

What Should We Do to Replace These Things?

Instead of engaging in one of the previously mentioned activities, consider the following:

1. Pray for our purposes up out of our prayer agenda.
2. Study the Word of God.
3. Spend quality fellowship time with the faithful in Christ.
4. Extend yourself by reaching out to someone in need.
5. Refuse to be pulled into situations and things that hinder your spiritual witness.
6. Read positive material that will lead to your emotional, spiritual and social growth.
7. Set monies aside from the non-purchase of Easter paraphernalia for tithing, personal savings, investing, and for your personal and spiritual edification such as the MAAFA, Women's events, Men's events, Youth events or sacrificial giving.

How Long Will We Fast?

We will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 1st and continue through Resurrection Sunday, April 16th. Individuals will commit to fasting from something of their choosing. In addition, every Friday beginning the Friday after Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, we will engage in a food fast from sun up to sun down (6am to 6 pm).

Does Fasting Work?

Yes!

Who Should Fast?

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the general fast by making a commitment to fast from something that would require some form of sacrifice in their daily living habits. Every day at 6am, we will lift out of our prayer agenda. Every Friday during the hours of 6am to 6pm, those who are able, will abstain from food and only intake juices and water. Due to dietary restrictions, some may not be able to participate in the Friday food fast. Please consult your physician before engaging with this fast.

Can Fasting Be Done Incorrectly?

Fasting can be done incorrectly when persons fast insincerely. The Bible sites clear examples of some people who made a show of their fasting, thinking they were impressing others and in particular impressing God; but they were only inviting God's condemnation. (Isaiah 58:3-5, Matthew 6:16-18; Luke 18:12). By contrast, God approved of true fasting, whether individual or collective when it was combined with genuine prayer (Matthew 4:1-4; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2-3).*

Biblical Examples of Fasting

<i>Old Testament</i>	<i>New Testament</i>
Deuteronomy 9:9	Matthew 6:16-17
Joel 2:15-16	Luke 18:2
2 Chronicles 20:3	Matthew 4:2
Zechariah 8:19	Acts 9:9

* Paraphrased from World's Bible Dictionary
** Spiritual Disciples for the Christian Life

Lent 2017

Edify

Equip

Engage

¹²To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV)

Mount Aery Baptist Church

Pastor Anthony L. Bennett, D. Min.

73 Frank Street

Bridgeport, CT 06604

(203) 334-2757

Fax (203) 334-6808

Website: www.mtaerybaptist.org

What is Lent?

Lent is a period of 40 days not including Sundays, dedicated by Christians to repentant prayer and fasting in preparation for Resurrection Sunday. This is the period of reflection upon the voluntary struggle and suffering of Jesus, The Christ and His ultimate triumph over death, hell and the grave.

The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday. Christians who observe Ash Wednesday participate in special services, which include putting ashes on one's forehead as a sign of repentance for sin.

What is Fasting?

A Biblical definition of fasting is a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes. It is Christian, for fasting by a non-Christian obtains no eternal value because the disciple's motive and purpose are to be God centered.

Fasting is voluntary in that it is not to be coerced. Fasting is more than just the ultimate crash diet for the body. It is abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.

There is a broader view of fasting that is often overlooked. This is the approach Richard Foster takes when he defines fasting as "a voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity." **

So then, fasting does not always deal with abstinence from food. Sometimes we may need to fast from involvement with other people, or from the media, from the telephone, from talking, from sleep, etc., in order to become more absorbed in a time of spiritual activity. Fasting includes abstinence from anything that is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some spiritual purpose. **

From What Can We Fast?

These are simple suggestions. You may add others to the list:

1. Telephone – refrain from engaging in gossip or “They Say” conversations
2. Shopping – refrain from excessive and unnecessary cash and credit card spending
3. Food – minimize eating foods or intake that are harmful to your physical temple
4. Television – significantly reduce TV viewing hours
5. Fear – discover what your comfort zone is and then ask God if it's time to step out of it.
6. Other – any other thing that you enjoy and/or know that is not good for you

Why are We Fasting as a Congregation?

Edify

- ❖ Pastor's vision of a church that offers healing through Christian education, activities, services and resources to the local community and then spreading abroad
- ❖ That the congregation stay focused on its vision in the midst of distractions

Equip

- ❖ That there will be a greater number of disciples participating in the various inreach and outreach ministries of the church
- ❖ That leaders and disciples engage in more collective study to be grounded in the Word of God
- ❖ For individuals and collective prosperity (fiscally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually)

Engage

- ❖ For discovering and using our spiritual gifts
- ❖ To engage in social services and social justice ministry

Opportunities to Engage

- ❖ Ministries within Mount Aery
- ❖ CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut)
- ❖ Ashefaith – HIV AIDS Prevention
- ❖ Other Social Service / Social Justice Agencies