



## Lent Reflections Week 1 - *What is Lent?*

Last Wednesday was Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of Lent. During this 6 week period on the Christian Calendar (46 days - 40 days of Lent + 6 Sundays) Christians are encouraged to review their spiritual lives in preparation and repentance as we anticipate the death of Jesus look forward to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection at Easter. One writer said that Lent is about the gospel making its way deeper into our lives.

One of popular views of Lent is that it is a time to 'give something up'. People try and give up all sorts of things such as smoking, alcohol, chocolate, biscuits and cakes, and these days Facebook and social media. This 'giving up' has its origin in the ancient biblical practice of fasting, which is found in both the Old and New Testaments. For example in the prophet Joel 2:12 we read:

***"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping and mourning."*** He was calling the people of Israel to repentance.

In the New Testament in Acts 14:23 we are told:

***'Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.'*** So they were fasting when making a big decision.

Fasting during Lent also reminds us of Jesus spending forty days fasting in the wilderness and being tempted by the devil after his baptism and as a preparation for his ministry. See Matthew 4:1-11

The whole point of fasting is to help us to reflect on our spiritual life and focus more on connecting with God. I suspect that the 'giving up' part sometimes becomes the main focus and if we are not careful God can get left out. A good way to keep the fast can be to do something extra to help with our reflections. It might be a Lent Course, or reading the Bible more or reading a particular book; it could be giving up something and putting the money we would have spent into a good cause; it might be setting aside time to pray more or possibly to get together with one or two others regularly to pray together; it could be going to extra worship services during Lent. The opportunities are plentiful but we should remember it is all about improving our spiritual life and making connections with God and spiritual discipline. We are disciples - in other words we are learners, learning to follow Jesus and to be part of God's family. Maybe we could ask God for His help in living lives that are totally dedicated to serving Him and giving glory to Him. This can help us to gain a fresh perspective and a new reliance on our Father God.

## Prayer

*Dear Lord,*

*Please help me today and give me eyes to see how You are at work in every one of my circumstances. Lord, give me perseverance to increase my understanding of You; give me a hunger to read your Word and to seek to know You better each day. Help me to trust that You will move in my life, in Your perfect timing and in Your beautiful way.*

*In the precious Name of Jesus, I pray.*

*Amen*

See: [Lent Prayers for the 2025 Lenten Season](#)