

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

THE LIFE - II

Acts 1:4-14

Pastor Miles McPherson — January 13, 2013



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Join us as we start the 40-day fast. For more details please visit <http://www.sdrock.com/fast/>.
2. If you know somebody that is interested in stepping up to lead a Community Group please have them go to <http://www.sdrock.com/communitygroups/lead/> to fill out an application to get started today! Our next New Leader Orientation is January 27th from 2-4 in room 252, please contact john.darrow@sdrock.com for more information.

MEMORY VERSE

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4 NIV)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Review the Sunday Message
 - A. What is fasting?
 - i. Biblical fasting is a discipline of voluntarily **denying** oneself of food in order to increase time with God
 - B. Goal?
 - i. A personal encounter with the living God.
 - C. Reasons why people in the Bible fasted:
 - In times of war: **Judges 20:26** (1 day)
 - Repentance: **Jonah 3:5, Daniel 6:18**
 - When facing danger: **Ezra 8:21,23**
 - Courage and wisdom: **Esther 4:3,16** (3 days – no food or water)
 - In times of grief: **1 Samuel 31:13, 1 Chronicles 10:12** (7 days mourning Saul and his sons)
 - In times of distress: **2 Samuel 1:12**
 - Spiritual power: **Mark 9:29** (Fighting spiritual opposition)



- Wisdom: **Daniel 1:12** (10 days vegetables and water), **Acts 14:23**
- Set aside self for holiness: **1 Corinthians 7:5**
- Answered prayer: **Acts 10:30-31** (Cornelius)
- Mourning: **Daniel 10:1-3** (21 days)
- Special revelation: **Exodus 34:27-28** (40 days no bread or water)
- Spiritual recuperation and preparation: **1 Kings 19:1-9** (40 days no food or water)
- Ministry preparation: **Matthew 4:2** (40 days Jesus ate nothing)

D. Establish clear Spiritual goals and guidelines

- Establish an **altar**, a **place** and **time** to meet God through prayer and Bible reading. **1 Samuel 3:1-9**
- Have your Bible, paper and pen ready. **Habakkuk 2:4**
- Ask for **privacy** from family and close friends who need to know about your fast.
- Plan your fast in advance.
- Clear your calendar of events that would compromise fasting goals.

E. Fasting expectations:

- Physical:
 - You will find yourself moving slower, speaking less, and you become more reflective. **James 1:19**
 - A stronger mental battle than physical
- Spiritual:
 - Increased **hunger** for God
 - Increased **distaste** for the world
 - Powerful God encounters
 - Fresh revelation from God

- Understanding that there may be some negative views toward fasting ask your group to openly share their preconceptions and assumptions they have.

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS — THE LIFE, PART TWO

This week we begin our 40-day journey of prayer and fasting as a church. We invite you to join together as a community and provide support and encouragement to one another in this opportunity to grow in your relationship with God.

- The primary purpose of fasting must be to focus on God. While it is fine to understand the benefits and blessings of fasting we must guard against the temptation to use the discipline as a way to get God to do what we want. Yes, physical benefits, success in prayer, spiritual insights can be achieved through fasting, but these things must never replace God as the center of our fasting. Consider and discuss the following verses:
 - God's question to the people of Israel after returning from exile, **Zechariah 7:5**.
 - Jesus' challenges the motives of fasting, **Matthew 6:16-18**.



2. A secondary purpose of fasting is to discover the things that truly control us. Food, amongst other things, can serve as a cover up, and once removed the things we are trying to repress come quickly to the surface. Fasting can be the beginning step for us to allow God to deliver us from areas of bondage in our lives and give us greater control of the things that would control us. Ask your group to share areas of their lives that they want to gain control of.

- Psalm 69:10
- 1 Corinthians 6:12

3. Fasting reminds us that we are sustained by God alone. Food does not sustain us; God sustains us. By removing food we are nourished more by the power of God. Fasting becomes feasting as we take in more of the word of God. This is why we are told to not act miserable when fasting (*Matthew 6:16-18*), because we are in fact feeding on God. Discuss the challenges to accepting this fact.

- Matthew 4:4
- Colossians 1:17
- John 4:32, 34

4. Review the fasting guide as a group <http://www.sdrock.com/media/site/docs/misc/fasting/through-prayer-and-fasting-2013.pdf>

Add'l Notes:

