

A Fast Moment with God

Fasting is a practice which began centuries ago. Giving up food for a designated time was meant to help find closeness with God, and to deepen our faith.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday each year and continues for about seven weeks until Easter. It is a time of spiritual renewal and preparation, right at the time when many other things are beginning that would cause us to lose focus on God.

In today's world, fasting is not so much about going without food as it is taking on spiritual qualities. It helps us escape the confusing extravagance and dangerous luxury of the world to discover what really matters.

It calls up a dynamic which the world has long since forgotten called sacrifice. Giving all so that others might live. Perhaps during these holy weeks of Lent before Easter we might rediscover this needed virtue, and transform a self-indulgent, idealistic generation.

“Prayer is reaching out after the unseen,” writes Andrew Murray. “Fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.”

Even using the time we might prepare a meal or two or three for God or others would give us time we otherwise would not have. Little bits, or bites, of time, are precious gifts of God to us.

Elisabeth Elliot puts it this way. “One way to begin to see how vastly indulgent we usually are, is to fast. It is a long day that is not broken by the usual three meals. One finds out what an astonishing amount of time is spent in the planning, purchasing, preparing, eating, and cleaning up of meals.”

In the words of Pope Francis:

“Fast from hurting words and say kind words.”

“Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.”

“Fast from anger and be filled with patience.”

“Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.”

“Fast from worries and trust in God.”

“Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.”

“Fast from pressures and be prayerful.”

“Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.”

“Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.”

“Fast from grudges and be reconciled.”

“Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.”

And further words inspired by those words:

Fast from worldly activity and go to worship.

Fast from fast, and find the benefits of slow.

Fast from darkness and find the light of Christ.

Fast from mediocrity and find excellence in faith.

Fast from looking inward and look outward.

Fast from looking outward and looking inward.

Fast from politics and focus on loving others no matter what.

Fast from meals and find spiritual food.

Fast from wasting time and do good for others.

Fast from money and give it in the name of the Lord.

Fast from ice cream and scream faith by the way you live.

Fast from mosquitoes and embrace butterflies.

Fast from technology and write a letter.

Fast from television and read a book.

Fast from darkness and spend time in the sunshine.

Fast from indoors and go outdoors in God’s creation.

Fast from mountains and visit the beach,

Fast from beach and visit the mountains.

Fast from making mountains out of molehills and find reality.

Fast from religion and walk with Jesus.

Fast from gossip and lift others up.

Fast from familiarity and seek the unknown.

Fast from fast food and eat healthy.

Fast from worldly writers and read the Bible.

Fast from tearing down and build up people.

Fast from criticism and practice words of love.

Fast from the devil and find Jesus as preeminent.

Fast from ignoring Lent to seeing its purpose.

Fast from rushing and find power in stop.

Fast from hate and practice love.

Fast from reading and write God things.

Fast from prose and practice poetry.

Fast from spectator faith and move to the field.

Fast from wondering how to witness and do it.

Fast from riding and do more walking.

Fast from pride and find humility.

Fast from time and discover eternity.

Fast from looking outward and look inward.

Fast from looking inward and look outward.

Fast from not seeing the forest for and see the trees.

Fast from the small picture and see the big picture.

Fast from the long term and treasure the moment.

Fast from frowns and learn how to smile. (Practice in the mirror.)

Fast from being inoculated with faith and be filled with it all.

Fast from driving and ride in the passenger seat.

Fast from meetings and rejoice in solitude.

Fast from giving advice and seek it from others.

Fast from the world and embrace Heaven.

Fast from the past and look forward to the future.

Fast from knowing about God in Christ and know him.

Fast from fast forward and find pause.

Fast from the words and listen in the spaces between the words.

Fast from not using the word fast and use it regularly in conversation.