March 30, 2012
Sligo e-weekend Newsletter
A Different Kind of Fast

Dear Lexie,

Have you ever thought seriously about why Christians fast or why they are supposed to fast? Fasting for most people means denying themselves the pleasures of food and drink. Of late, some are even prepared to add Facebook and Email to the list, in the name of devotion. For some, fasting means pleading with God for answers or direction. It conveys an intensity of earnestness that is beyond the ordinary. God, tells us, however, about a different kind of fast.

...(read more below)

"A Different Kind of Fast"

It is not a fast where we passively deny ourselves but rather one in which we actively participate in the lives of others. It is not a fast for prayers to be answered but rather a fast as an answered prayer. It is the kind of fast that Isaiah 58:1-12 describes. In this passage we see the Israelites fasting, praying and seeking God, but God is not pleased. He tells them emphatically about the kind of fast that pleases Him, the kind He will respond to: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen; to loose the chains of injustice, and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry, and to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"
God requires a fast in which we lift the burdens of others, a fast that makes us the answers to their prayers. How many times do we pray and fast in our homes and in our churches, while neglecting the fast of liberating those under the weight of injustice and oppression? How often have we felt good and more spiritual because we fasted from food or TV for a week, but the hungry went on being hungry? We find that the spiritual high of our fast wears off very rapidly and we are soon back to where we started. When we fast 'the Isaiah 58 fast' God says, "Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I...The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land" (v. 9,11).

God requires a fast that stems from more than us being prayerfully hungry, He requires a fast where we are feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, freeing the oppressed, and rising to battle injustice. I am proud to belong to a church that gives its young people an opportunity to be a part of this different kind of fast. This summer (July 8-15) our youth will be fasting in Caguas, Puerto Rico. They will be serving a community of hungry, elderly, low-income families, and others who are often forgotten. We don't want this different kind of fast to happen only once a year; we want to develop a lifestyle of 'the Isaiah 58 fast.' Let us rise to be the answers to prayers and demonstrate to our community the benefits of a real Christian fast.

Pranitha Fielder
Youth & Young Adult Pastor
We hope you found this week's e-weekend newsletter helpful. If there is anything else you would like to see included, we appreciate your feedback. Just email us to sligo@sligochurch.org. We will continue to send this out on a weekly basis. Remember, you may choose to unsubscribe for any reason at any time, though, we hope you won't!

May God continue to richly bless you!