

Reforming Lent

*"After leaving them, Jesus went up
on a mountainside to pray."*

Mark 6:46 NIV.

Christians have long recognized the virtue of times and seasons being set aside for more focused Bible reading, spiritual reading, praying (private and/or corporate), service, generosity, examination of conscience, or fasting. Lent is an appropriate season to practice these spiritual disciplines.

Would you consider setting aside 40 days for a more focused growth in godliness? If so, why not begin on Wednesday Feb. 14 (Ash Wednesday), and end on Sunday March 31 (taking the Sundays as a time for attendance at worship and a relaxation of the disciplines you have undertaken)? That is 40 days, and what better time to end your 40 days than gathering with other Christians to remember and celebrate Jesus' resurrection from death?

So, on top of the list of practices that help us grow in godliness, consider the following.

PRAYER

Here is a very wise prayer that is both a prayer that you can pray, a guide as to what to pray, and a concise biblical gospel theology to guide meditation.

"Almighty and everlasting God, who hates nothing that He has made, and does forgive the sins of all who are repentant: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, so that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging the ruin of our fallenness, may obtain of You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN"

(From the 1662 BCP Collect for all of Lent)

FASTING

Give up looking at all social media for forty days. Spend some of that time praying instead.

BIBLE READING

Slow down and write out by hand all 150 Psalms (2461 verses, 62 verses a day). If that is too much, pick one or more of the Gospels (Matthew 1071, Mark 678, Luke 1151, John 879 verses)

READING

Kevin DeYoungs book, "Impossible Christianity."

GENEROSITY

If you eat out a lot or buy lots of Latte's, cut out one or more purchases a day and give the money to the Compassion Guatemala Prenatal care program. This is on top of your regular tithing.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Read 4-5 verses in Psalm 119 each day, meditating for a few minutes on each verse as to whether you live what each verse teaches.

SERVICE

Commit to attending church every Sunday during Lent and taking the first ten minutes after the service is over and/or the first ten minutes of coffee time to greet and connect with someone new, or someone you have never talked to before.