



DIGGING DEEPER

Best Practices: Generosity, Fasting, Prayer

This study guide is designed to help you dig deeper into the weekend message and apply it to your life. The questions below are meant to encourage thoughtful reflection, discussion, and prayer for you and your group. If you missed the message (or want to hear it again) go to fopc.org/sermon or download the Fair Oaks Church App.

PRAY [Have someone open in prayer.]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is something that stood out to you from this week's message or passage?
2. What is significant about Jesus saying, "when you give," "when you pray," and "when you fast?" Are giving, prayer, and fasting a part of how you pursue Jesus?
3. Jesus makes it clear that when we give, pray, or fast, the intent matters. What are some ways you have let yourself be affected by others when you give, pray, or fast?
4. Whatever we are seeking, whether human approval or God's approval, our hearts will find a way to find it. What are a few ways you could change the way you live or act in order to have a heart turned toward God rather than human approval?
5. Giving, prayer, or fasting—three tangible practices that all believers should be practicing. Have each member of your group pick one of these practices to put into practice this month. Write them down and hold one another accountable to it!

PRAY [Close in prayer!]

KEY SCRIPTURE [Matthew 6:1-18]

Giving to the Needy "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer ⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting ¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.