



Time To Feast & To Fast

“Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?” (Matthew 9:14).

Bulletin VCM-MT11

06 March 2019

Wise king Solomon once admonished his subjects, (and God preserved his admonition in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 for our benefit) that **“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace”.**

Ability to discern the differences in seasons and times lead to wise decisions that reap untold benefits and avoid costly dangers. It enables people to seize opportunities to do the right things for the time / season that attracts success and progress. Every situation of life, no matter how adverse they may appear to be at first, comes with hidden potentials that a discerning person can harvest to his / her benefit. This study focuses on Jesus' teaching on (a) discernment of the right timing for things, and (b) recognition of uniqueness in variations / not copying.

“Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.” (Matthew 9:14-15).

“And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the

“And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?” (Matthew 9:15).

bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days” (Mark 2:18-20).

“And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? 34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days (Luke 5:33-35).

Note the following:

- 1) The question of the disciples of John (Mark 1:18) was based on the assumption that whatever John did, was the standard / norm for Jesus' ministry. They did not recognise that our God is the God of variety who adopts different styles to reach different people. Jesus flagged up their folly when He said “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19 The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children” (Matthew 11:18-19). As you cannot please everybody, it is therefore important to know what God has called you to do and stick to it, whatever people say.
- 2) A balanced approach is essential to discerning **when** to fast and **when** to feast. Both are essential to true spirituality. Over indulgence in one to the neglect of the other leads to ‘half-baked’ / immature Christianity and unfulfilled life (Hosea 7:8).