

Title: Fast 1: Atonement // **Scripture:** Leviticus 16:1-34, 23:26-32 Hebrews 9:11-28

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

We began this year as a church concentrating on prayer, and for the last several weeks we have been focusing on how to Pray Like Jesus. This week we started a new series by doubling down on our commitment to prayer by beginning a new series on fasting. Fasting is about learning to abstain for a period of time from what usually sustains us. While fasting is only commanded once in the Bible, this week Jon showed us the way the practice of fasting opens up to us a different way of life. Fasting helps us reset, respond, and produce profound results in our lives and in our world as we take note of our grievous condition and God's miraculous atonement. This year as we walk through Lent (a historical season of fasting between Ash Wednesday and Easter), we wanted to practice this spiritual discipline together for our lives, our community, and our world. So, how will you enter into this sacred practice this year?

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

Fasting does not produce forgiveness, rather fasting is the response to forgiveness.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture (What is the story saying?): What is fasting? Why do we fast? (reset, response, result) What does fasting look like? What creative kinds of fasts have you heard of? What kinds of fasts have you participated in the past? How does fasting connect our body to our mind and spirit? What results have you seen or heard about from fasting? Where in Scripture do you see people fasting? What were the results of this fasting?

Mirror (Where am I in the story?): What places in your life need to be reset? What places in our culture need to be reset? What places in our community need to be reset? How do these grievous moments encourage us into a response of fasting? Where do these places need atonement (AT-ONE-MENT) from God? What might coming to AT-ONE-MENT with God in these places look like?

Window (How does the story change how I see those around me?): How does fasting keep us tender to our own needs, our community's needs, and the needs of our world? How might living with this tenderness affect your life? How might choosing not to participate periodically in the discipline of fasting keep us callous to the needs of our lives and the world around us?

BE IT – Practice *15 minutes*

Change UP // Confession

Jon challenged us this week that fasting starts with a grievous moment—a moment where we wake up to the desperation of our need for God's Atonement (At-One-Ment) in our lives, community, and world. Take some time as a group to walk through confession of your personal, community, and cultural needs by asking the group to call out and name places in their own lives, their community, and our world where we need God. End this time with a corporate confession—like the one we used on Ash Wednesday.

Change IN // Concordance

Invite your group to use the concordance in the back of their Bibles to look up fasting and the different places in Scripture where fasting is mentioned. Break your group up into groups of two or three and have the groups read the passages they find together. Bring the groups back together to discuss what each group learned through the passages they read.

Change OUT // Creativity

Invite your group to fast for one or more of the things that you have called out in your confession time during this season of Lent. Encourage the group to get creative in their fasting. For instance, fasting doesn't have to involve food—it could be giving up social media, TV, lights, etc. Commit together to walk through this season of fasting by stepping into the tenderness of this grievous moment using fasting to reset, respond, and to expect results from your fast both in you and in our world.

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes*

Take a few minutes to gather any prayer requests and pray for each other to SEE IT and BE IT this week.