

Contending For The Faith Once For All Delivered To The Saints (Jude 3)
 Church of Christ: 4th Ave. South Shore, Ky. P.O. Box 649, March 31, 1974
 Editor & evangelist: Richard E. Swan, Phone: 932-3244, Vol. III No. 13
 "The Gospel Of Christ" 8:15-8:30 a.m. Lord's Day WNXT 1260 AM 99.3 FM
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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT FASTING?

"Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."
 (Matt. 9:14-15)

While the New Testament does not teach the Christian to fast on a monthly, or yearly basis (Gal. 4:10-11) there are examples in our law of brethren fasting and I'm sure we'll edify ourselves in a study of this subject. I'm also convinced that today there is entirely too much feasting and not enough fasting (Ecc. 7:3). Have you fasted?

LENGTH OF FASTING IN THE BIBLE:

- Twice A Week (Luke 18:12)
- Three Days (Acts 9:9)
- Three Weeks (Dan. 2:2,3)
- Seven Days (I Chron. 10:12)
- Fourteen Days (Acts 27:33)
- Forty Days (Ex. 34:27,28, Lk. 4:1f
I Ki. 19:28)

NEWS AND NOTES: We rejoice in that sister Wilma Fyffe made confession of sin and was restored unto the Son of God! May our Father bless and strengthen her that she may be a good example and a profitable servant in the church. I thank bro. Lemon Moore, the Riverside church of Christ, and the brethren here for the opportunity of to be away and preach for them. We also thank and encourage the brethren here for filling in!

PURPOSE OF FASTING:

1. "...I humbled my soul with fasting." (Ps. 35:13)
2. "...I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting." (Ps. 69:10)
3. Asking God of a great request. (Ezra 8:23)
4. Requesting God to spare the life of the sick (II Sam. 12:22)
5. "...to make your voice to be heard on high." (Isa. 58:4)
6. "...turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God." (Joel 2:12,13)

We are sorry to learn of the illness of sister Connie Vaughn and pray that she might regain her health as soon as possible.

THE FASTING UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT:

1. Husband and wife in the marriage relationship (I Cor. 7:5)
2. When the church sent preachers to preach the gospel. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13
3. At the time of appointing elders: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts 14:23)
4. Paul was "in fastings often". (II Cor. 11:27)

FASTING IS TO BE KNOWN ONLY TO GOD AND THE ONE FASTING:

"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. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:16-18)

THE LEAST MENTIONED SIN...FAT ELDERS, PREACHERS, AND TEACHERS!

"Glutton" means one that eats too much. This word is used several times in the Bible. Now unless some abnormal glandular condition exists, eating too much (gluttony) is the cause of obesity and people get fat by eating more food than is necessary to maintain good health. Gluttony has been around as long as there has been food. Note below:

In Deut. 21:18-21, gluttony is one of the characteristics of a stubborn, rebellious, disobedient, drunk who was to be stoned to death. Among the words of the wise man in Prov. 23:20,21 are warnings to avoid being among, "winebibbers and gluttonous eaters of flesh" because both would come to poverty.

Among the false charges raised against Jesus by his enemies were that he was a "gluttonous man and a winebibber" (Matt. 11:19, Lk. 7:34) Drunkenness and overeating are again associated together. Paul once quoted a Cretan prophet who admitted that his people were "liars, evil beasts, and idle gluttons" and Paul said "this witness is true" Ti. 1:12 There again gluttony is listed with lying and being evil. The strange thing is how gluttony ever came to be regarded as amusingly respectable when everywhere the Bible speaks of it, the connection is sinful! Undoubtedly Phil. 3:19 refers to sensual indulgence when it says of people, "their god is their belly" but who would say this did not at least include unrestrained over eating?

And what about self-control? Is not the Christian required to exercise this in all things? (I Cor. 9:24-27) Why wouldn't that include calorie intake? Doesn't the fruit of the spirit include self control? We see a Christian must control his temper, his habits, his tongue, but we draw the line when it comes to controlling the appetite at the dinner table. I have actually heard preachers brag on how much food they could gorge down. A sobering question those men should ask is "How much must I eat before I become guilty of gluttony?"

Now everyone knows the statistics are against the smoker (lung cancer, heart disease) and the drinker (cirrhosis of the liver) but somehow the evidence that obesity overworks the heart, and leads to a shortened life has few exponents. Almost any illness one might contract is compounded when the victim also suffers from an excessive weight problem.

Do not the passages teaching that the body is the Holy Spirit's temple apply? But does this cause much alarm? We hear such excuses, as "Well, all my relatives are heavy." So it may be a family trait. All the more reason to exert special care to avoid those extra pounds. And control of eating habits is the only solution. Someone else grabs a fistful of "spare tire" and laughingly refers to it as simply "the middle age spread". Perish the thought that it may be evidence of unrestrained gluttony!

What does all this add up to? Just this. Brethren are doing more feasting than fasting. Paul was in "fastings often" where today it seems that people almost live to eat instead of eating to live! Certainly some readers of this long overdue warning about gluttony are overweight due to lack of self control in eating habits. If you feel guilty about this why not begin today to take steps to curb that appetite. It would be much better to suffer a gnawing stomach than a gnawing conscience.

PAUL SAID

"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Rom. 14:17

* ORDER OF SERVICES *
* Lord's Day: 10:00 a.m. Worship *
* 7:30 p.m. Worship *
* Thursday: 7:30 p.m. Bible Study *

GOSPEL MEETING: The Carter City congregation will be hosting a meeting with bro. J.W. Holcomb next month. Let's make plans to attend!