

## March Spiritual Discipline of the Month:

### Fasting

**Fasting.** To abstain from food, or certain types of food. The purpose isn't to lose weight or to check our will power. When we fast we substitute prayer and a closer focus on God for the food we would normally eat. Our hunger for food becomes a hunger for God. Many people have fasted without realizing it when they "gave something up for Lent."

Strictly speaking, fasting involves food, but it is possible to fast from other things, especially things that might be getting in the way of your relationship with God. Maybe you spend a lot of time on the computer or in front of the TV. It might be valuable for you to take some of that time and to devote it to God instead of those other activities.

Fasting also allows us to more clearly focus on God and what God is trying to tell us. It allows us to be more open to where God is leading. If we pray and fast it doesn't mean that God will automatically give us what we ask for, but it will allow us to be more tuned to God's will.

*"So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer." - Ezra 8:23 (NIV)*

### Practical Suggestions / Challenge for the Month

- ✓ Take it easy at first, especially if you've never fasted before.
- ✓ Prepare yourself spiritually prior to fasting. Prayerfully seek God's help and direction when deciding to fast.
- ✓ Remember that there are different kinds of fasts. For example, you might fast from something in particular, like red meat, or caffeine. You might choose to fast from solid food but continue to consume liquids. If you decide to do a total fast, it is important to drink water.
- ✓ Before fasting it would be helpful to talk to someone who has done this before.
- ✓ Partnering with someone can help make fasting even more meaningful as you can share your experiences with each other as you compare notes.

## Other Things to Remember:

1. It is not always easy to incorporate a new spiritual discipline into your life.
2. Choose a time for fasting that will not be overwhelming (like not on the day of a big family feast).
3. If you break the fast, don't give up.
4. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
5. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, and prayers during the fast.
6. Enjoy the experience!

**Helpful Hints:** "When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don't make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won't make you a saint. If you 'go into training' inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn't require attention-getting devices. He won't overlook what you are doing; He'll reward you well. Matthew 6:16-18 (The Message)

If you have any questions or need additional help, contact us at (302)378-7692 or [connect@connectioncc.org](mailto:connect@connectioncc.org).

For additional information on Spiritual Disciplines, refer to The Celebration of Discipline by Robert Foster.