



## LENT: fasting, prayer and alms-giving

**FASTING** is a willing abstention from eating food, drinking or other forms of consumption, to make space in our souls to feast on Jesus. There are several types of fasts:

1. **Partial Fast:** Cut out part of your diet such as sugar/desserts, alcohol, meat, caffeine, or dairy products for the entire duration of Lent (except Sundays). Choose something that has an inordinate hold on your life.
2. **Partial “Media” Fast:** Choose to abstain from modern distractions that have an inordinate hold on your imagination, such as social media, screen-based entertainment, or the news.
3. **Whole Fast:** Choose a challenging weekly practice of skipping entire meals, from 1 meal a week to 1-2 days per week. You still need to take in enough water and calories to sustain energy without satisfying hunger. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are common days that believers practice the Whole Fast. (You can continue this practice on Fridays throughout the year as a way to remember Jesus’ death and commune with him on the way to your resurrection.)

**PRAYER** is participating in the life of God talking with and listening to him, whether in solitude or in common worship. Christians often pray using the Scriptures, especially the Psalms. In Lent our prayers take on a tone of repentance and contrition. A couple of specific practices are to pray the Psalms/Daily Office or to adapt the Jesus Prayer to suit your particular experience: “Jesus, Savior, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!”

Also, find ways to pray with others—whether at a church service, with a small group, or around a dinner table.

**ALMS-GIVING** is a direct participation in God’s generosity as we give away our resources in love to our neighbor.

1. Begin with **prayer walks**, observing the areas where your community is in need and in pain.
2. Set aside money for a “**neighbor fund**” that you would otherwise spend on yourself. Pray for opportunities to spend it in love towards your neighbor, be they a coworker, extended family, prisoners, or refugees.
3. Give generously towards your **local church**, above and beyond your tithe. If they highlight a special offering for missions, contribute money that you have set aside during Lent.