

IT GOES BOTH WAYS

Matthew 6:5-18

5 – “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

6 – But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, Who is unseen. Then your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

7 – And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

8 – Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 - This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name,

10 – Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

11 - Give us today our daily bread.

12 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 – And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

14 - For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 – But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

16 - When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

17 - But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

18 – so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, Who is unseen; and your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

(1) FASTING.

Praying for HEALTH:

"David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground" **(2 Samuel 12:16)**

Praying for SAFETY:

"There, by the Ahava Canal, I [Ezra] proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions" **(Ezra 8:21)**.

As an act of REPENTANCE:

"When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." **(1 Samuel 7:6)**.

As a sign of MOURNING:

"They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword" **(2 Samuel 1:12)**.

Before making an important DECISION:

"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.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off...Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust " (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23).

Fasting is good for us PHYSICALLY.

Fasting's main benefit is SPIRITUAL.

Psalm 69:10, "I HUMBLED my soul with fasting."

Fasting should be done SECRETLY.

Fasting is a discipline we LEARN.

Fasting doesn't have to be about FOOD.

Fasting must be coupled with PRAYER.

(2) PRAYER. (Communication—between Us & God.

PRAYER IS US TALKING TO GOD.

HOW DO WE TALK TO GOD?

(1) WE MUST PRAY SECRETLY.

Luke 5:16, "...Jesus OFTEN withdrew to LONELY places to be by Himself and pray."

(2) PRAYER SHOULD BE OFFERED SINCERELY.

PRAYER IS GOD TALKING TO US.

John 10:14-15 "I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me...they listen to My voice."