

Fasting Increases Compassion

Thanks for taking a moment to review your commitment to the biblical practice of prayer and fasting. Thank God this practice is beginning to spread across numbers of denominations and church associations. Recently someone sent me an e-mail from Bill Hybels, pastor of a large church on the west side of Chicago. Willow Creek had been challenged to practice a "5 day food and water fast."

One purpose of fasting is to [identify with and deepen our concern for the needs of the poor](#) around the world who are less fortunate than we are. Hybels writes, "This is a very special day for thousands of Creekers who are completing a 5 day food and water challenge. It will be a huge relief to be able to have a normal dinner tonight, won't it? For me the toughest part was only drinking tap water...And then I realized that my drinking water was crystal clear, absolutely safe and unlimited. It poured instantaneously out of any faucet in my house. If it had been polluted, or if I had to walk 2 miles to get it...well, I can barely imagine. Others of you mentioned that the beans and rice diet just about put you over the edge. Imagine eating that restrictively for a lifetime."

The prophet Isaiah reminds us: "[Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice...to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him...?](#)" (Isaiah 58:6-7) Fasting increases our compassion. This is a universal principle and eternal truth: [Prayer and fasting is the key to spiritual breakthrough.](#)