

**about ...**

## **Fasting + 1 Question**

*“Why is it ... that something Jesus believed to be ... **so important** ...  
is for the most part ... considered totally **unimportant**  
by most of His followers today?”*

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Now ... I’m not going to speak about Jesus and His practice of fasting ... because we all know it well. Quite simply, Jesus fasted frequently ...

and His own words reveal to us that His **purpose in fasting** was often to draw near to God during the times wherein He most particularly needed the closeness and/or help of His Father.

**And** ... in Luke 5 Jesus made it perfectly clear that He “expected” His followers to fast once He was no longer with them.

**That’s NOW** my fellow ministers ... **and that’s US!**

Pastor Pete Fischer

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And to be clear, I’m not talking about corporate fasting ... you know, when we ministers call our congregations to a period of fasting as often happens once or twice during the year.

And I’m not talking about the times wherein a serious need literally drives us to fast ... such as when one of our congregants or family members are in the hospital facing a difficult operation ... or, as was the case a year ago, when many fasted leading up to the presidential election.

Rather today, I want to speak about ... the regular discipline of “personal fasting” ... when it’s just between the Lord and ourselves - nobody else knowing about it, except possibly our spouse and maybe our children.

It’s a discipline much like that of our “personal prayer” practice ... something the Lord calls us to do on a “regular basis” both to draw closer to Him ... and to help build our Christian character.

Pastor Pete Fischer

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*“Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the pious custom of fasting. Strict exercise of self-control is an essential feature of the Christian life.*

*“Such customs have only one purpose - to make the disciples more ready and cheerful to accomplish those things which God would have them do.”*

The Cost of Discipleship  
Dietrick Bonhoffer

To Bonhoffer this personal practice of fasting was in fact akin to one’s personal practice of prayer. Both were essential for the serious-minded Christian.

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*“ ... fasting means “concentration,” because when you’re fasting, you have a heightened sense of attentiveness. Food ... can satisfy, fill you up, and dull your senses and spiritual ears. In contrast, a hungry stomach makes you more aware and alert to what God is trying to say to you.”*

Oswald Chambers

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Fasting is ... a “discipline” - and a discipline by its very nature means that it’s something that’s got to be developed.

And hear me on this: that will ... **never happen** ... unless and until we first see it as a *requirement* for us ... in other words ... something that Jesus fully expected us to do.

Finally, take note: we never get very far in the development of any discipline until we first know ... **without a doubt** that it is an “obligation” for us. One has to first ... believe that developing a personal practice to fasting is a MUST in their Christian walk. Believing that ... they then have a chance to actually accomplish it.

Pastor Pete Fischer

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*“I fast just often enough to let my stomach know who is boss.”*

A. W. Tozer

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*“It’s silly when you put it in perspective. (The moment) We think about missing a meal or two for the sake of becoming more like Jesus ... we get anxious. And yet we willingly miss meals sometimes while shopping, working, recreating, or otherwise (being) occupied.*

*“Whenever we believe another activity is at that moment more important, we will go without food fearlessly and without complaint.”*

Donald Whitney

We must never lose sight of the fact that fasting (as with most disciplines) involves *sacrifice* ... which nearly always involves a degree of pain.

We have to accept that ... and in fact, have to grow to actually welcome it.

I love what Wayne Weible (one of the early leaders of the Croatian revival) once said:

*“Fasting in any form ... is only successful when we come to that inevitable point of need ... or want ... or temptation to break the fast ... (but yet stick with it).”*

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**1 Question:** *“Lord Jesus, You know that I want to become more like You. What would You have me do following this retreat regarding*  
**Fasting?**