

2024 FAST-A-MEAL GUIDE TO PRAYER

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? – Isaiah 58:6

For centuries, Christians have **fasted** and **prayed** through the season of **Lent**. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, believed fasting helps us **remember Christ's sacrifice** and **join our sacrifice with His**. It enables us to **turn from darkness** and **look to the light of resurrection**. It allows us to **wait for God's guidance** and **see the promises of God's hope**. Wesley called Christians to **"fast, give alms, and pray."**

The first section of the Guide to Prayer are Scripture readings for each day of this holy time as well as some thoughts to help along the way. On the back page you'll find more information on fasting, especially if that's a new practice for you, and how to read Scripture in a deeper way.

For more resources, you can scan the QR code here: We will also post messages daily during Lent on Social Media (@RHMTulsa). However you connect, we hope this guide will help during this holy time!



Scripture Readings

Week of Ash Wednesday (February 14-17)

- Wed: Joel 2:12-17
- Thu: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
- Fri: Isaiah 58:5-11
- Sat: Psalm 51:1-15

Meditation: Lent is a season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The ashes remind us of our mortality and sinfulness, while the cross reminds us of hope and faith. Isaiah reminds us that true repentance turns us toward freedom, justice, and generosity. Repentance brings us into a right relationship with God as we believe the Good News.

Prayer: God of mercy and grace, stir the dust of our lives and help us remember who we are. And at the end of these 40 days, may we find we have exchanged our ashes for your beauty, our mourning for your joy, and our despair for your praise. Amen.

Action: Do more than "turn away from" in your fast. Remember to also "turn towards." Covenant to fast during this season.

First Week in Lent (February 18-24)

- Sun: Genesis 9:8-17
- Tue: 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Thu: Romans 8:24-28
- Sat: Isaiah 40:27-31
- Mon: Psalm 25:1-10
- Wed: Mark 1:9-15
- Fri: Luke 4:1-13

Meditation: Our journey begins with God’s promise, a covenant which reminds us that God is with us; we are not alone. The rainbow is a sign of this promise, later sealed in the water of baptism. Finally, the Holy Spirit fills and empowers us to become the sign of God’s presence in the world.

Prayer: God of Salvation, it is easy to get caught up in daily tasks and forget to spend time with you. Help me to live in the hope of your covenant promise. God, I want to know you and be known by you. Amen.

Action: Look for signs that remind you that God is with you and ways you can be a sign for others as you remind them that God is also with them.

Second Week in Lent (February 25-March 2)

- Sun: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
- Tue: Romans 4:13-25
- Thu: Mark 8:31-38
- Sat: Psalm 82:1-4
- Mon: Psalm 22:23-31
- Wed: John 17:9-19
- Fri: Micah 6:6-8

Meditation: Names tell our story. We are given new names like “disciple” and “Christian” when we enter a covenantal relationship with God. And like Abraham, we live out this new identity by faith as we walk before God.

Prayer: God of Abraham, empower me with your Holy Spirit to live by faith and walk with you in the new name I have been given. Amen.

Action: This week, tell someone the story of your “new name.”

Third Week in Lent (March 3-9)

- Sun: John 2:13-22
- Tue: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Thu: Exodus 20:1-17
- Sat: John 15:12-17
- Mon: Psalm 19
- Wed: 1 John 3:16-22
- Fri: Matthew 22:34-49

Meditation: As a community of faith, we commit to live in covenant with one another and celebrate who we are as the body of Christ. Scripture depicts who we are called to be: people who love God and love others.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, pour out God’s love into our hearts. Help us to live as the body of Christ who loves you, others, and ourselves. Amen.

Action: Worship God this week by showing God’s love to someone.

