



RIDGEPOINT CHURCH • GROW GROUPS GUIDE

Give, Pray, Fast

A Better Way

WEEK 4

MATTHEW 6:1-18

Brent Warkentin • September 13, 2026



LEADER PREPARATION

Thank you for investing in your Grow Group each week!

- If you have questions, need help, or are looking for additional resources, visit our Grow Group Leader page: ridgepointwichita.com/growleaders
- Looking for an easy icebreaker? Grab the NOT JUST SUNDAYS card game we handed out. Try just a few cards each week — have everyone answer one card, or let people choose between two. It's a simple way to keep building relationships!
- This discussion guide is exactly that — a guide. Skip questions, add your own, spend longer on a verse, or adjust it to fit your group. You know your group best! And if you have feedback on these guides, please let us know.

Opening (10 min)

OPENING QUESTION

Think of something generous, prayerful, or disciplined you've done that nobody else ever found out about. What made you want to keep it quiet?

MESSAGE SUMMARY

We're in week four of "A Better Way," our series through the Sermon on the Mount. In **Matthew 6:1–18**, Jesus turns from how we treat others to how we relate to God, addressing three practices He assumes every Christian will do: giving, praying, and fasting. Notice He says "when," not "if." For each one, Jesus repeats the same warning and the same promise: don't do it to be praised by others, because applause is the only reward you'll get; instead, do it in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. The issue was never about whether people find out. It's about the heart — are we living for people's approval or for God's glory?

KEY POINTS

- ◆ Jesus assumes every believer will give, pray, and fast — He says "when," not "if" (**Matthew 6:2–18**).
- ◆ All three carry the same warning: don't do them to be seen, or the applause of others will be your only reward (**Matthew 6:2, 5, 16**).
- ◆ The Lord's Prayer gives us a pattern to follow: start with praise, prioritize God's kingdom, bring our needs, and close by acknowledging His power (**Matthew 6:9–13**).
- ◆ Fasting has biblical purposes beyond food: worship, repentance, and urgent petition (**Luke 2:37; Esther 4:16**).
- ◆ The question underneath all three practices isn't secrecy for its own sake — it's motive: are we doing this for God's glory or people's praise?



UP • 20 MIN

A Daily Relationship with God

BIG IDEA

Giving, praying, and fasting aren't performances for an audience — they're for the audience of One. Jesus wants disciplines that grow out of a real, unseen relationship with the Father, not a public image of devotion. The reward He promises isn't applause; it's His own attention and delight.

SCRIPTURE AT THE CENTER

Matthew 6:1–4 (ESV)

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them... Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do... that they may be praised by others... But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Jesus opens with giving because it's the most visible of the three practices — the easiest to turn into a performance. The wrong motive isn't generosity itself; it's generosity engineered for applause.

Matthew 6:5–6 (ESV)

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others... But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Jesus isn't against public prayer — He's against prayer performed for an audience. The "room" is a posture as much as a place: talking to God because you want to, not because someone's watching.

Matthew 6:9–13 (ESV)

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"

Jesus doesn't just correct wrong motives — He hands us a pattern: start with praise, prioritize God's kingdom, bring our needs, and trust Him for protection.

Matthew 6:17–18 (ESV)

"But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

The same pattern shows up a third time. Jesus isn't asking us to hide that we follow Him — He's asking us to examine why we're doing what we're doing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Jesus says "when," not "if," for giving, praying, and fasting. Which of these comes naturally to you, and which do you tend to neglect?
- ◆ What's the difference between letting your light shine for God's glory (**Matthew 5:16**) and doing something so other people notice you?
- ◆ The reward for secret discipline comes from the Father, not from applause. What makes it hard to trust that over visible recognition?
- ◆ Look at the shape of the Lord's Prayer: praise, God's priorities, our needs, praise again. Which part is usually missing from your own prayers?



IN • 15 MIN

A Shared Life Together**WHY THIS MATTERS**

These practices happen "in secret," but that doesn't mean we walk them out alone. A Grow Group is exactly the kind of place where quiet, unglamorous faithfulness gets noticed, encouraged, and modeled — without turning into a performance for each other the way Jesus warns against.

GROWING TOGETHER

It's easy for a group to accidentally recreate the very problem Jesus is addressing — sharing prayer requests to sound spiritual, or mentioning generosity to earn respect. The goal isn't to stop talking about these things together; it's to talk about them with the same honest, unselfconscious motive Jesus is calling for.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Where might our group unintentionally turn giving, praying, or fasting into something we perform for each other?
- ◆ Who in your life has quietly and faithfully given, prayed, or fasted without ever mentioning it? What did you learn from watching them?
- ◆ Fasting is the practice most of us skip. Would you be willing to try a short fast this week — and would this group be a safe place to talk about how it went, without it becoming a badge of honor?
- ◆ How can we hold each other accountable to these practices without making them about being seen?



OUT • 10 MIN

An Outward-Focused Faith**LIVING IT OUT**

Jesus isn't calling us to hide our faith — He already told us to let our light shine. He's calling us to check our motives. Genuine, private devotion to God has a way of overflowing outward anyway: generosity that actually helps people, prayer that actually intercedes for others, fasting that clears space to hear God for the sake of a real need.

Closing challenge: pick one of the three — giving, praying, or fasting — and grow in it this week, in secret, with no plan to tell anyone but God.

FOCUS ON GROUP PROJECT

OUT Project Update

- Depending on your group's OUT Project, there may not be much to report each week, and that's okay! The biggest thing is simply keeping us in the loop.
- If you haven't already: please let us know what your group has chosen for your OUT Project.
- As you go: keep us updated on any significant changes, needs, or progress with your project.
- Need ideas, resources, or guidance? Visit our [Grow Group Leaders](#) page for more help.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by inviting the group to share prayer requests. Then lead the group in prayer, drawing from these prompts from today's sermon:

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray that each person would grow this week in whichever practice most convicted them tonight — giving, praying, or fasting.
- Pray that our motives would be examined, and that we'd seek God's approval over people's praise ([Matthew 6:1](#)).
- Pray for anyone who finds fasting new or difficult, that God would show them how and when to begin.
- Pray for our group's OUT Project, that God would use it to bless others in both quiet and visible ways.



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