

FASTING

A Spiritual Discipline

During our recent 24 hrs of PRAYER & FASTING many of those praying found that the act of **FASTING** was of great benefit to them.

FASTING is not an extreme form of prayer, neither is it supposed to be a discipline to dread and avoid. **FASTING** is simply that—a DISCIPLINE—an act that helps us to get our thoughts and minds in order.

The word **FASTING** seems to send shivers of horror down some of our spines. It smacks of over enthusiasm, or even fanaticism! Yet this is a form of Prayer that Jesus recommended and encouraged, so why are we so reticent?

When Jesus' disciples faced a very difficult situation and turned away feeling that they had failed, Jesus told them, *"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind does not go out except by PRAYER AND FASTING."* (Matthew 17 v 20, 21)

FASTING does not mean that you have to go without food for 40 days and 40 nights as Jesus did in the wilderness. It simply means that you forego something that is a normal part of your everyday life in order to emphasise the fact that you are serious about the thing you are praying for.

There are many different and various ways of practicing this discipline of FASTING. They don't have to be onerous, they just have to be something that reminds you constantly that you have covenanted with God to pray about something specific. As you FAST you are telling God, and yourself, that you are really serious about your prayers.

FASTING **one meal a day** for a week and using the time for prayer may be the right way forward for you. Or, perhaps, you might feel that you would like to take this a little further and **only eat one meal a day** for a week.

FASTING doesn't necessarily have to mean going without food. We can fast our favourite T.V. Programme perhaps and use the time for prayer, or go without tea and coffee, drinking only water instead. We can get up extra early (fasting our sleeping time) and use the time for prayer. We could leave the car at home and walk to the shops, again using the time to pray as we walk along. The possibilities

are endless. You know your own lifestyle, and you know what kind of FASTING fits in best with the way your family functions.

*Contracted together to
FAST and PRAY.*

Prayer and fasting go together quite naturally, and when a congregation contract with each other to pray and fast as one Body the power of prayer becomes a wonderful thing. Fasting for your own personal reasons brings great results, but Fasting as a congregation is even more powerful.

Wesley L Duewel in his book "Mighty Prevailing Prayer" says:-

"Fasting is so closely related to prayer that it adds its blessings in many ways ...First, it can bless and deepen your regular prayer. It is a blessed component of a deep devotional life, of a close walk with God. My father often pleaded when he exhorted his congregations to fast, 'Try it! Try it!'

Second, it can intensify your power to prevail in prayer. For those occasions when Satan is long-entrenched and needs to be driven back and expelled, fasting added to prevailing prayer may be imperative. For those battles where Satan has resisted thus far much militant intercession, add fasting to your prayer. If possible, add collective fasting and prayer.....Just as there are situations that call for united prayer, so there are needs that can be met only by adding

united fasting to united prayer. Unity in seeking God by fasting confers the same multiple dimensions of effectiveness as unity in seeking God by prayer alone, only more so."

As the combination of Prayer and Fasting is so powerful it would be foolish of us to neglect this means of really hearing and understanding what God wants for our future at W.B.C. This is a time when we all need each other, for we are only truly united when we function as one Body.

**GOING FORWARD INTO THE
FUTURE.**

Because of this we are encouraging everyone to consider Fasting and Praying on the first Wednesday of each month as preparation for our Church Prayer Meeting. In this way Fasting could become an integral part of our prayer life at WBC.

Maybe you have never tried FASTING—well why not try it now. Maybe you used to FAST, but have let the habit slip—well here's your opportunity to pick it up again. Because we believe that God has great plans for His people, we need to learn to co-operate with Him in order for them to become a real part of our everyday lives. May God bless all of us as we seriously seek His face and try to be obedient to His call on our lives.

Mavis Gibbs.