

Life Group – Week 5

Going for breakthrough – *the discipline of fasting*

Leader: Welcome to this Life Group (Spiritual Formation Group). May the Holy Spirit bless us and may we find fellowship and encouragement during this time together. We come together with one aim – to become better disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this by encouraging one another to keep Jesus' word which is what we naturally do when we love him (John 14:23-24). Through the grace of mutual accountability, we strive to inspire one another to love and good works. Everything said here is in confidence. We are safe and free to share honestly. This is how we help each other.

A few moments for silent prayer

Together: In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as my ever-living Saviour, Teacher, Lord and Friend, I will seek continual renewal in the power of the Holy Spirit and daily transformation into the likeness of Christ.

In turn read through the *Common Disciplines* which are statements of intention based on the six traditions (contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice, evangelical, incarnational).

- By God's grace, I will set aside time regularly for prayer, meditation and spiritual reading and will seek to practise the presence of God.
- By God's grace, I will strive mightily against sin and will do deeds of love and mercy.
- By God's grace, I will welcome the Holy Spirit, exercise His gifts and nurture His fruit. I will live in the joy and power of the Spirit.
- By God's grace, I will endeavour to serve others everywhere I can and will work for justice in human relationships and social structures.
- By God's grace, I will share my faith with others as God leads and will study the scriptures regularly.
- By God's grace, I will joyfully seek to show forth the presence of God in all that I am, in all that I do and in all that I say.

Scripture reading, reflection and sharing -

Luke 4:1-13

Meditate on Christ's experience in the wilderness. Why was this time so important for him before he even began his ministry? Does the passage impress on you that maybe fasting should be important for you too?

Check up

What progress have you made in the areas of meditation, prayer and study over recent weeks?

Questions of the heart

Beginning with the leader, each member is encouraged to share from their experiences in the past week. Select from the following questions to help focus the discussion.

- **What temptations have you faced?** How did you respond? Which disciplines has God used to lead you further into holiness of heart and life?
- **Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit?** What spiritual gifts has he enabled you to exercise? What fruit of the Spirit would you like to see increase in your life? Which disciplines might be useful in this effort?

Thinking about fasting

What was your first reaction to the thought of fasting?

What is the most difficult thing about fasting for you?

What do you think about the church having corporate days of prayer and fasting from time to time?

Looking ahead

Agree to fast for 24 hours this week, give the saved time to God and record anything you learn from the experience.

Try fasting from TV or all media for the week and see what you learn about yourself.

Ending

Continue to pray each day for each member of the group, maybe at an agreed time in the day.

Leader: *Please remember that what we have heard here was spoken in confidence and should remain so. May the love, peace and power of God be with us during this week.*