

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

For almost 2 months, we have repeated one phrase over and over again: we don't fight FOR victory, we fight FROM victory. In the final week of our Battle Ready series, Paul drove home the obvious but often overlooked truth in that statement: while we may not fight for victory, we do, actually, **still fight, and because we fight from victory, we're free to fight for others**. We fight because there are souls at stake, and we fight by employing the armor and weapons we've been given. This week, we learned about one final weapon – fasting – and that when we fast for the right reasons, something powerful happens in the battle.

1. **Never fast for YOUR AGENDA:** When you read the first few verses of Isaiah 58, it sounds so good, doesn't it? God's people are seeking Him and seem eager to know His direction. They appear to want to do the right things and seem to have a desire for His presence. They were even fasting, which is more than many believers do today, and yet something was wrong. We find the answer in verse 3 – even though they were fasting, they were still doing whatever THEY pleased. They weren't fasting to please God; they were fasting to please themselves, and as a result, God didn't hear them (v. 4).
2. **Always fast for GOD'S AGENDA:** The prophet went on to point out the right way to fast, and that is to see people set free, injustices made right, the hungry fed and the homeless housed. It's not a call to social activism as much as it's a call to have the Father's heart, and His heart is always FOR people. Remember how the people weren't heard when they fasted for their own agenda? The opposite happens when we fast for God's agenda – just read everything after the word "then" in verse 8 and see all of the power that is released when we fast for God's heart!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What words come to your mind when you think about fasting?
- Most believers think of fasting as an optional "add on" to the faith or the kind of thing that only "Super Christians" do. But what does the first word of Matthew 6:16 reveal about that? How does the fact that Jesus said "when" and not "if" challenge the notion that fasting is optional?
- The issue isn't whether or not God wants fasting to be a weapon in our Battle Ready arsenal. The issue is whether or not we are using that weapon correctly or incorrectly. According to Matthew 6:16 and Isaiah 58:3-5, what are some wrong reasons to fast?
- Continue reading in Matthew 6:17-18 and Isaiah 58:6-7 and talk about some of the right reasons to fast.
- Read the following passages: Isaiah 58:8-12; Ezra 8:23; Acts 13:2. What are some things that happen when we fast?
- This Tuesday is First Tuesday, a day every month that we set aside as a day of fasting and prayer. Consider how you will take part in this, not only this month, but every First Tuesday.
- What takeaway, if any, did you have from the message this week? From the Battle Ready series?
- **FOR FURTHER STUDY:** Here are some links to explore over the next week.
["Unlocking the Power of Fasting"](#) by Kay Arthur
["Fasting for Beginners"](#) by David Mathis