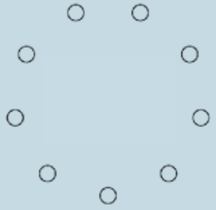
# Practising the Way

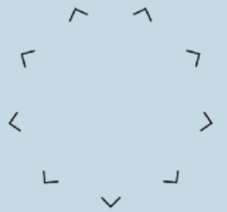
Sabbath
安息日

Prayer
禱告

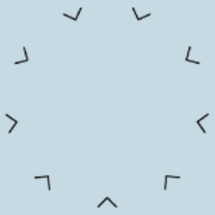


Fasting
禁食

Solitude
孤獨



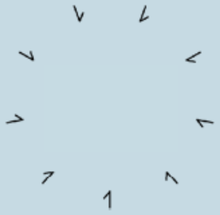
Generosity
慷慨



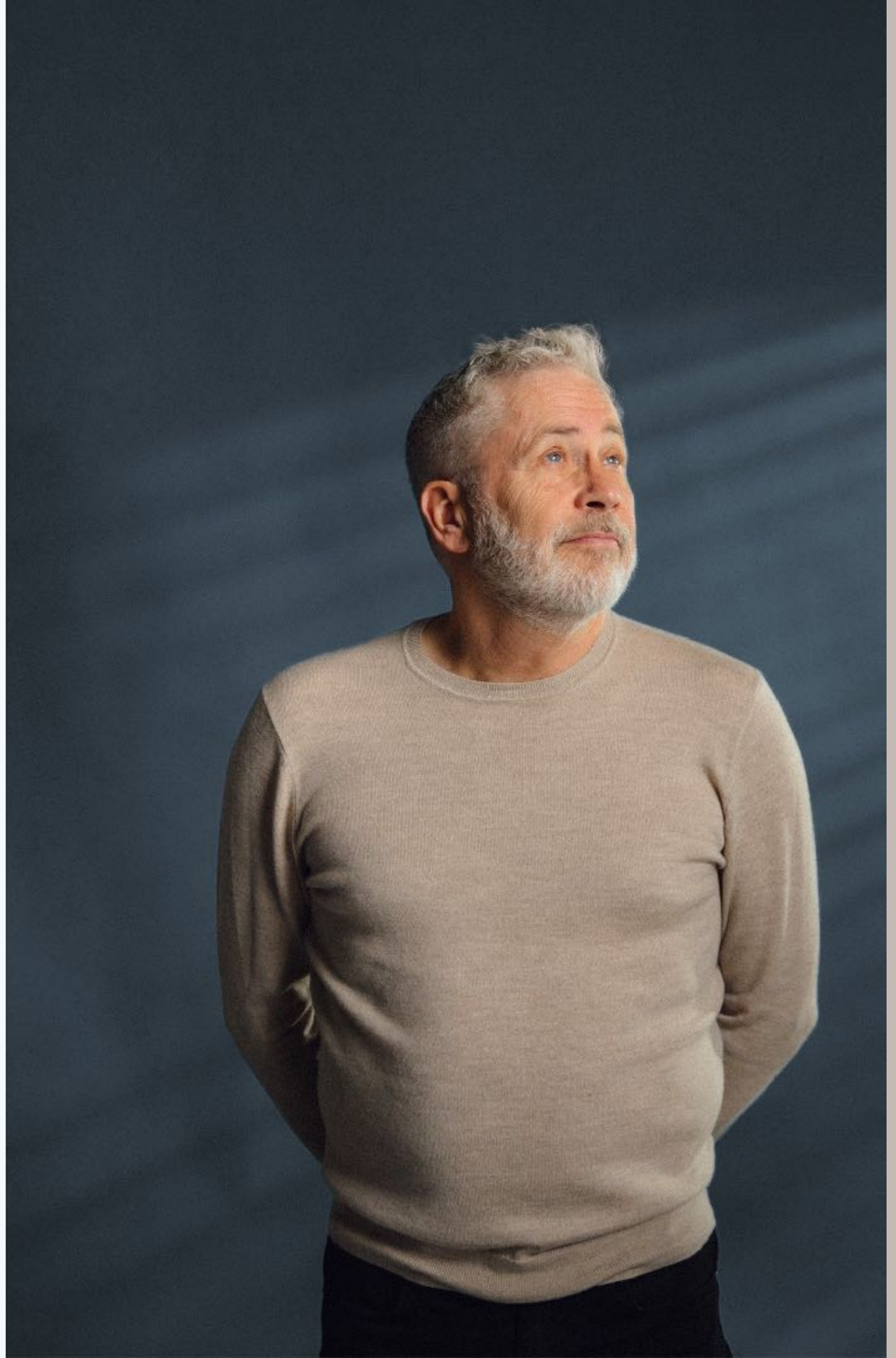
Scripture
聖經

Community
社群

Service
服侍



Witness
見證



# Fasting | Part One

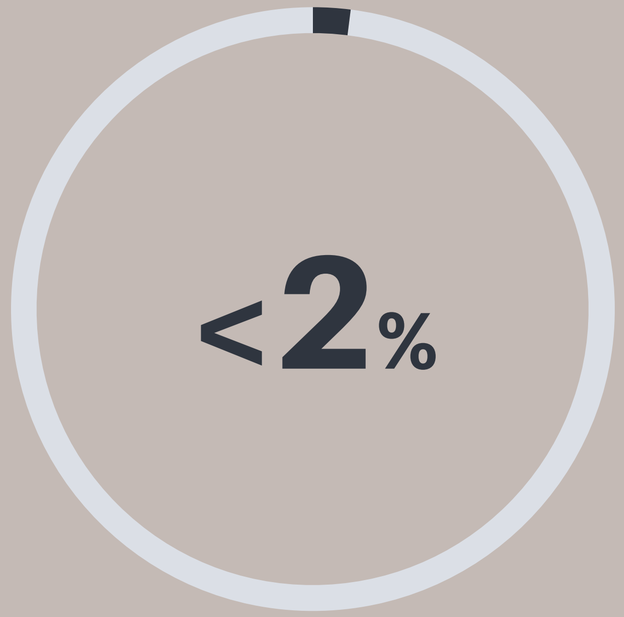
Fasting | Part One

# Offering Ourselves to Jesus

# Church* Survey of Fasting

*Bridgetown Church, Portland, Oregon.


Half had never fasted a single day in their life




Less than 2% fasted on a weekly basis

## MATTHEW 6:16—18

“When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

# A brief History of Fasting

—

According to ‘Practising the Way’

**WORLD RELIGIONS**

Part of every major world religion

**FIRST MENTION IN BIBLE**

Moses’ 40 day fast; Yom Kippur

**THROUGHOUT OLD TESTAMENT**

Moses, Elijah, David, Samuel, Ezra, Esther

**TIME OF JESUS**

Common for the Jewish people to fast

# A brief History of Fasting

According to ‘Practising the Way’

**NEW TESTAMENT**
Seen in Gospels and by Christians in Acts

**EARLY CHURCH**
Didache; Church Fathers; Constitution of the Holy Apostles; Lent

**18th CENTURY**
Fasting starts to decline in Western church

**STILL POPULAR IN EASTERN CHURCH**
Eastern Orthodox; Coptic; Dalit; Africa

**“Fasting is one of the most essential and powerful of all the practices of Jesus, and, arguably, the single most neglected in the modern, Western church.“**

John Mark Comer

# 01_WHAT IS FASTING?

- Not eating food
- Sometimes not eating food and not drinking water

# 02_HOW LONG IS A FAST?

- No set time
- Most common fast is from waking until sundown

# 03_WHEN DO YOU FAST?

- Up to you
- Two types of fasting in Bible and Church History:
  - *Rhythm*
  - *Response*

