

# A LENTEN JOURNEY THROUGH THE DISCIPLINES

In his book, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard discusses 14 different spiritual disciplines that can lead us closer to God. Half of the disciplines are ones where we abstain from something and half are ones where we engage in a particular practice. In this guide, we'll look at one or two each day for the first week of Lent and offer you the chance to consider how these disciplines might begin to deepen your spiritual formation this Lenten season.

Notice we said "begin." One purpose behind the spiritual disciplines is to infuse our lives with consistent, regular practices that draw us nearer to God, not just for a season, but for our day-to-day lives in every season. We hope this guide's broad introduction to the spiritual disciplines allows you the chance to discern which ones draw you closest to God (and to your neighbors) so you can pursue them more deeply throughout the remaining five weeks, building up a habit of regular practice that carries you beyond Lent.

USE THIS GUIDE TO SHAPE YOUR JOURNEY OVER THESE NEXT 40 DAYS.

ENTER INTO LENT WITH US!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE  
6:00PM

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

## ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2

### SOLITUDE

In addition to being the first day of Lent, it's also the middle of week. Take some time to be alone. Go for a walk. Take a drive. Close the door to your office. Find a space where you can be alone with God. It may be 20 minutes or an hour or you may only be able to scrounge up 5 minutes to be alone with God today. Take whatever time you can and challenge yourself to increase this time during the season of Lent.

### STUDY

There are great devotionals everywhere. A free web-based devotional can be found at [HERE](#). The Revised Common Lectionary also has daily scripture readings [HERE](#). You might also consider a printed devotional like *A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*. If you're on Instagram consider following [@blackliturgies](#) or [@stewartdantec](#) who post prayers and reflections almost daily.

The discipline of study also can include studying a topic or issue that connects to your expression of faith so that you learn more and more prepared to direct your gifts and resources toward addressing it. For the next four years, UBC will continue its role in the [Alliance of Baptists' "Churches that Thrive for Racial Justice"](#) initiative. We are digging into ways we can address the roots of racism within our community so that our congregation gains a deeper understanding of what it will take to become anti-racist. **Consider studying this with us during the lenten season using our resource guide included in the following pages.**

## THURSDAY, MARCH 3

### FASTING

Fasting isn't starving. It's the act of giving something up in order to be prepared to take on something else. Consider the things that fill up your time, distract you, or that you use to avoid other tasks. Consider not only to giving one up, but also to replacing it. Maybe this is how you'll find time for more solitude or study you've been.

### CELEBRATION

One of the biggest things we can do is to celebrate is to connect with other people. *Is there someone whom you have not spoken with in a long time, but who had an impact on your life? Drop them a note! Is there someone on your mind today? Let them know you're thinking about them and give thanks for the ways your lives have been brought together.*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 4

### FRUGALITY

As you enter the weekend, and a time when many of us do our grocery shopping, consider taking on the Food Research and Action Center's [SNAP Challenge](#) this week and see if you can, as millions of Americans must, feed yourself (or your family) on \$4/day per person. Frugality certainly looks different when it's not a choice.

### SERVICE

*Is there a non-profit whose mission you admire? Call them and see if they need volunteers. There's a good chance they do. Could you add the [Eagles' Nest Pantry's list of needed items](#) to your regular grocery list these next few weeks? You can always drop your items in our bucket at the church to be delivered each week.*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 5

### CHASTITY

Chastity deals with much more than libido. It's about connection, partnership, and respect. Maybe you and your partner need to renew your connection and sense of partnership. Maybe you're in an unhealthy relationship and it's time to get out. Maybe you're still preparing for a healthy relationship when the right partner comes along. These are all practices you can pursue this Lent.

### FELLOWSHIP

Our communities can only ever be as diverse as our friendships. If we don't have diverse groups of friends, neighbors, and colleagues beyond the walls of our church building, we can never expect our congregation to become more diverse. Consider ways you can connect with people who don't look like you, worship like you, vote like you, or do the things you like to do. Broaden your network by finding ways to fellowship with people who are different from you. You may just learn you aren't that different after all.

*This guide was put together for you by University Baptist Church with assistance from Communion Collective, a group committed to helping churches transform their passions into impact.*

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## SUNDAY, MARCH 6

### WORSHIP

Join us for worship at 10:30am in our sanctuary this Sunday (or you view our worship service online on [YouTube](#) on Sunday afternoons). During Lent we'll be looking at how Jesus embodies, engages, and teaches about spiritual disciplines, especially those that call us to abstain or refrain from certain aspects of life.

### SILENCE

Before or after worship take some time to be silent. *Wait. We already spent time in solitude earlier this week. Why are we doing this again?* We're not. There's a difference between silence and solitude. Solitude is making intentional time to be alone with God. Practicing silence is about finding space without noise or distraction. It's not easy. Sometimes it's uncomfortable. But, when we're not worried about the sound or information we're taking in, we can be more open to discern God's guidance and even to experience and understand the world around us differently. Consider taking as much time as you can find today to be in silent in a space that is free from distraction.

