



## **SESSION 1** (BIBLE STUDY emphasis):

*This session has some introductory discussion starters & issues to consider; with the main focus a 'journey through scripture' to give an overview of fasting in the bible.*

*Each section has a number of pointers with scriptural reference for each. As you consider each section, you could give either 2's & 3's (or individuals) a scripture each to look up in each section, & then report back to the group what their scripture said, what they thought it was getting at; & what most got their attention about it...*

### • **fasting is? (groupwork)**

*introductory goal of drawing out people's current journey or experience of fasting*

fasting is...?:

my current experience...?:

my questions...?

### • **why is this emphasis important?**

- Neglected in theology and practice
- New dimension with regard to discipline
- Deals with the 'resistor in the circuit' – appetites  
*(the stated key of General Enoch Adeboye - Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria [www.rccg.org](http://www.rccg.org) to go from 2000 people to hosting meetings of 20 million!!)*
- A place of increased commitment, sensitivity & intimacy
- Can provide breakthroughs
- ASSUMPTION:. There is a New Testament challenge that Christians will fast, and that prayer & fasting go together, as part of the habits of being a follower of Jesus.

READ TOGETHER Matthew 6 v16, 9v15

What gets your attention about these passages? What issues does it raise for you?



- **purpose of fasting**

1. To seek God
2. To get God's attention – Isaiah 58:1-11
3. To show God we mean business – Joel 2, 1 Samuel 7:5-6
4. To show God we are really sorry – Ezra 9:1-3
5. To plead with God to change His mind – 2 Kings 20:1-6
6. For power – Matthew 17:20, Mark 9:29
7. For unanswered prayer – Psalm 35:13-14, Psalm 109 (24)
8. To deny yourself
9. To put to death your sinful nature – appetites!

**recommended reading: 'God's Chosen Fast' ( a spiritual & practical guide to fasting) – Arthur Wallis**

*very old fashioned in places, but fairly comprehensive*

**'Spirit of the Disciplines' – Dallas Willard**

**'Celebration of Discipline' – Richard Foster**

*2 'classics' that have an overview of spiritual disciplines including (but not exclusive to) fasting  
(Life Giving Habits are based on these 2 books)*