

Recapturing the Spiritual Disciplines During Lent

First Week Round-up

We are into our first full week of Lent. Here are some hints and clarification on what you might want to be doing.

Bible Reading:

During Bible Reading, expect God to speak to you. Starting with your Bible Reading everyday, after you have asked God to be with you during this time of study - reflection and meditation are excellent ideas and strategies for getting into God's presence to listen to and hear His voice. You might want to develop your own strategy and style in Bible Reading. One method that is helpful is to read the passage over and over until something "drops out" of it or something "clicks" for you. This "something" is what you might want to enter in your journal. It should be something meaningful or memorable.

Prayer:

Prayer is not magic or a mantra. It is a conversation with our Heavenly Father. We do not need special forms, language, posture, etc. How many of us are in the habit or are required to make an appointment with our earthly father when we need to talk to them? [My family often say that they will have more of my time if the make an appointment :->] I have to change this. This is one of my goals for Lent: being more available to my loved ones.

Pray for your self. Pray for your family members. Pray for others. We should have a prayer list. Using the Form might be helpful. **Hints for Prayer:**

Pray . . .

- ✓ Continuously
- ✓ Specifically
- ✓ Humbly
- ✓ Passionately
- ✓ Persistently

Fasting and Giving-up:

This is what fasting is all about. It is giving up something physical for spiritual advantage. Fasting is not the same as starving. We should give up something that is meaningful. Fasting is sacrificing.

It is no use giving up broccoli, if it is something you detest. What sacrifice is there in that? Remember: Giving up does not have to be less. It can be more. Fasting is not restricted to food items. It can be anything. It might be watching TV or something else. It is not a bad idea to give something that is an enslaving habit. Remember, that here you are not dependent on your own strength, but that you are tapping into spiritual resources.

Journaling:

Get a notebook, preferable a new one. This will probably be one of your most important tools. Here you will write your reflections, experiences and charting your spiritual journey. You want to be writing something every day. Let God speak to you through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit and others, even circumstances and situations during the day.

Generosity (Almsgiving):

This can be tied in with the other disciplines. The money you save from food, etc., you can give to someone or to some cause. Again, generosity does not necessarily have to do only with money. It can be giving someone some of your time, efforts, expertise, etc.

Sundays:

How you can use Sundays more effectively: Make an effort to go to church every Sunday in Lent, if going to church is not a regular habit for you (It is never too late to start). As you would see from the Readings for Lent ([Reading through the Gospel of Mark during Lent](#)), there are no readings for Sundays. Sundays can be used in various ways. The least of which is: it can be a time to catch-up, if you missed any of the readings during the week. Another thing you may want to do on Sundays is re-read your Journal entries for the past week(s). Additionally, you can spend some extended time in Prayer. One of my little ones (Charissa), suggests that, on Sunday, you can re-read all your Scripture Readings for the past week. This is an excellent idea. If Charissa can do this, surely you can! If you do this, you will be reading about 2 Chapters in the Bible which should take you about ten minutes. If you do this you will be reading the Gospel of Mark twice during Lent. You should not be habitually skipping the daily readings to catch up on Sundays. This defeats the purpose of the discipline and will undermine your growth and minimize the benefits.

Holy Habits:

Two kinds of habits: a holy habit and a helpful habit. A holy habit is one that advances you spiritually. A helpful habit is one that will help you in relating to others (yourself also).

It is a proven fact that we can establish a new habit in twenty-one days. Here we are having Forty days to do it.