

Pray For Them

Well, it is somewhat awkward for me to be writing about the subject matter of prayer and fasting simply because it is not a regular discipline in my walk with Christ. And before I go any further, it is important to understand that whether one does fast in combination with prayer, or not, it isn't a measure of one's spirituality (Matthew 6:16-17). That being said, the act does appear to play a role in the early churches decision making process and by virtue of that simple fact, should grab our attention.

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 14:23

In the above text, as well as in Acts 13:3, the early church appears to use the practice of prayer and fasting when faced with a decision of great importance: one the choosing of elders and the other sending missionaries off. As Richard Foster notes in his book, Celebration of Discipline, "Biblical fasting always centers on spiritual purposes." The idea of fasting and its association with prayer in the above verses is noteworthy, but again, this seemed to be a practice. As one person writes, "There simply are no biblical laws that command regular fasting." That being said, we can see from the above verses, and many more, that fasting, along with prayer, played an important role in the lives of those who followed God, both under the Old Covenant as well as the New Covenant.

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

1st Timothy 2:1-2

We now come full circle regarding the invitation which was given last Sunday. The discipline of praying for our leaders is clearly something God yearns for us to do and do often as His church. Couple that exhortation with the picking of our leaders (election time), it seems reasonable to encourage fasting along with prayer. Some may be intimidated by the subject of fasting (I am), while others may feel inadequate because they are unable to fast because of health reasons. These are legitimate feelings which Satan can use to discourage us. Maybe this is exactly why fasting is not commanded. One thing is for sure, we can all pray. Let us never forget that prayer is powerful, influential regarding the things around us. God is listening! Let's pray, and if possible, fast as we prepare to involve ourselves in such an important matter.

Dennis

