

FASTING & FEASTING

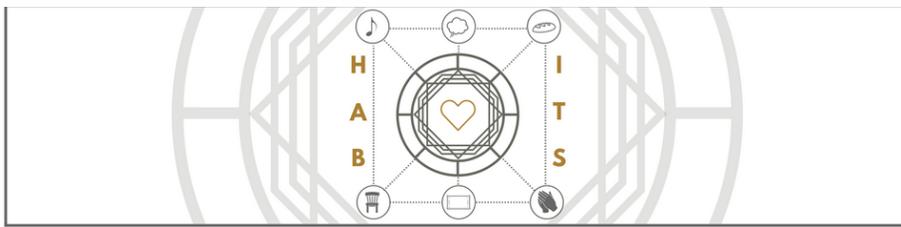
Week 4 – May 28-June 3

- **Passage: Matthew 6:16-18**
- **Memory Verse:** *“that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:18, ESV)
- **Big Idea**
 - How would you summarize the main idea of the sermon this week?
 - How can we become more satisfied with heavenly rewards than earthly?
- **Applying God’s Word in Community** – Plan to spend less time than normal on discussion to prioritize Kingdom Prayer in your gathering this week.
 - What is the purpose of fasting according to the Bible?
 - Where do you look for glory or praise outside of God? (e.g. from co-workers, classmates, acquaintances, your spouse, your children)
 - What rewards from your Father might you be missing because you are feasting on lesser “meals” of glory from others?
 - If repentance is turning from sin and moving toward God, what does repentance look like for you in response to this message?



– It is Kingdom Prayer week in our church, so during our CG gatherings we are collectively focusing on inviting God’s reign as King to increase in and around us.

- **Upward** - Spend time fixing your gaze on God, praising and worshipping him for his greatness and his marvelous deeds (Psalm 77:11-15). Ask him to fill your hearts with his fullness (Ephesians 3:14-19).
- **Inward** - Invite God to lovingly but effectively shed light on the darkness in your heart and in our community, where we have sought glory outside of him (Matt 6:16).
 - Confess your sins to one another (perhaps in pairs) and call on God’s great mercy to forgive (Numbers 14:19).
 - Then, receive the free and complete forgiveness that God grants only through Jesus’ work on your behalf (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:12-14).
 - **Ask God to give you faith to believe that you possess the forgiveness he promises in Christ – let if wash over you, striving to experience and sit in it.** (Consider practicing meditation and solitude of heart here.)
- **Outward** - Spend time asking God to manifest his kingdom in you, our community, and in our surrounding neighborhoods. Here are some suggested areas of prayer:



- Ask God to give us loving courage to walk powerfully in our identities as his witnesses in our buildings, workplaces, and relational circles (Acts 1:8).
- Ask God to stir in us compassion and resolve to sacrifice for the benefit of the poor and marginalized in our communities. Ask him to fuel our partnerships with HFNY, Safe Families, Avail, and the East Harlem Salvation Army.
- Ask God to prepare and strengthen our five new deacon candidates as they near appointment. (Emily Belz, Spencer Imbrock, Yemi Olajuyigbe, Emily Stivers, Caryn Wilson)
- **Connecting Church & Home for Kids**
 - Read Matthew 6:16-18 together. Practice what it would look like to “disfigure” your faces. Talk about how making faces like that would be hard to ignore. Remind your kids about what Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, that fasting is supposed to be to honor God, not to make other people notice you.
 - Talk about FASTING and its meaning. Fasting is making a choice to give up something we like for a time to help us remember God satisfies every need. What is something that you can **give up** as a family for a time (a TV show, video game, treat). Then, think about something you can do to **fill up** that space with something for God (Bible story, serving someone, singing a praise song).
 - Talk about FEASTING and ask what you can celebrate about God and what he has done. Plan a special meal where you can remember and celebrate those things together.
- **Going Deeper:** Here are some additional questions for you to engage the preached word more deeply either individually or with others.
 - Have you ever fasted from food before? What prompted you to do it? Share about your experience.
 - Where are you vulnerable to hypocritical living? Where are we vulnerable as a community?
 - What “rewards” are you seeking from God? What “rewards” are you seeking from the world or others?