strong longing for God in a long time. I was hungry for God a long time ago or when I first became a Christian, but if I'm honest I really don't feel that way anymore."*** If you feel that way, fasting may be the very best thing you could do to renew your hunger for God. Fasting and prayer should go together. If you have been wanting to grow in your prayer life as this new year begins, you may want to think about incorporating fasting as a regular pattern into your prayer life.

We fast to seek God's guidance

In the book of Acts we see fasting connected to the church making important decisions. In Acts 13 the very young church in Antioch was fasting and praying, and it was during that time that they realized they should set aside Paul and Barnabas to be sent out on the first missionary journey.

Fasting is one way we can focus our prayers as we make big decisions in life. As this year begins you may know you have a big decision ahead of you. When we face significant decisions or challenges in life, fasting can help us discern God's leadership and direction in our life.

We fast to express a longing for Christ's return

God's people used to fast for the Messiah to come, Christians fast as a way to express a deep longing for Christ to return. Because one day Jesus will return. And when he does he will make all things new.

- ***He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Rev 21:4***

Fasting How To's

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html>

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/7-steps-to-fasting.html>

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/fasting-starter-kit.html>