

Fasting: Saving Room for Something Better

Matthew 6:16–18 | Habits of Grace Series | Good Shepherd
Community Church | January 3-4, 2026

**Big Idea: Save room for something better by FASTING to
express and intensify HUNGER FOR GOD!**

Opening

- The sermon opened with the reality of ups and downs in life. What was one “high” and one “low” for you from last year? How did you experience—or need—God’s grace in those moments?
- The sermon series “Habits of Grace” is about developing habits for receiving the strengthening of God’s grace for all the ups and downs of life.

Read & Reflect

- Read Matthew 6:16–18 aloud.
- Observation: What stands out to you in Jesus’ instructions?
- Why do you think Jesus says ‘when you fast’ instead of ‘if you fast’?

Section 1 – Jesus Expects Us to Fast

- Why do you think fasting is so rare among Christians today?
- How does fasting differ from dieting or skipping meals?
- What does fasting reveal about what we value most?

Section 2 – God Rewards Those Who Fast

- Jesus says the Father ‘will reward you.’ What kind of reward do you think He means?
- How does fasting express hunger for God?
- How would you describe your current hunger for God – strong, weak, inconsistent, growing? What tends to increase or decrease that hunger?
- The sermon suggested that we may lack hunger for God because we are “stuffed” with other things. What good but distracting things most easily crowd out your desire for God?

Section 3 – Fast to Be Seen by God

- Why is motive so important in fasting?
- How can we guard against fasting for human approval?
- How does fasting reshape our prayers to focus on God's glory rather than personal gain?

Application & Prayer

- The church was invited to fast weekly through January, or to fast from something else if food fasting isn't possible. What kind of fast do you sense God inviting you into right now (if any)?
- If you fast, how will you use the time you free up to seek Him?
- Pray together for revival and deeper hunger for God in 2026.

Next Step Takeaway:

Fast one 24-hour period a week through January (Tuesday after dinner through Wednesday lunch).

Practical Suggestions for Fasting:

- If you are under 18, get permission from your parents to fast from food. If you struggle with an eating disorder, DO NOT fast from food.
- Prepare for the fast from food the day before by eating fruits and vegetables, not drinking much pop or coffee, and drinking plenty of water.
- The day of your fast, drink plenty of water or juice and very little caffeine.
- While fasting, let every feeling of hunger remind you of your hunger for God. Tell God: 'This is how much I want you.'
- During times when you would normally enjoy what you are fasting from, spend the time reading the Bible and praying.
- Have specific prayer requests in mind. Pray for His will to be done in specific areas of your life, or for Him to give you freedom from specific struggles in your life.
- Don't make it obvious that you are fasting, and do not brag about your fast.
- Expect it to be hard. The devil does not like it when we fast.
- Decide in advance how long you will fast, and don't break the fast early.
- Celebrate the end of the fast by worshipping God through enjoying what you were fasting from.