## MONDAY, MARCH 7

### SECRECY

Do something kind for someone else. Do something meaningful. Eat something delicious. Have a deep conversation. And, then...don't tell anyone about it. Don't take a picture of it. Don't post about it on social media. Let that moment be what it was: a moment. Jesus calls us to pray in secret, not to ring the bells and beat our chests every time we do. Our constant desire to share everything we do or think with others could also use a healthy dose of secrecy so that we focus on doing these things for the sake of doing them, not the sake of broadcasting them.

### PRAYER

Prayer comes in all shapes and forms. There's the traditional letter-style prayer we're accustomed to hearing or that we grew up offering before we went to bed (Dear God...). There are many more ways to pray. Silence can be prayer. You can pray while you walk. There are practices like *Lectio Divina* that help us pray through the scriptures. Whatever way you feel like praying today, pray. Share your hopes and fears. Meditate on particular words. Acknowledge when the words don't come. Like all of the other disciplines, the purpose of prayer is to deepen our connection to God, so it can (and should) take on all the shapes we need.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 8

### SACRIFICE

As we walk these forty days with Jesus, we cannot help but consider the sacrifices he made throughout his life, his ministry, and ultimately his death—sacrifices that allowed him (and us!) to reach a deeper communion with God. *What sacrifices can we make this season to help others reach a deeper communion or a richer, fuller life?* So much of our lives are tied to the dominant culture. So much of where we spend our time and money are too. If you are a part of the dominant culture (educated, white, male, heterosexual), where can you give up your positions of privilege to make space for others to lead or for other voices to be heard? Where can you say, "Who is missing from this table?" and then invite them to take your seat? Maybe you are not a part of this part of the culture. Whether you are or not, we can all do more to support the parts of our economy and society that go overlooked and under appreciated. Consider sacrificing the comforts and convenience of your routine retail and restaurant choices, choosing instead to support more local, minority- and/or women-owned businesses. Downloading [Blapp](#), an app developed by comedian Jon Laster, can help you identify businesses like these in your community.

### SUBMISSION

Submission is often used by the powerful to hold power over the powerless. A better understanding of the practice of submission is admitting what we don't know, confessing that we do not have all the answers, and committing to seeking them out by asking questions and requesting help. *Who can help you begin this journey? Who are the sages around you who can shed some light on the topics of faith you want to study more deeply or the issues facing our community that you want to address more fully?* Seek them out this season and see where their guidance may lead you in your faith journey.

## NOW YOU HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE!

Consider one or two of these disciplines you want to pursue more deeply this season.

Pursue one discipline of abstinence and one of engagement for the rest of Lent. The resources that follow may help you shape your practice.

It takes 21 days for a habit to take root, and what are these disciplines, but habits we want to take root in our lives so we can deepen our spiritual formation and connection to God. With 34 more days of Lent, there's more than enough time to pursue these disciplines and transform them into habits you carry beyond this season.

Blessings to you on your journey!

# A LENTEN JOURNEY THROUGH THE DISCIPLINES

## A RESOURCE GUIDE

### DISCIPLINES OF ABSTINENCE

#### SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

If you start today being able to find 6 minutes of solitude to be alone with God or 6 minutes to be free from the distractions of life, and you add one minute each day, by the end of Lent, you'll be spending 40 minutes of solitude each day alone with God or 40 minutes each day paying closer attention to God's creation all around you. You might not be able to find 40 minutes today, but finding an extra minute each day is easier.

#### FASTING AND FRUGALITY

In addition to consider taking on the Food Research and Action Center's [SNAP Challenge](#), consider other ways that your fasting from certain foods might have a greater impact on God's creation. Check out [THIS LIST](#) that shares the impacts a more sustainable diet can have on global resources. Then consider fasting from one (or more) of the foods on [THIS LIST](#) that requires more water to produce than similar foods.

Also as it relates to frugality, consider thrift shopping in addition to any choices you may make about supporting more local, minority- or women-women-owned retail businesses. Most thrift stores like [Edwards Street](#) and [Goodwill](#) use their revenue to fund projects supporting those at the margins of society and, often, their employees are individuals are training and working to get back on their feet. Not only will your dollars stay in the local area supporting working families and great organizations, but you'll also help minimize all the costs that come with shipping your favorite items to you from your favorite online store.

#### CHASTITY

Intentionally plan a regular evening or lunch date with your partner. You don't have to go to a fancy dinner. You could go for a walk or ride on the Longleaf Trace or take a drive together. It may require sacrificing some resources (especially if you have children who need care while you're away), but if you feel like your partnership needs to be re-centered, it will be worth it. And, if you need help finding or funding childcare contact [Brett](#).

Maybe there are sources of emotional or physical connections you've been making beyond the boundaries of your partnership. If you have, those may be the source of any distance between you and your partner. Fast from those this season and, instead, fill that space and time with choices you make to grow closer to your partner. It could be as simple as choosing to watch a show that your partner loves with them (that you don't like) instead of doing something else while they are. And don't scroll through your phone while you do. Be present. It could also be something as simple as reading a book by an author your partner enjoys (or reading the same book they are now) and taking time to talk about it with them.

