

LENT

-a Season for Personal and Corporate Spiritual Renewal

We have been observing Lent for many years. It has been awhile since we gave a full explanation of the whys in this exercise. This is not a command from God to observe Lent. It is an exercise for personal growth and Spiritual Renewal. It consists of 6 weeks of sacrifice, fasting, and prayer.

1- What is Lent? The word means 'spring' because it begins in the springtime of the calendar. It ends with the anniversary of Jesus' death (Good Friday). It corresponds to Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness. It entails 40 days plus Sundays (46 total). The reason Sundays are not included is because we gather each Sunday to celebrate the Resurrection.

2- Why participate? It is my hope that your time with the Lord will deepen your walk with Him. Instead of Easter being a one-day event it can be lengthened to remembering Jesus' sacrifice over these 40 days.

It will be a time to purify your heart from sin and draw closer to Jesus.

3- What to do. I would like you to pray about your relationship to God. Select something in your daily habit that you would be able to give up for 40 days by choosing something that means enough to you, it would be a sacrifice to give it up. In so doing being reminded of Christ's sacrifice each time you wanted to engage in your habit. For example. I have sacrificed desserts, TV, computer games, in the past. Then each time I wanted to watch TV I thanked the Lord for His sacrifice and I used that time to reflect on my relationship with Him. I.e.. read the Bible or a book on the Life of Christ; prayed through the directory of our church. And then did what I felt the Lord was leading me to do to serve Him. It has always been a cleansing of habits and of placing Jesus first in my heart. That is where the renewal comes in. We call Sundays celebration Sunday and you are free to engage in your habit if you choose. **Please note:** if you are engaging in a sin on a regular basis then that sin would be a very good item to give up. Not for just 40 days but forever.

4- Is this a catholic tradition? It is a liturgical tradition. Many liturgical churches use this as part of their Christian calendar. Catholics, Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran, and others but many evangelical churches have seen this as a practice that can deepen their walk with Jesus.

5- In regards to fasting. I would suggest you try one meal a week or one day a week to not eat. In place of not eating remember that Jesus was 40 days in the wilderness without food. Make sure you drink plenty of liquids. When I fast, I replace the eating with a time of prayer. I pray my prayer list and whatever God brings to my mind. Also, each time my stomach growls I thank the Lord for His sacrifice and for His provisions for my life and family.

As you can see, this can be as involved and meaningful as you would like to make it. Encourage someone to join you in this exercise and talk and pray together. Maybe your sacrifice will be not watching TV from 7-8. Then on Tuesdays call your friend and pray with them over the phone.

Make it your way to draw near to God.

If you have any questions please talk to me. It Starts Wednesday March 6th.