

Season 2 Study 9: Better Fasting

THE BIG YEAR

A Journey through God's Word

***What has been the biggest lesson you've learnt through this second season of the Big Year?
What have you learnt about God? What have you learnt about yourself?***

1. *'Break my heart for what breaks Yours'* is a prayer in one of the popular songs we sing regularly in church. What kinds of things do you think really 'break God's heart' in our world today?
What would it mean then for us to be men and women after God's own heart in this generation?

READ ISAIAH 58:1-5

2. Why were the people fasting and 'seeking God's face' (vs2-3)? What were they hoping for, and why did they accuse God of not 'seeing it' or 'taking knowledge of it'?
3. How do you feel about fasting? Have you ever fasted? For what reason? How was the experience?
4. What particular sins were the people committing on their days of fasting, according to vs 3-4? Why did this behavior anger God?

READ ISAIAH 58:6-14

5. What kinds of things would God prefer the people do, rather than fasting (vs6-7)?
6. Judging by this passage, what kinds of things is God really passionate about? Should we also be passionate about these things?
7. What does God promise for those who do these things (vs8-12)?
8. Why is God so particular about His people keeping the Sabbath (vs 13)? What were the people supposed to gain from keeping the Sabbath, according to vs 14?
9. Should Christians keep the Sabbath?

READ MATTHEW 25:31-46

10. What does Jesus tell us will be the reward for those who show kindness and compassion to others? What is the punishment for those who don't?
11. Is Jesus saying we can earn our way to salvation by doing good works to those in need?
12. What responsibility do we, as the Church of Jesus in 21st Century South Africa, have for the poor and broken in our community? Are we doing well in this regard?

"I'll tell you what it really means to worship the LORD. Remove the chains of prisoners who are chained unjustly. Free those who are abused!" (Isaiah 58:6 CEV)