

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (WEEK 12)

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS – APRIL 18, 2010
PASTOR JEFF – FASTING (MT. 6:16-18)

connect

1. What's your name? Tell briefly about yourself (particularly if you are a new group, or if there are new people in the group this session).
2. What's your favorite snack? Have you ever gone without food? What was it like?

study

1. What are your first reactions to the idea of fasting?
2. Have you ever tried fasting? If you've had an experience of fasting, what prompted you to fast?
3. As Jeff shared back in week 10, Chapter 5 in the Sermon on the Mount ends with Jesus saying, "Be perfect," and chapter 6 begins with Jesus saying, "Be careful." What specific danger is Jesus warning us about as we seek to live a righteous life with Him?
4. In Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus discusses 3 key spiritual disciplines in our lives as His followers—giving, praying & fasting. If these spiritual disciplines are graces that build our relationship with God, in what specific ways do you think fasting builds our relationship with God?
5. When we fast, Jesus says, "Don't be like the hypocrites" or play actors. How can we be hypocritical in our fasting if we're not careful? Give an example. What would it look like if you were to practice fasting in the right way—what would your day look like?
6. The definition for fasting is: "*to voluntarily refrain from food [or anything] for a spiritual purpose.*" Of the 10 purposes listed on the back of the notes for practicing fasting, which one is most relevant for you right now?
7. If fasting means refraining or going without something in order to better focus on God, what are some other things [besides food] that might be helpful for us to fast from? List some examples.

8. What are some common excuses for not fasting? Why do you think so few U.S. Christians fast?
9. Jesus promises a reward whether we fast the wrong way or the right way. What's the difference between these rewards? In Isaiah 58:6-12, what benefits does God say we will enjoy?
10. What do you think might happen if our church were to fast and pray more often?
11. As we bring all of this home, what insight, principle or observation from this weekend's message stood out to you most? Explain.

pray

1. Pray that we will be men and women who are more hungry for our Father in heaven and what He wants to do in our lives, than we are for earthly rewards.
2. Prayer requests – how can you pray for each other this week?