

● ● ● | Thinking out loud...

Here are some questions and ways to think through if you are going to participate in Lent this year.

What might I be hearing God say to give up for Lent? (Usually you only give up one thing...just list your options.

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What would be hard about giving up \_\_\_\_\_?

Why would I NOT want to do it?

What could I imagine replacing \_\_\_\_\_ with that would help me grow as a healthy disciple in another vital sign?



Whom would I love to be with on this journey? Have I asked them yet?

Disclaimer: This is a doozy of a convicting question!  
In light of what Jesus gave up for me (glory, power, comfort, his life...) what am I NOT willing to give up for Him?



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● ● ● | Preparing for Easter with an ancient practice in a fresh way

Wednesday March 1 -  
Saturday April 15

# ● ● ● | What is Lent?



Lent is generally observed as a time for Christians to reflect, repent, and pray as a way of preparing their hearts for Easter.

It starts on Ash Wednesday (March 1) and ends on Easter (April 16) so therefore it lasts 40 days. You might be saying that this is actually 47 days... and you would be right! The Sundays, while a part of your observance, aren't counted as part of the 40 days and on Easter it's over so ..just go with it!

Lent is most commonly observed by those Christian denominations that are considered more 'liturgical', that is, they adhere to a common church calendar and have many set traditional parts of their worship times.

Christians from many different theological persuasions choose to observe Lent as a way of focusing their thoughts on Jesus Christ and preparing for the Easter season. There is no right or wrong way to observe Lent even though there are many common traditional ways to go about it.

It truly differs from church to church and person to person. Here is what we are asking you to consider here at Temple this year as part of a personal journey as well as a corporate experiment.

# ● ● ● | How do I participate in Lent?

## FIVE STEPS TO LENT 2017

1. **PRAY** between now and Sunday, February 26th about your involvement in Lent 2017. Ask God to give you wisdom, a clear sense of whether or not this is something you will do this year and the commitment to do it.
2. **DECIDE ON SOMETHING YOU WILL GIVE UP** during the Lent season. We do this for a couple of reasons:
  - We want to physically deny ourselves of something we usually engage in for the purpose of denying ourselves like Christ denied himself as he fasted in the wilderness. This should be something that is not 'easy' to give up but not completely detrimental to your health/life. For example people give up coffee (*gasp*), pop, alcohol, eating red meat (or any meat), social media, movies/Netflix/TV, chocolate, eating out, watching sports. Some kids want to give up vegetables but we aren't sure that's the Lent talking:)
  - We do this to replace it with an intentional focus on our relationship with Jesus. If you give up something that takes time you will need to replace it with something that helps you grow in your life as a disciple (reading scripture, devotional book, prayer etc). If you give up some type of food you might want to save what money you would have used

and have a plan to give it away generously at the end or during Lent. But to give something up without replacing it will not fully engage the Lenten practice.

3. **DO LENT WITH SOMEONE ELSE**. The easiest thing will be to connect with someone you are already doing life with, maybe from your Gospel Community, your Bible study, your spouse or a good friend. While this is predominantly a personal journey, having a partner will help in those times it gets hard and you need some support. Commit to holding each other accountable, to encouragement and to pray for each other during these 40+ days.

4. **JOIN UP** at Temple on Sunday February 26 so that we can create community in our journey. We will have a special moment in the Gathering that day to commemorate the journey. We are also planning ways to create encouragements, prayers and communal moments of reflection for those who will be taking this journey together.

5. **DIVE IN AND ANTICIPATE GOD** showing up and making himself real during this Lenten season. A wise way to do this is have a journal ready or place to make a God-Note when He does show up. It will happen and our prayer is that during the 40+ days there will be some amazing moments. Also as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus on April 16 we anticipate a renewed and fresh spirit of worship together and taking place in your soul!

What is Lent - The Meaning of Time Set Aside. Just as we set aside time to spiritually prepare for Christmas Day, it makes sense to set aside time to prepare for the two most important days of the Christian year. Lent is also an opportunity to contemplate what our Lord really did for us on the Cross - and it wasn't pretty. But ultimately, the purpose of Lent does not stop at sadness and despair - it points us to the hope of the Resurrection and the day when every tear will be dried (Rev. 21:4).

Do you need help understanding what Lent is and how it relates to Easter? Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) from Ash Wednesday to the Saturday before Easter. Lent is often described as a time of preparation and an opportunity to go deeper with God. This means that it's a time for personal reflection that prepares people's hearts and minds for Good Friday and Easter. What Are the Key Days During Lent? Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. You may have noticed people with a smudged, black cross on their foreheads. What is Lent? Is it an official Christian holiday? How do you observe Lent, and are Christians required to do so? We answer common questions about Lent. Because Lent is not officially instituted in Scripture, observing it isn't in any way a requirement of Christianity. However, Christians from many different theological persuasions choose to observe it as a way of focusing their thoughts on Jesus Christ during the Easter season. How Do You Observe Lent? On the Christian calendar, Lent is the 40-day period from Ash Wednesday to Easter. When it was first observed in the fourth century, its focus was on self-examination and self-denial in preparation for Easter, and Christians used fasting (abstaining from eating food) in the early years as a visible demonstration of this process. Over the centuries, Catholics have relaxed some of the strict fasting rules. Today, only Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent are considered fasting days. Why is Lent 40 days? 40 is a significant number in the Bible: In Genesis, the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain. What is the first day of Lent called? Often called the Day of Ashes, Ash Wednesday opens Lent and takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday. It's chiefly observed by Catholics, although many other Christians mark it too. Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. What is Holy week? What is the story of Lent? Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray before beginning his work for God. Jesus was tempted several times by Satan, but was able to resist. Lent allows Christians to remember Jesus's fasting in the desert. It is a time of giving things up and a test of self-discipline. There are many foods that some Christians do not eat in Lent, such as meat and fish, fats, eggs, and milky foods. Some Christians just give up something they really enjoy, such as cakes or chocolate. Can you fill in the missing words?