

Hungering for God

Scripture Reading — Matthew 6:16-18

*“Fast ... so that it will not be obvious to others ... but only to your Father, who is unseen.”
—Matthew 6:17-18 —*

Maybe you are reading this as part of your mealtime devotions, with leftover food ready to be stored in the refrigerator. If so, your appetite may be satisfied, and it may feel a bit strange to be thinking about fasting.

Fasting was commonly practiced in ancient days. It was so important that Jesus assumes his followers were fasting: “When you fast ...” he says. Its purpose was to heighten one’s awareness of total dependence on God. A person may have fasted to express the need for God’s forgiveness, or to ask for comfort in a time of grief, or to seek guidance and help.

Fasting can be a beneficial discipline for Jesus’ followers today. However, it can also lead to spiritual pride. In Jesus’ day, the religious elite were known to fast at the times and places when the market would be busiest so that they would receive the most attention!

Fasting should draw our attention to God—not to ourselves. Fasting with sincere motives is rewarding because we learn to enjoy Jesus more deeply. We remember that our deepest needs are satisfied not by food but by the bread of life. Jesus fills our deepest hungers and our greatest longings. That’s why fasting is not a somber experience but a joyful one! Let’s feast on Jesus, even as we may fast from our food.

Prayer

We come to you, Lord, hungry for bread we cannot purchase, longing for food we cannot afford. Feed us with the only nourishment that can truly answer our longings. Lead us to realize our dependence on you. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Disciplines](#)

<https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/hungering-for-god-2013-10-21>

Printed on July 16, 2019

