

# SPRING TRAINING

## Spring Training

### Key idea:

Spiritual health and growth require practicing spiritual rhythms - periodic seasons of stripping away some things to give greater focus to seeking God through prayer.

### Key text:

Luke 4:1-2, 14

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry... <sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

### Key points:

1. Jesus practiced spiritual rhythms, including periods of fasting to allow intense focus on God.
2. Changing our spiritual rhythms periodically is important for growth and vitality.
3. The season of Lent can serve as a time of "spiritual spring training" to prepare us for Easter.
4. When done properly, fasting is eating less (or less of some other activity) so that we can give more focus to God in prayer and the Word.

### Discussion Questions:

1. The teaching mentioned Jesus' practice of withdrawing to "lonely places" to pray. Why do you think this was important for Jesus, and how might it be beneficial for us?
2. How do you currently incorporate spiritual rhythms into your life? Are there areas where you feel you could benefit from change?
3. The teaching highlighted the principle of "less is more" in spiritual disciplines. What does this mean to you, and how might you apply it?

4. What are your thoughts on the concept of Lent as "spiritual spring training"? Have you ever practiced Lent before? If so, what was your experience?
5. Bret encouraged fasting from food one day a week during Lent. What challenges or benefits do you foresee in this practice?
6. Besides food, what other things might you consider fasting from to create more space for God in your life?
7. How does the idea of feasting (as in communion) relate to fasting in our spiritual lives?

### **Practical Applications:**

1. Choose one day this week - possibly Ash Wednesday - to fast from food (or a specific food item). Use the time you would normally spend eating for prayer and Bible reading.
2. Identify one "distraction" in your life (e.g., social media, TV, news, a hobby) and commit to giving it up or reducing it significantly for the next 40 days. Replace that time with extra time in prayer and the Scripture.
3. Make a plan to attend the countywide prayer meeting on March 20th and the Good Friday service on April 18th.
4. Start each day this week by reading Isaiah 55:1-3 and reflecting on God's invitation to "feast" on His presence.
5. As a group, commit to checking in with each other weekly during Lent to share experiences, challenges, and insights from your "spiritual spring training."
6. Consider ways your group can serve others during this season, perhaps by volunteering at a local food pantry or other community service.
7. At your next meeting, share testimonies of how changing your spiritual rhythms has impacted your relationship with God and others.