

FEASTING

ESTHER 9:20-11; LUKE 22:14-20

(FEB. 1)

Fasting is a time to give something up to fill up by focusing on God, prayer, and sometimes saying sorry for things we've done wrong. It helps us clear our hearts and pay attention to God. But fasting doesn't last forever. After fasting, God's people often celebrated with feasts—a special meal that reminds them of God's love, mercy, and protection.

Read Esther 9:20-22. After God helped Queen Esther and the Israelites be saved from danger, they celebrated with a feast called Purim. They remembered God's faithfulness and rejoiced together as a family and a community. They shared food, gave thanks, and told the story of how God had delivered them. Feasting is a way of saying, "Thank You, God, for saving us and taking care of us!"

Read Luke 22:14-20. Jesus also used a meal to teach His disciples about remembering God's work. Before He went to the cross, He shared the Passover meal with His friends. He gave thanks, broke bread, and told them to remember Him whenever they shared meals in the future. Feasting in this way celebrates God's love, mercy, and the salvation He gives us through Jesus.

Why Feasting is Important

Feasting after a fast or a time of prayer is a way to:

1. **Celebrate God's Faithfulness:** Just like Esther's feast, we remember what God has done and thank Him for helping us.
2. **Bring Joy to Our Hearts:** Celebrating reminds us that God is good and makes our hearts happy.
3. **Remember God's Work in Our Lives:** Feasts can help us reflect on how God has helped, protected, and blessed us, just like Jesus reminded His disciples at the Passover.

Feasting is a natural way to complete the cycle of fasting. After a time of focusing on God and asking for His help, we celebrate the ways He has worked in our lives.

FAMILY DISCUSSION:

Discussion: Early Childhood

- Why do we celebrate after something good happens?
- What is something you liked about how you gave something up for God?
- What was hard about giving something up for God?
- How do you feel when you share a special meal with your family?
- Who do we want to thank when we celebrate what God has done?
- What's your favorite way to say "thank you" to God?

Discussion: Elementary

- Why did the Israelites celebrate with a feast after God helped them?
- How can feasting help us remember what God has done for our family?
- How did Jesus use a meal to help His friends remember Him?
- What are some ways our family can celebrate God's faithfulness every week?
- What is something you enjoyed about how you gave something up for God?
- What was hard about giving something up for God?
- What have you learned during this season of fasting?

INTERACTIVE PRAYER TIME:

Thanksgiving Prayer: Each person thanks God for one thing He has done in their life or for the family.

Celebration Moment: Share something you are joyful about today and praise God together.

Storytime Prayer: Take turns sharing a story of a time God helped you or your family, then pray together thanking Him.

Family Blessing: Pray for God to continue showing His love, protection, and faithfulness in your family.

Family Challenge

After a time of prayer or fasting, plan a simple "celebration meal" together. You can:

- Include favorite foods or a special treat.
- Share stories of how God has helped or protected your family.
- Sing songs or say prayers of praise together.
- Talk about ways you can celebrate God's goodness in everyday life.

Feasting is not just about food—it's a way to celebrate God's love, mercy, and faithfulness. It reminds us that after a time of seeking Him, He fills our hearts with joy and hope.