**Lesson 21: FaSTING**

**REASONS FOR FASTING**

Definition of fasting: Giving up at least one meal to spend extra time praying and seeking God. This could be through prayer or reading the Scripture; the Holy Spirit will direct you on what to do. If you just skip a meal and do not seek God, you are just dieting and not fasting.

⏵In the following passages, what are the reasons for fasting?

**Read *Acts 13:1-2***

⏵ What did the Holy Spirit tell the church to do while they were fasting?

**Read *Acts 14:20-23***

⏵ What did Paul and Barnabas do as part of their appointing of the elders?

**Read *Matthew 9:14-15***

⏵ What did Jesus say about fasting in these verses?

**Read *Esther 4:15-16***

⏵ Why did Esther feel the need to call the nation of Israel to fast? Why did she not ask them to pray?

**Read *2 Samuel 1:11-12***

⏵ Why do David and his men fast in this situation?

**Read *Ezra 8:21-23***

⏵ Why does Ezra ask the people to fast and pray?

⏵ What was the result of the people fasting and praying?

**SUPERNATURAL FASTS**

**Scripture only records three supernatural fasts of 40 days.**

1. **Exodus 34:27-28 – Moses fasted 40 days**
2. **1 Kings 19:7-8 – Elijah fasted 40 days**
3. **Matthew 4:1-2 – Jesus fasted 40 days**

**HOW WE SHOULD FAST**

**Read *Matthew 6:16-18***

⏵ What do these verses teach us about how we should act when we fast?

**Read *Zachariah 7:4-5***

⏵ What is God’s concern about the manner in which these people fast and mourn?

There are two major things that will drive fasting in your life:

1. Issues in your life.
2. Consistency in your life.

Regarding prayer- consistent, regular fasting in your life will increase your ability to hear God. You can hear Him without fasting, but fasting will maximize your ability to concentrate and focus on Him and improve your ability to hear Him.

There are no hard and fast rules about fasting given in the Bible. It does not give a time or length. It may be need-driven or it may be a regular, consistent part of our lives.

***We will discuss together some suggestions about how to fast at the end of the discipleship lesson!***