

Connect Group notes 7 July 2025

Chris completed our current sermon series 'Living in a Spiritual World' on Sunday. He spoke to us about the importance of desiring Jesus – particularly through fasting.

See Psalm 63: 1-8 – the psalmist cries out to God with his whole being.

Fasting is a way we show discipline and a declaration regarding our desire for God. As we fast and make God the object of our desire, we create space to tune out the noise of the world and tune in to the voice of God.

God fills the emptiness that fasting creates, as we starve our strong desires (food, or whatever else we fast from) in order to feed our deepest desire (God).

Discussion Points

1. Fasting is not often a subject taught about, and historically has been misunderstood
 - What is our understanding of, or thoughts about, fasting?
 - What is our understanding of the difference between 'en vogue' dietary fasting and biblical fasting?
 - Does it help us be more open to fasting if we understand more about it?
 - Does fasting always have to be about food? For those who can't abstain from food (ie. with eating disorders, or other health needs) how can they participate in this spiritual discipline?

2. Chris talked about the fact that it is good for us from a spiritual perspective, to deny our own desires and bring them into submission through fasting
 - How is fasting in relation to this counter cultural?

- Why might we say that biblical fasting can bring freedom? (think about how the things we fast from have the potential to become addictive, causing spiritual bondage, as well as having the opportunity when we go without, to turn to God).
 - Discuss fasting as a discipline, not a spiritual gift.
 - Why do we experience an increased difficulties or temptations when we fast?
 - How can we be aware of and manage the above (ie. being careful about our levels of irritability with people, tiredness etc?)
3. Chris taught that at times fasting has been misused and/or misunderstood.
- Have we ever felt like fasting was a way we could twist God's arm to do something or as a way to earn his favour?
 - How can this set us up for disappointment?
 - How do we make fasting a part of our lives, in order to express our desire for God (instead of obtaining something from him)
- Chris gave us these thoughts.....
- ~ **start small and build from there** - maybe skip a meal to start with and use the time to pray, fast from social media for a morning, skip the gym, cut down from three coffees a day to two.
 - ~ **tell someone** to help keep you accountable (this isn't bragging, just asking a friend to help you in your walk with Jesus in this particular way).
 - ~ **write it down** – what you are sensing or feeling, all the different emotions (you will at some point feel uncomfortable). You will start to hear God's voice with greater clarity, and it's helpful to go back and reflect on.

PRAY and Apply

As a faith community we are being encouraged to seek God through fasting over a period of 48 hours on 15 and 16 July 2025.

Ask ourselves;

'What would it look like for me to respond to this invitation?'

Seek God as to how he would have you lean into this spiritual discipline.

