

FAITH IN ACTION

Matthew 6:1-18

“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.” - Matthew 6:1

As you begin your group time use the following questions to get the conversation started:

Describe a time in your life when you showed unusual discipline as you worked toward a goal, such as running a marathon, or studying for a license related to your career. What were some of the disciplines you used to meet your goal?

What was the biggest sacrifice you made, or the biggest hurdle you overcame?

Spiritual disciplines are practices and habits that are to be incorporated into the daily life of the Christ follower. Some examples include Bible intake (reading, meditating on, and memorizing Scripture), prayer, worship, evangelism, serving, giving, fasting, silence and solitude, and journaling. These disciplines form the foundation for how we train in godliness, because through them we learn more about our God and we invite the Holy Spirit to work in and through us to put our faith into action. Let's take a look at three of these core spiritual disciplines: giving, praying, and fasting.

The first spiritual discipline Christ talks about putting into action is **GIVING**. **Read Matthew 6:1-4 together as a group.**

Why does God expect His kingdom people to be givers?

Jesus used the statement in Matthew 6:2 “when you give.” What should we assume from this simple statement?

What are some of the selfish reasons we're motivated to serve the poor? How do these motives compare with the ones Jesus desires us to have?

If God is the One who gives us everything we have, what role do we play in giving?

The second spiritual discipline that will help us put our faith into action is **PRAYING**. **Read together Matthew 6:5-15.**

How can we know if our motives are pure when it comes to prayer? What are some obvious clues our motives might not be pure?

What three kinds of prayer did Jesus say to avoid?

Which of these provides the greatest challenge or temptation to you? Explain why.

The final spiritual discipline Jesus mentions putting into action is **FASTING**. **Read together Matthew 6:16-18.**

Why is fasting an opportunity for confession of sin?

Have you ever fasted and what was your motivation?

Why is feeling our weakness in fasting so important? How have you experienced this?

What good things in your life are most likely to distract you from focusing on your relationship with God? How might the discipline of fasting help you reorder your priorities?

Pray:

Thank God for giving us tools like giving, prayer, and fasting, with which we can grow in our relationship with Him. Ask God to help you carefully consider your motives for engaging in spiritual disciplines. Pray that your group members would grow to treasure Christ supremely and God might use the discipline of fasting to deepen their affections for Christ.

Connect:

Fasting is a very uncommon spiritual discipline in today's culture. Below is the link to an online guide of the spiritual and physical preparation and expectations when fasting. Read through it and decide for yourself if fasting is something you would like to attempt to grow closer to the Lord. Share with your VGroup your experience!

<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.5.html>