

INTRODUCTION: Message - "Fasting For Intercession" (Ezra 8:21-23; Esther ch 4)
Life happens. If you live and breathe, problems surely will come in all shapes and sizes. What should we do to overcome our own obstacles and the distress of others? What should we do when life-changing problems come our way? What should we do when yours or someone else's physical or eternal life is in jeopardy?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Read Ezra 8:21-23. What was the purpose for Ezra calling a fast (v21)? What prompted this fast (v22)?
2. Read Ezra 8:31. What was the result of Ezra's fast?
3. Read Esther 5:1-3. Esther called on the Jews to fast with no food or drink **BEFORE** breaking the king's law (Esther 4:16) and going to see the king on behalf of her people. She could have been killed on the spot. Do you think the **TIMING** of a fast is important? Do you think that this situation was serious enough to go without food/water for three (3) days?
4. Read Jonah 3:1-10. The king called for a fast across the entire nation of Nineveh (a corporate fast), including **ALL** the animals! Do you think calling for a day of prayer would have been just as sufficient for Nineveh's situation? What was the result of the nation's fasting and repentance?
5. Read 2 Samuel 12:15-23. David and Bathsheba's illegitimate child was sick unto death. So David fasted seven days. Does intercessory fasting always go in favor of the one who is fasting?

SO WHAT?:

Fasting for intercession **CAN** and **DOES** make a difference. The timing of the fast is critical. Fasting should always occur **BEFORE** making life-changing decisions or stepping out in faith whenever possible. The seriousness of the need determines the length and type of fast. In the words of Finis Dake (of Dakes study bible)...

"Faith needs prayer for it's development and full growth, and prayer needs fasting for the same reason" [Dakes study bible, p1043].

THINK ABOUT IT:

"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16, KJV)