**8 Reasons Leaders Should Be Fasting**

**By Chuck Lawless**

Nobody talked to me about fasting until I was in my first pastorate. The fact that many of us have never learned about or emphasized fasting, though, is not positive. Here are some reasons why church leaders ought to be fasting:

The Bible assumes believers will fast. The early church fasted before sending out missionaries (Acts 13:1-3) and before appointing elders (Acts 14:23). Jesus expected His disciples to fast after He returned to the Father (Matt. 9:14-17), just as much as He expected them to give and pray (Matt. 6:2-7, 16-17). Leaders must lead the way in being obedient in this discipline.

Fasting requires us to focus on God’s kingdom. The kingdom of God is already here (Luke 11:20), but also yet to come (Luke 22:18). We fast while we wait for the bridegroom to return for His bride, and doing so requires us to focus on His kingdom – not ours. Fasting might well show us that we are building our own kingdom.

Fasting leads to us to slow down and reflect. Leadership usually means activity and busyness. Always there is something else to complete, somebody to visit, the next meeting to conduct, another book to read. Often left behind is our private, personal, intimate walk with God. Fasting is one means to redirect our attention to Him.

Fasting calls us to consider our deepest longings. We do not fast to “get stuff” from God; we fast because we want God Himself more than anything else. Fasting exposes whether we truly believe encountering the eternal One is more significant than the temporary satisfaction of food. It forces us to determine what we really live for.

Fasting reveals who we really are. It was John Piper who taught me this truth. When hunger consumes us during fasting, we sometimes find ourselves grumpy, short-tempered, anxious, or faithless. To state it a better way, fasting brings to light our true self. Most of the time, repentance becomes the next necessary step.

Fasting should increase our praying. I love the way Charles Spurgeon united these disciplines: “The first [prayer] links us to heaven; the second [fasting] separates us from earth. Prayer takes us to the banqueting table of God; fasting overturns the indulgent tables of earth. Prayer allows us to feed on the Bread of Heaven, and fasting delivers our spirits from being encumbered with the fullness of bread that perishes.”

Fasting can be an honest expression of desperation for God. Jehoshaphat and his people cried out that way to God when three armies rallied against them (2 Chron 20:3). The people of God mourned, prayed, fasted, and sought God after Ezra read them the law (Neh 9:1). We, likewise, have desperate, repentant moments that call us to fast; in Piper’s words, then “God is committed to rewarding those acts of the human heart that signify human helplessness and hope in God.”

Fasting is a reminder we are not as strong as we think we are. Leaders are often by nature tough, persistent, and resilient. Fasting, however, quickly reveals our limitations. Even a short fast uncovers our struggle to deny self; a longer fast reminds us we are finite beings who die without nourishment. All our knowledge, training, and experience mean little when the body has no sustenance.

What lessons have you learned about fasting? What suggestions do you have for leaders who have not fasted regularly?

The above article, “8 Reasons Leaders Should Be Fasting,” was written by Chuck Lawless.

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”