

Thornbury Baptist Church
Small Group Discussion Questions

Talk Date: September 7th 2025

Talk title: Fasting

Passage: Matthew 6:16-18

Speaker: David Lawrence

Discussion Questions

- For those that have heard David's talk – has anything stayed with them as either a *question*, *new insight* or possible *new intention* regarding fasting?
- Have any of the group members ever engaged in fasting? What motivated them to do it? How would they describe the experience?
- In the talk David pointed out that this is the third of three instructions from Jesus regarding a Christian's spiritual life. Look briefly at all three. What do you notice? (6:2-4; 5-6; 16-18).
- Christian giving and prayer (items one and two on Jesus' list) remain priorities for most Christians but fasting less so. Why do you think that is?
- In the talk David used the following quote to explain fasting. "Fasting is the body talking what the spirit yearns, what the soul longs for, and what the mind knows to be true. Fasting is **body talk**... the whole person expressing herself or himself completely in prayer" (Scott McKnight). How do you respond to that thought?
- Look up some of these passages (as time allows) and see what each tells you about the reasons for fasting (1 Kings 21:27-29; Psalm 69:10; Daniel 9:3; Joel 2:12ff; Jonah 3:5; 2 Samuel 1:11-12; 2 Chronicles 20:3; Acts 27:33-34; Judges 20:26; Psalm 35:13; Acts 13:1; Acts 14:23)
- Read Matthew 9:14-15. What does this teach about fasting?
- If you were mentoring a new Christian, how would you describe the practice of fasting to them (remembering that effectively this is what Jesus was doing in the Sermon on the Mount).
- David gave some practical suggestions about how to engage with fasting. If people in the group wanted to engage with fasting, what practical guidelines might be helpful (these might differ between individuals).
 - Are there ways in which the group might encourage and support people as they fast?

Spend time praying with one another in the light of your discussion.

Takeaway

What is the main thing each person is taking away from this discussion?