

Lenten Practices

Lent in the Christian calendar is time beginning with Ash Wednesday and concluding with Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. It is 40 days (not counting the Sundays as they are weekly reminders of Easter). There are 960 hours. There are 57, 500 minutes. What, as people of faith, do we do with this time period?

Some focus on penitence with reflection on and fasting from actions and objects and attitudes. For others it be may the chance for renewal. Marjorie Thompson writes in her book *Soul Feast*, "For the early church, Lent was just the opposite of a dreary season of restriction. It was understood as an opportunity to return to...the life of natural communion with God that was lost to us in the Fall."

With this approach to Lent, returning to a natural communion with God, what does Christ want to accomplish in me through a spiritual practice? What will assist me in a more inspired and intimate relationship with God? Again from *Soul Feast*, Marjorie Thompson writes, "What we feel "searched and known" by a gracious God, we are both moved and enabled to search our own hearts honestly." Am I moving toward or away from God?

Prayer

- Start where you are
- Listen in stillness
- Meditate on a single word that describes God best to you
- Be an intercessor for others
- Think on the words of the Prayer Jesus Taught

Read and study scriptures

- Start where you are
- Take small portions of scripture to read over and over
- Read in different versions or translations to see what is said
- Make us of devotional materials and books about the B

Fasting

- Start where you are
- Name the attachments and excesses of your life
- Abstain from a habit, a type of beloved food, a non-God focus
- Radically change your schedule for a day

Confession

- Start where you are
- Think of the positive aspects of your life
- Discern where you may grow in Christ
- Journal as a daily discipline
- Review your life with the reflection of Christ

Resistance

- Start where you are
- Read about the prophets of old and of modern times
- Challenge yourself to positive filled speech and actions
- Avoid anything within the culture of violence (movies/books)
- Choose a worthy cause and work with it.