

THE SEASON OF

Lent

HISTORY OF LENT

Lent has been practiced throughout generations, tracing back to the early church. Originally it was a 40 hour fast leading up to Easter and eventually became a 40 day period in which the early church taught new converts the basic doctrines of the faith before their baptisms on Easter. More recently, it has become a season in which believers practice repentance, prayer, giving, and fasting. It's an intentional time set aside to consecrate ourselves, remember the Gospel, reject the flesh, and prepare our hearts for Resurrection Sunday.

Unlike what is taught in the Catholic Tradition, the protestant belief holds that none of the spiritual practices earn blessing or favor (in Christ we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:3) but can renew your devotion and relationship with the Lord through drawing near to Him in this way.

Traditionally the 3 pillars of Lent are giving, praying, and fasting taken from the Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount:

“When you give to the needy . . .” (Matthew 6:2)

“When you pray . . .” (Matthew 6:5)

“When you fast . . .” (Matthew 6:16)

It's a season of reflection, repentance, and dependence. “Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.” (Joel 2:12-13)

WHAT IS COMMONLY PRACTICED?

Today, most often associated with Lent is some type of fasting for 40 days. A biblical fast is from food, most pick a type of food or drink to fast from over this period. Some practice abstaining as a form of fasting from things like social media, shopping/consumerism, tv, etc.

Others commit to a proactive approach, a deeper commitment to a daily prayer or Scripture reading for 40 days.

PURPOSE OF LENT

Whether you choose to participate in practices of devotion or abstinence, the purpose of this season is to prepare your hearts for Resurrection Sunday. It is one of the ways we can participate with the global church across denominational lines to keep the Gospel at the forefront and remember the Lord. When we find ourselves craving something other than God's word to satisfy, we can set aside the flesh daily by turning to Him as a reminder that He is our sustenance...

We would love to invite lifegroups at The Well to consider a commitment to 40 days to practice something new during Lent. Consider one of the ways below:

- **40 Days of Scripture reading and prayer during this season. We have purchased journals for life groups to write takeaways from the weekly passage and the sermon. We encourage you to read through the weekly passage 3 times throughout the week, write 3 takeaways from your time in the Word, and 3 takeaways from the sermon to enrich your group discussion.**
- **As a group, consider a weekly 24 hour fast together on the same day or a way to serve those in need throughout this season.**
- **If you know someone new to the faith, consider spending time with them over the next 6 weeks to share about the basic doctrines of the faith.**

Our team would love to help you with any resources you may need and encourage you in the next 40 days to walk closely to and abide deeply with the Lord.

**Love,
The Life Group Team**