

# Less of me

## a sermon series on fasting

✧ Eastview Church

Sermon Study - 1.25.2026

### Leader's Corner

Fasting — Why? What? Who?

#### Summary

This study explores fasting as more than self-denial or religious activity. Rooted in Isaiah 58 and fulfilled in Jesus, fasting is meant to reorient our hearts toward God's love and move us toward justice, compassion, and genuine love for others—especially the poor and overlooked. True fasting reshapes who we see, how we live, and who we become.

#### Main Idea

Fasting that pleases God is motivated by love, focused on Jesus, and expressed through compassion and justice toward others.

#### Main Passage

- Isaiah 58 (primary)
- Matthew 25:31–40
- Matthew 6:16–18
- Luke 4:18–19

#### Main Practice

Fasting that trains us to see Jesus more clearly—in God and in the people around us—and respond with love.

### Prayer and Praise

#### Opening Liturgical Prayer

(Read aloud together or have one person read on behalf of the group)

God of mercy and justice,  
we confess that we often reduce you  
and reduce your gospel—  
turning spiritual practices into performances  
rather than pathways of love.  
You are restoring all things.  
Shape our hearts to look like Jesus.  
Free us from selfish ambition,  
awaken us to compassion,  
and teach us to love as you have loved us.  
Orient us toward your grace,  
your peace,  
and your kingdom coming here and now.  
In Jesus' name, amen.

#### Worship Option

- Song suggestions:
- "Build My Life"
- "Take My Life and Let It Be"
- "The Heart of Worship"
- Or invite the group into two minutes of silence, asking: "Jesus, who are you inviting me to see today?"

# Group Discussion

(Aim for open, honest conversation. Silence is okay.)

## Getting Started – Sermon Reflection

1. In a sentence or two, how would you summarize this sermon? What stood out to you most?
2. What emotions did Isaiah 58 stir in you—comfort, discomfort, conviction, hope?

## Digging Deeper

3. According to Isaiah 58, what made Israel’s fasting unacceptable to God?
4. Why do you think motivation matters so much to God when it comes to fasting, prayer, and giving?
5. The sermon said: “Love is what God is after.” How does that reframe the purpose of fasting?
6. How do Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25 help us see the connection between loving God (vertical) and loving others (horizontal)?
7. The message asks some honest questions:
  - Am I growing in love toward others?
  - Do people live more freely because of my presence?

Which of these is hardest for you to sit with—and why?

8. How does rest and Sabbath connect to justice and compassion in your own life?
9. What might it look like for you to “see Jesus in everyone you meet” this week?

# Practice

## Group Formation Practice

Seeing Jesus Together

As a group, identify one tangible way you can practice Isaiah 58 this week or month (serving, giving, advocating, or simply showing up for someone overlooked). Pray together for eyes to see Jesus in the people you will encounter.

## Individual Formation Practice

A Fast That Leads to Love

Choose one simple fast this week (a meal, media, noise, or busyness). Each time you feel the absence, pray:

*“Jesus, help me see you—and love who you love.”*

Then intentionally act in compassion toward one person each day.

# Further Study

## Scripture

- Isaiah 61:1–3
- Micah 6:6–8
- Amos 5:21–24
- James 1:27
- Philippians 2:5–11

## Quotes & Theology

- Paul E. Miller, *A Praying Life*:

*“Prayer is asking God to incarnate, to get dirty in your life...”*

- Theological theme:

Restorative Justice — God’s justice is not about punishment but restoration, reconciliation, and freedom.

- Spiritual Formation Insight:

Practices don’t earn God’s love; they train us to live in it.

## Closing Prayer

*Father,*

*shape us to look like Jesus by the power of your Spirit.*

*May our fasting please you*

*and lead us to love others more deeply*

*in our everyday lives.*

*Give us more of you,*

*and less of us.*

*Amen.*