Fourth Week in Lent (March 10-16)

- Sun: Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22
- Tue: John 3:14-21
- Thu: Psalm 42:1-8
- Sat: Ephesians 2:1-10
- Mon: Numbers 21:4-9
- Wed: Philippians 4:5-9
- Fri: 1 Peter 3:10-12

Meditation: Complaints and worry have the same root: our need to be in control. The scriptures this week remind us to let go of our need to be in control and let God take hold of us for what he has called us to do.

Prayer: Jesus, we bring to you those areas in our lives we need to let go. We thank you for finding ourselves free to hold onto you when we let go. Fill us with your shalom as you guard our hearts and minds. Amen.

Action: What do you complain or worry about the most? How can you let go of the need to control this area and take hold of Christ Jesus?

Fifth Week in Lent (March 17-23)

- Sun: Psalm 143
- Tue: Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Thu: Hebrews 5:5-10
- Sat: Romans 5:1-11
- Mon: John 12:20-36
- Wed: Ezekiel 36:22-32
- Fri: Psalm 119:9-16

Meditation: As the old hymn says, our hearts are “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.” But at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly, and His grace can “bind my wandering heart to thee.”

Prayer: God, bind our hearts to yours. Let us know your unfailing love and help our lives to reflect that love through all that we say and do. Amen.

Action: Pause and reflect on the words written on your heart.

Holy Week (March 24-31)

- Sun: Matthew 21:1-11
- Tue: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Thu: John 13:1-17, 31-35
- Sat: Matthew 27:57-66
- Mon: Isaiah 42:1-9
- Wed: Philippians 2:5-11
- Fri: Psalm 22
- Sun: John 20:1-18

Meditation: Jesus went from a parade to the Way of Sorrows, from the Prince of Peace to a hated criminal, from “Hosanna” to “Crucify Him.” Even in the midst of chaos, we are still given hope in a seemingly hopeless world.

Prayer: Gracious God, teach us to wait on you and your goodness. We set aside our worries and distractions to set our eyes fully on you. Thank you for enduring the cross for us and for the hope of the resurrection! Amen.

Action: Ask God to show you how to share the hope of resurrection. Write down how this experience has helped you on your journey.

A Word About Fasting

There are many different ways of fasting. For instance, Wesley fasted twice a week on Wednesday and Friday. He followed what some call an “ordinary fast” of abstaining from all food and drinking only water. Wesley followed the ancient church practice of fasting, starting his fast after his evening meal the night before and breaking it at 3 PM.

As we embark together to fast for Lent, we are encouraged to fast at least one meal a week. Of course, people can be quite different and what is safe for one person may not be safe for another. You should not fast at the expense of your health. Those who cannot fast completely, could consider a “partial fast” if you cannot do an ordinary fast of abstaining from all food. A partial fast is abstaining from certain kinds of food and drink. For instance, Daniel and his friends refused to eat rich foods and fine wine (Daniel 1:8, 10:3). In a partial fast, you might refrain from eating meat or processed foods, eat only fresh fruit and vegetables, or drink only water or juice.

However you choose to fast, this practice can be truly powerful and we pray it will help your faith grow stronger!

Reading Scripture Devotionally

Most forms of Bible reading are centered around information and ask questions like: What does the text mean? How can we apply it today? The ancient discipline of sacred reading, sometimes called *lectio divina*, centers on personal transformation and asks different questions: What does the text mean to me? How is God guiding me? What must I do in obedience?

Here are some simple directions for developing this practice of reading Scripture devotionally:

- **Center your thoughts on Jesus.** Ask the Holy Spirit to breathe through the Word and speak into your heart.
- **Read slowly.** Take time to listen for the Spirit’s voice. Remember, you aren’t reading to understand what the verses mean but what God might want to say through them.
- **Read, re-read, and wait.** Read the passage slowly at least three times. Pause between each reading and wait for the Spirit to illuminate some words or phrases until they stand out and have special importance.

Ask Jesus to speak. Let the Spirit reveal the heart of Jesus through the Scripture for the particular circumstances of your life. Take note of what you observe, write it down, and resolve to obey.