



Fasting

HolyHabits

Worship

We can build up 'holy habits' as we choose to get to know more of God's ways. Holy habits Theme Song: <https://youtu.be/h4nDQOYbiqE>



As part of 'The Well Sheffield' we can know that the well of God's love and provision will never run dry! Let's remember that as we worship God singing 'Deep Cries Out': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luJv28w4Y_U

Word cont...

Fasting means we have to make a choice and stick to it, which takes determination and effort! It isn't easy to choose to go without the things we like, but when we do, it gives God the glory. It is an opportunity to become closer to God through prayer and reliance on him.

Important: We need to be sensible in what we fast and we need our families to help us decide what is right for us.

Word

Fasting means choosing to go without food or certain things we really enjoy, because we want to focus instead on God. Sometimes, food is not the only thing we can choose to give up. It might be that you realise some things you enjoy doing, take up too much of your time and attention and draw you away from thinking about and getting to know God. For example; my sons sometimes fast their computer games. They have a day where they do not go on the X-box and instead they have to find something to do that gets them to think about and spend time with God instead.



Some things to know about fasting:

- If we fast, we must choose to do it so that we can centre / focus on God. We spend that time with God, we try to listen to Him (we'll need our 'spiritual ears' that we talked about during the 'Prayer' session) and we expect God to nourish us.
- Fasting reminds us that God is our provider of every good and perfect gift. It can help us to be thankful for all the amazing things that God gives us.
- Fasting is a holy habit not a punishment. So if you choose to give up biscuits for a few days to focus on God, don't think that you are doing it to punish yourself. You are doing it by choice, because you want to focus your mind more on God than on biscuits!
 - The more we practise the holy habit of 'fasting', the easier you'll find it to focus on God and tune-in to hearing God's voice in your life.

What does it say in the Bible about fasting?

In the Bible it does say "when you fast..." (Matthew 6: 16) so it is something that followers of Jesus are expected to do.

Matthew 22: 37 is a key verse. Read it and chat together as a family about why this shows that holy habits like fasting are important.

Daniel 1:1-16 tells the story of how Daniel and his friends bravely asked to do something that was different to the rest of the king's school because they wanted to follow God's ways. Daniel and his friends actually became fitter, healthier and stronger by fasting. God blessed them for their good choices.

Acts 13: 1-3 shows how fasting and praying helped believers make decisions. Talk together about the kind of decisions that you as a family might need to pray and fast about.

Activity suggestions



A way to try fasting:

- 1) Take two cups / jars (you can decorate them if you are allowed).
- 2) Label one of them "Give Up" and the other one "Fill Up"
- 3) Write on slips of paper examples of things you could give up / fast and place it in the "Give Up" pot
- 4) Talk as a family about what you could safely fast for a short time during this coming week. Then try giving that thing up for the agreed time. Choose to focus on spending time with God (reading the Bible, watching a Bible story re-telling, praying, being quiet etc).
- 5) Write out scripture verses or pictures of how you feel or God's promises or things that you learn about yourself or God that you fill up with when you fast - place these in the "Fill Up" pot



Reflect

Things to reflect on:



I wonder how prayer and fasting might be connected?

I wonder how fasting might help me to trust God more?

I wonder what 'hungering for more of God' means?