

**Short Review**

Review the main points of the message.

**Some Questions for Discussion:** Focus on: God making us cheerful givers as He is a cheerful giver

1. What are your favorite dishes? The ones that make your mouth water when you think of them...
  - a. What happens in our body and mind when we think of those foods?
  - b. How does our physiological response change when:
    - i. We are really hungry?
    - ii. We are full?
    - iii. We are sick?
2. There are many analogies and lessons in comparing the hunger of the stomach and the hunger of the soul... how many can you come up with?
  - a. Which hunger is easier to discern? Why?
  - b. What does it mean when we don't feel hunger?
  - c. What is good and bad 'food' for each?
  - d. What happens if we don't 'eat'?
3. Summarize in your own words what it means to seek the face of God. [Jehoshaphat; II Chron. 7:14; Ps. 27:8; 24:6; Hosea 5:15 etc.]
  - a. Comment on the contrast with Asa (II Chron. 16:12 and 16:9 with 17:3,4). What was different between the two men?
  - b. Comment on the contrast with Ahab (II Chron. 18) - Why did Ahab NOT want to hear the prophet of God?
4. How can we clear our minds and hearts enough to hear God say what we may not want to hear?
5. If you think of fasting, do you think of it positively, negatively, indifferently?
  - a. What have you seen, heard or experienced about fasting?
  - b. How does fasting help us to focus on prayer?
6. Leader: Go over the insert on fasting and answer any questions people may have. Help each to come up with a plan which might work. Share examples and stories as people are willing to share.

# Fasting and praying

## Seeking God's guidance

“Speak Lord for your servant is listening”

I Samuel 3:9

### How do I spend my time when I am fasting?

- Pray alone, pray with others.
  - Set apart enough time to quiet your mind and heart to spend time in prayer.
  - Meet with others to pray.
    - Some are walking around the church grounds and praying as they walk. Find friends to join you in such prayer.
    - Limit this to those who are committed to prayer and not ordinary conversation.
  - Ask the Lord to tell you how you and your family should participate in the Building Fund
- Read the Word of God.
  - Follow the “40 Days of Prayer” brochure.
  - Read additional portions of Scripture. E.g. Scriptures we considered in the past weeks: Nehemiah 1:1-11; II Chron. 2:1-10; Exodus 14:1-18; I Chron. 19:1-19; II Cor. 9:6-15
  - Meditate on what you have read. Ask the Lord to speak to you and direct you through His Word. Jot down notes.
- If you are able, spend time singing choruses and hymns. This helps to focus your mind on the majesty, love and grace of our Lord. But don't let the whole time be taken up with lyrics others have written. Instead, let the songs prepare you to let *your* prayers and requests to be made known the Lord.

### What kind of fast is best for me?

There are several ways to fast in order to set apart time to seek God.

- Give up meals: this is the most common type of fast mentioned in the Bible.
  - Be **wise about your health**. **You may want to consult your physician if you have a chronic condition or because of medication you take.** Remember, there are *other ways to fast – see below*.
  - Decide what kind of fast you will do. For example: Give up all food for a day; give up a meal each day and use the time you would have spent in meal preparation to pray; drink juices only.
- Give up some normal activities.
  - That is, “fast” even from good activities in order to create time to pray.
  - What activities, hobbies, or recreations could you give up?
    - Media: TV, tablets, computer searches, music
    - Cell phone: texting, non-essential calls
    - Reading of magazines, novels and other books
- Make prayer and seeking God a priority.
  - Rearrange your schedule to be able to pray.
  - Limit social activities to create time for prayer.
  - Set an example for the family by saying no to activities of school and children as much as possible.
  - If possible, take a day off from work, a “personal day,” in order to devote it to prayer.

