

# *Shall We Fast?*

**Mark 2:18-22**

# Nature of Jesus Ministry

- **Caught the attention of everyone**
  - Healed the sick, cast out demons, **Mark 1:34**
  - Traveled city to city, preached, **Mark 1:39**
- **Caused Jewish leaders to scrutinize...**
  - His claims to forgive sins, **Mark 2:6-7**
  - Him dining w/ publicans & sinners, **Mark 2:16**
  - His disciples did not fast, **Mark 2:16**

# Why Didn't Jesus' Disciples Fast?

**1. John and the Pharisee's disciples fasted**

**2. Law of Moses commanded fasting/affliction**

- Command ONLY on Day of Atonement
  - **Leviticus 23:26-32**
- Day of Humiliation & Affliction
- Day High Priest entered the Holy of Holies

**3. Jews fasted on many occasions**

- Different reasons
- Different lengths
- Different abstinence

# Jesus' Response to Not Fasting

- **Mark 2:19-20, Bridegroom illustration**
- **Mark 2:21, Cloth Illustration**
  - New cloth on old garment, tear made worse
- **Mark 2:22, Wine Bag Illustration**
  - New wine in old wineskins, bags burst

## Bottom Line On Fasting

- Right time, place & manner to fast
- Ritualistic fasting not commanded as a part the “New Doctrine”, **Mark 1:27**

# Lessons Learned

- **Jesus indicated his disciples would fast**
  - **Mark 2:20**, “...*they will fast in those days.*”
    - Jesus did not say fasting was wrong
- **Fasting pleases God if done appropriately**
  - **Matthew 6:16-18**, Sermon on the Mount
- **Early Christians fasted**
  - Church at Antioch, **Acts 13:1-3**
  - Church at Galatia, **Acts 14:21-23**
  - Paul’s ministry, **2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27**

# Fasting Today OK

## –Individual Level

- Difficult temptations & decisions
- Serious illnesses & sickness
- Personal health reasons

## –Congregational level

- Appointment of elders, missionaries
- Important decisions in life of congregation
- For Certain Events, Actions, & Individuals

**ALWAYS INCLUDE PRAYER  
ALONG WITH RIGHT ATTITUDE**

# Conclusion of the Matter

- Views about fasting often extreme
- Fasting: Appropriate time, place & attitude
  - **Matthew 6:16**, “...when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.”
  - **Ezra 8:21-23**, Ezra tells of proclaiming a fast
    - To afflict themselves before God
    - To seek of him a right way
    - They besought God & he intreated them

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