

Mar 26/23 – Small Groups –
Expressing our Deep Hunger -“Matthew 6:16-18”

1. Tim began the sermon by reflecting on the reality that fasting (giving up food for a spiritual purpose) is the least practiced of the kingdom disciplines. Do you think this is true? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. It was C.S. Lewis who said – we are creatures, so what we do with our bodies impacts our souls. What is going on in our bodies when we fast? How does this impact our souls?

Read Matthew 6:16-18

3. The Pharisees in fasting were turning their hunger outward in order to be satisfied by others. In what ways do we turn our hunger outward in order to be satisfied by others? In so doing do we find such hunger satisfied?

There are three deep hungers of the human heart that fasting gives expression to 1) the hunger for right relationship 2) the hunger for wisdom and direction 3) the hunger for his presence.

Hunger for Right Relationship - Read Isaiah 58:1-12

4. In the scriptures fasting and repentance go hand in hand, for the only proscribed fast was on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. The hunger that lies under repentance is the hunger for at one ment, for right relationship with our heavenly Father. What does this text tell us about the true heart of fasting? The true fruit of fasting?

Hunger for Wisdom and Direction - Read Acts 12:25-13:5

5. As we hunger for the Lord’s wisdom and direction we are invited to fast and pray. Is there anything in your life that you would yearn for heavenly wisdom that might invite you to the practice of fasting?

Hunger for His Presence - Read Matthew 9:14-15; Psalm 63:1-8

6. In this interaction Jesus is reflecting on the reality that fasting expresses hunger for Jesus’ presence, for the Spirit to make Jesus real to us. In the Psalm David is hungering for the steadfast love of God to be made more real to him, and as he hungers he is praising the character of God, meditating upon the Lord’s goodness. Have you ever had an experience of a truth being made real to you? How did it impact your life?
7. Which of the three hungers would you like to express in fasting? How could we as a group support you in that practice?