# 04_DO WE FAST IN COMMUNITY OR ALONE?

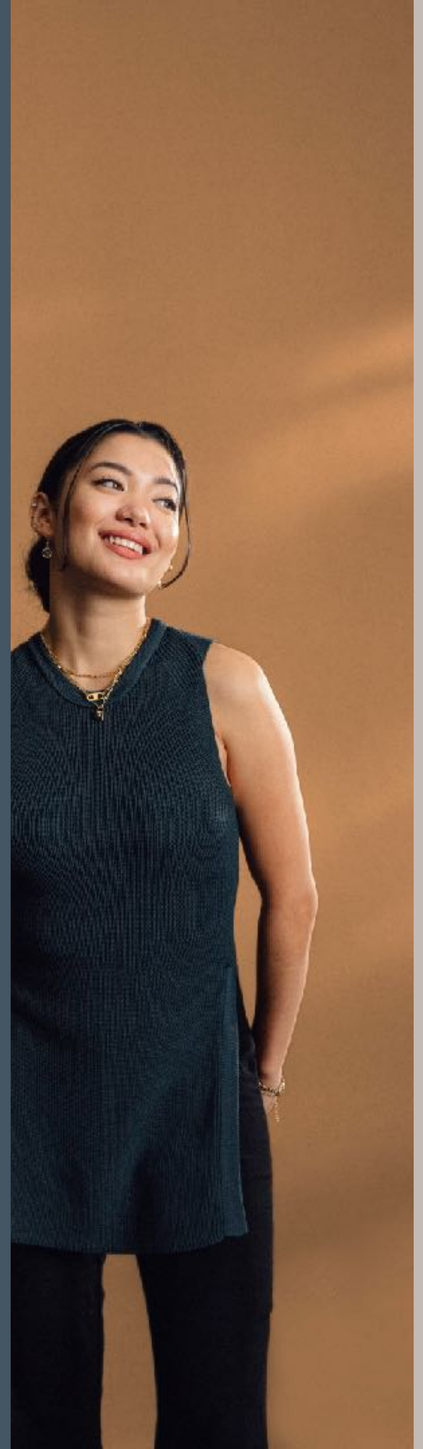
- Both
- Community fasting often found in Bible
- Jesus' warning in Matt. 6 is about virtue signalling

# 05_WHY DO WE FAST?

- To offer ourselves to Jesus
- To grow in holiness
- To amplify our prayers
- To stand with the poor

