

JULY 1, 2020

FASTING AND PRAYING AS A CHURCH

TO CHURCH FAMILY MEMBERS OF ROCHESTER
CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH



HELLO RCCC FAMILY!

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We want to encourage and call all of you, the Church as a whole, *to Fast and Pray* as we relaunch our Sunday Worship Services for both the English and the Chinese Congregations.

Before giving you some guidelines for fasting and praying, I want to start by giving you some warnings that our Lord Jesus gives when you fast and pray. I think the reason is because it is so easy to turn something good and righteous as fasting and praying to something to boast in front of others.

Some Warnings

In Matthew 6:1, Jesus says, “Beware of practicing your righteousness..” And the righteousness that Jesus focuses on are:

- Giving to the needy (Christian or non-Christian, but especially to the “household of faith” – Galatians 6:10!)
- Prayer
- Fasting

Prayer and Fasting has a vertical direction - namely to God and not to be seen by others for self-righteousness and boasting.

What is Fasting?

Fasting is abstaining from food for a period of time. But we will see at the end it could be other things that is a big part of your life.

What is the biblical reason for "fasting"?

When do you fast?

- A crisis in your life
- Desperation for God and you are starving spiritually.

Fasting through Prayer & God’s Word

- Daniel 9:3 - Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

- Luke 2:37 - and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with ***fasting and prayer*** night and day
- Acts 13:2-3 - While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after ***fasting and praying*** they laid their hands on them and sent them off.
- Acts 14:23 - And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, ***with prayer and fasting*** they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
- Matthew 4:1-2 - Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after ***fasting forty days and forty nights***, he was hungry.
 - *Jesus was probably fasting & praying*

In other words, when you are fasting you are praying and I want to suggest and think that weaving into the prayer is God's mind, thoughts, His will in the Bible. It is and should be in conjunction with God's Word. In other words, in and through the Word!

Why Bread or Food?

Bread or food is a big part of our lives waking hours. Isn't it? We (the world) spend about half of the day almost to food. Now you

might only spend around 2-4 hours eating food in a course of a day. But there are people who are preparing the food in order for you to eat it. I mean go to any restaurant or a dining hall on campus. In order for people to prepare the food for you, they are spending 8-9 hours a day concerning food. In other words, it is a big part of our lives every day!

So fasting from something that is a huge part of our daily lives and not to focus on it is because there is more important thing to focus on more than food which is God!

And when someone who does not eat and does not show up to dinner to eat (which is important!!!), there must be something more important thing to do now than food!

Seeking God

Fasting is not necessary for God to act or move God. You fast to seek God. There comes a time when you will need to stop your busy schedule, a meal, half a day, or a whole day or days to be with God by fasting in prayer with God's Word and spend some quality time with Him. To concentrate and feed on God and his truth. So you might want to try that. Fasting shows desperation for God.

Practical Applications

What are some of the distractions in our lives that hinder us from seeking our God more? Is it Facebook? Youtube? TV (tv shows,

sports etc)? music? movies? or video games, internet, work? etc. These are some of the things you can fast from and not just food!

Dates?

So RCCC Church Family, Pastor Peter and I would love to exhort and encourage all of you to Fast and Pray as a Church from **July 6th - 11th**. There will be a google form that you can fill out. Please pray and see how you we can as a Church fast and pray together in this COVID-19 Year!