Whatever it is, consider the ways your partner receives and offers love. One framework for this comes from Gary Chapman's [The Five Love Languages](#). If you're not familiar with this book, there are countless summaries and discussions of it out there, but, to boil it down, most people feel loved in one or more of these ways: physical touch, words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, and receiving gifts. If you don't know what leads your partner to feel loved, put this guide down and find out! If you do know, (re)commit to regularly showing them your love for them in their love language this Lent.

#### SACRIFICE

So much of Lent is about sacrifice in one way or another. One idea for you, if you've discerned that practicing the discipline of sacrifice this season is what you'll do, is to commit to setting aside a certain amount of money each week (it could be a little or a lot, but make sure it is significant to you). If you have to, consider withdrawing it as cash each week and setting aside in a jar or envelope until Easter. Make no plans for that money. Each week as you set those funds aside, pray about what God may lead you to do with them at Easter. Through your prayer, discern the opportunities God may offer to you so that your sacrifice can become a blessing in someone else's life.

#### CONFESSION

Confession is a practice that straddles the line between abstinence and engagement. It is, in a way, engaging in disengagement. When we confess we seek God's encouragement to stop doing things that cause harm to others and ourselves and we seek God's strength to help us refrain from picking them back up in the future.

At University Baptist Church we do not regularly set aside time in our worship to engage specifically in the practice of confession. We do, however, make that space during lent.

Every Sunday, we will confess the following prayer. Join us in this prayer throughout the lenten season.

*Lord, we remember the depths of your love for us, and we repent of our half-hearted discipleship.*

*We have been called to deny ourselves: forgive us for putting self-interests before the interests of your kingdom; forgive us that Christ's lordship in our hearts has been challenged by our ambition, our appetites, our desires, and our needs; forgive us for the times when self-interest has hindered our care for others.*

*Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy.*

*Lord, we have been called to carry a cross: forgive us for complaining when it has weighed heavily upon us; forgive us that, having received so much, we have sacrificed so little; forgive us for the limits we have set to Christian love; forgive us that we have settled for mediocrity, resisting the fire and passion of Christ's love upon the cross.*

*Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. Amen.*

# A LENTEN JOURNEY THROUGH THE DISCIPLINES DISCIPLINES OF ENGAGEMENT

## STUDY AND SUBMISSION

Are you taking on the disciplines of study or submission, especially as it relates to our church's participation the [Alliance of Baptists' "Churches that Thrive for Racial Justice"](#) program? Here is a list of resources we've compiled for you to use this season as you seek to learn more and acknowledge all you don't know so that you can begin to do your part rebuild God's kingdom in better ways for all of God's children.

*Love a good podcast?* Check out [THIS LIST](#) or [THIS EPISODE](#) from Good Faith Media.

*Prefer to read a book?* Try [HERE](#) or [HERE](#).

*More of a movie buff?* Try [HERE](#), [HERE](#), or [HERE](#).

*Need an actionable list to guide you?* Check out [THIS RESOURCE](#) from the United Church of Christ.

## CELEBRATION AND FELLOWSHIP

Build on that one note or text or phone call you made during the first week of Lent and reach out to at least one person who fits that mold each week. *Feeling ambitious?* Reach out to one person each day for the rest of the season. Make it a habit to let the people who have shaped or for whom you have great respect know how much they mean to you. As it has been said another way, don't wait to say at a funeral what you could have said at a birthday party.

The same goes for connecting with people who don't look like you, worship like you, vote like you, or do the things you like to do. Build a fellowship with other people by reaching out and making connections with someone new every week. *Who knows?* Maybe by the end of Lent you'll have a new group that gets together for lunch or coffee regularly.

**And don't miss out on our return to Wednesday evening meals together during Lent!  
Each Wednesday (Mar 9 - April 6) we will gather in our fellowship hall for a meal together at 6:00pm.**

It's been two years since we've done so as a congregation and this feels like a special way to practice the discipline of fellowship together this season.

## SERVICE

Looking for places to serve? We've got you covered. Reach out to [Brett](#) about ways you can connect with [UBC's Children, Youth, or College Ministries](#), our partnership with [Thames Elementary School](#), our [Prison Ministry](#), or even partner organizations like [Breadbasket](#) and [Delta Hands for Hope](#).

## PRAYER AND WORSHIP

You are always invited to join us for worship (or you view our worship service online on YouTube on Sunday afternoons).

**SUNDAY MORNINGS  
10:30AM**

We will also be holding two contemplative Celtic Worship services during Lent. Join us for these times prayer, silence, and holy communion.  
A meal will follow the service.

**SUNDAY EVENINGS (MARCH 13 AND APRIL 10)  
5:30PM**

During Holy Week we will have daily services Monday-Friday at 12:00pm. These services are brief and intended to accommodate those with limited lunch breaks from work. We'll pray, sing, and share a meal together.

**APRIL 11-15  
12:00PM**