Fasting | Part 1

# Offering Ourselves to Jesus



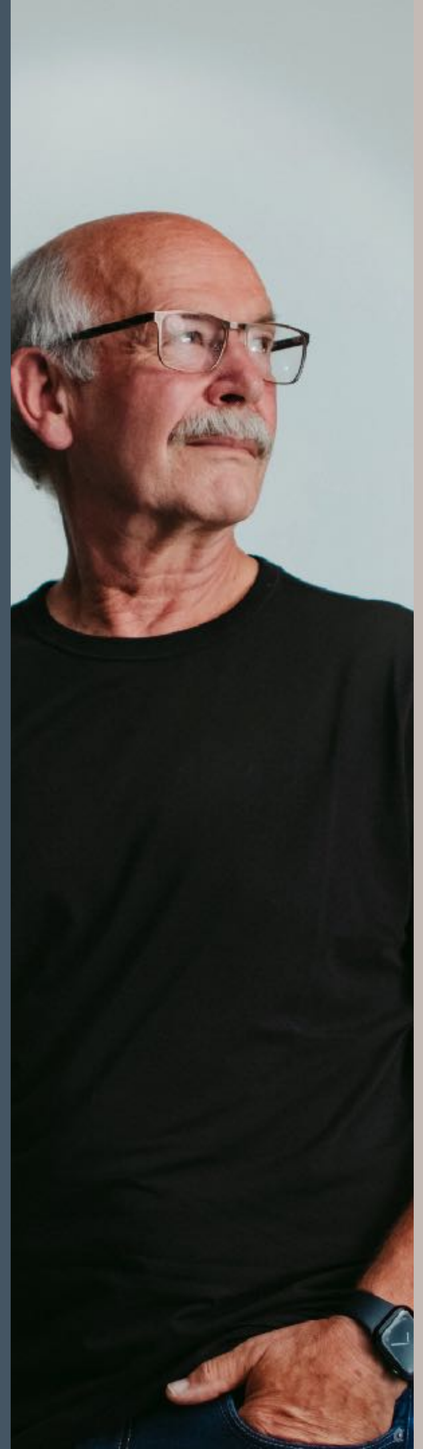
## The Motivation

"When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting." Mt. 6:16

- Fasting to follow Jesus' pattern of death to self and life in God
- Fasting not to gain others' praise, but to become like Jesus
- To *hunger* for Jesus

Fasting | Part 1

# Offering Ourselves to Jesus



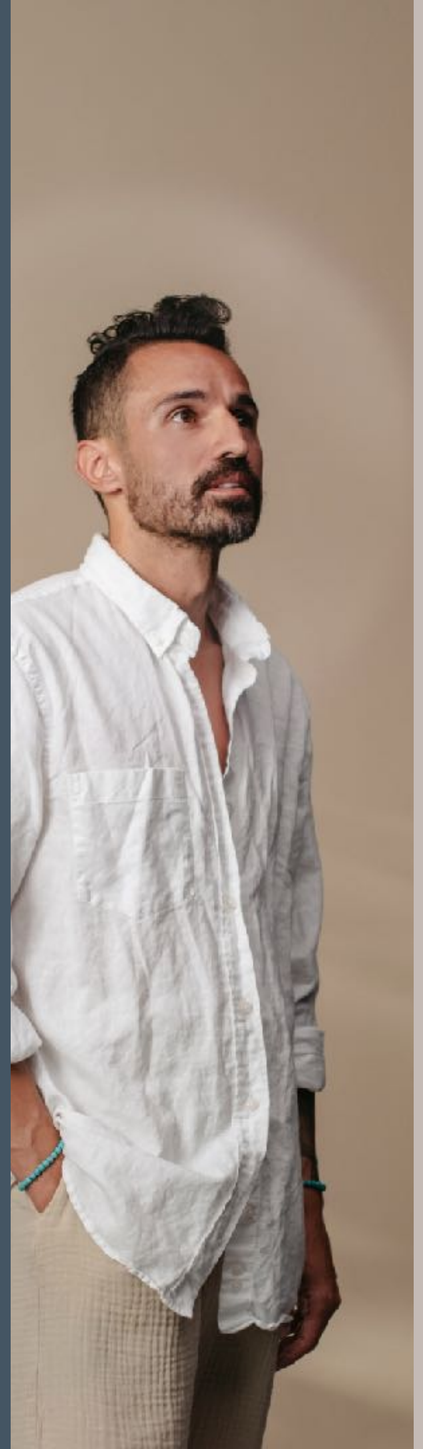
## Fasting: involving our bodies in our worship

"In view of God's mercy … offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship." Rom. 12:1

- Spirit, mind *and body* should be involved in worship
- Fasting engages the body in a visceral, primal way

Fasting | Part 1

# Offering Ourselves to Jesus



## The Reward

"But when you fast [without virtue signalling] your Father will reward you." Mt. 6:17—18

- The reward of fasting is ultimately Jesus
- Jesus did not command fasting, but he assumed it, and did it himself. He invites us to follow him... to receive more of him

# Basic tips on fasting...

- Stay hydrated
- Seek medical advice if pregnant, diabetic, etc.
- The more time given to prayer and reflection whilst fasting the better
- Pick a day which works for you; do in community if possible
- If a day too much, start small

# Basic tips on fasting...

- When hunger pangs pray “God, I offer my body to you in worship. Please transform me.”
- In ‘meal spaces’ give yourself to prayer
- Through the day, enjoy God’s company, attempt to open your heart to him
- If you’ve never fasted before may feel ‘hangry’ or tired


Time to reflect