

FASTING GUIDE FOR LENT

In 2019 we will take up the spiritual challenge to fast together during the 40 days of Lent, just as Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness before he began his ministry. Below you will find practical guidance for fasting:

WHY FAST?

...to focus on God.

The primary reason to fast is to give our attention to God and remind us of our basic need for God. Fasting teaches us that “man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

...to reveal the things that control us. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that exposes the unseen things that hold us back and keep us in bondage.

...to create space for something else. When we remove food for a short time, we intentionally redirect that time and energy to prayer, reading Scripture, silence or serving.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Fast March 6 through April 17.
- Fast together once a week during the Wednesday lunch-time meal.
- Drink water even when food is removed.
- Fast from food only if you are able and with approval from your doctor if you have any question. It is perfectly acceptable to fast from something besides food for health reasons, eating disorders, or out of a sense of call to give up something else such as media, social media, or spending on certain things.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The goal is spiritual attentiveness—to become aware of ways to join with God and the things of God. This is best described in Isaiah 58.

You can find Isaiah 58 and the series Prayer of Confession on the back of this card.

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SCRIPTURE

“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 provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear...”

Isaiah 58:6-8a

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God of mercy, we come before you again, longing to enter your kingdom.

But we confess that we don't want to. We prefer what is easy over what is right. We prefer the comforts of this world over the high calling of the cross.

And so, Creator and King, unmake us, forgive us, refashion our desires, re-create us in your grace, so that in Jesus' name we would be free:

*to resist what is evil
to love what is beautiful
to choose what is difficult
and to, in joyful obedience,
discover your kingdom.*

Amen.

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